

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY AUGUST 27, 2015

Senate Concurrent Resolution

No. 78

Introduced by ~~Senator Nielsen~~ *Senators Nielsen and Hueso*

(Principal coauthors: Assembly Members Chávez, Irwin, and Mathis)

***(Coauthors: Senators Anderson, Bates, Block, Hall, Huff, Nguyen,
Pan, Roth, and Vidak)***

*(Coauthors: Assembly Members Achadjian, Bloom, Daly, Kim, Lackey,
Olsen, Rodriguez, and Wilk)*

June 30, 2015

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 78—Relative to veterans.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 78, as amended, Nielsen. Veterans: Team AMVETS.

This measure would commend AMVETS Department of California, also known as Team AMVETS, for providing benefits and services to veterans, and for playing an important role in the community for 70 years.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, The unprecedented call to military service
2 demanded by World War II led to a record number of returning
3 war veterans in need of assistance and support; and

4 WHEREAS, The roots of ~~AMVETS-National~~ *AMVETS National*
5 can be traced back to a gathering of 18 veterans in Kansas City,
6 Missouri, on December 10, 1944, who named themselves “The
7 American Veterans” of World War II; and

8 WHEREAS, This group sought to provide more comprehensive
9 assistance than was currently available from the organizations run

1 by veterans of earlier wars and those operating on college campuses
2 during that time; and

3 WHEREAS, On July 23, 1947, ~~AMVETS-National~~ *AMVETS*
4 *National* became the first World War II organization chartered by
5 Congress when President Harry S. Truman signed Public Law 216
6 (H.R. 1888), giving AMVETS a federal charter under Title 36 of
7 the United States Code and status as a 501(c)(19) nonprofit veterans
8 service organization; and

9 WHEREAS, In honor and recognition of the sacrifices made by
10 all veterans, membership in AMVETS is open to anyone who is
11 currently serving or has honorably served in the United States
12 Armed Forces, Coast Guard, and Merchant Marines, as well as
13 the National Guard and reserve components; and

14 WHEREAS, On October 20, 1945, the AMVETS Department
15 of California was established and today has over 12,000 members
16 and over 50 local posts in California's communities; and

17 WHEREAS, AMVETS Department of California is also known
18 as "Team AMVETS" to reflect its mission to serve at the forefront
19 of community and veterans' services for the State of California,
20 and that any patriotic citizen can be a part of Team AMVETS
21 through volunteerism and donating used clothing and household
22 goods to the Team AMVETS Thrift Stores; and

23 WHEREAS, Team AMVETS is involved in many aspects of
24 service to veterans and the community. In 2014, AMVETS service
25 officers assisted California veterans in filing 16,365 claims, which
26 resulted in new and retroactive claim payments of almost \$39
27 million for California veterans; and

28 WHEREAS, Team AMVETS has a partnership between the
29 federal Department of Veterans Affairs and the AMVETS
30 Department of California Service Foundation called the Welcome
31 Home Program, which offers furnishings and household items to
32 homeless veterans who receive HUD assistance throughout the
33 state and supports the federal Department of Veterans Affairs'
34 goal to end veteran homelessness by 2015; and

35 WHEREAS, Team AMVETS is active in advocating on behalf
36 of veterans and their dependents before the Legislature, the state
37 Department of Veterans Affairs, and state and local agencies, as
38 well as supporting California's National Guard; and

39 WHEREAS, Team AMVETS sponsors legislation, supports and
40 monitors approximately 100 veteran-related bills per legislative

1 session, and actively monitors aspects of the state budget process,
2 which affect such issues as veterans' homes, CalVet, National
3 Guard, County Veterans Service Officers, and veterans' outreach
4 programs; and

5 WHEREAS, The Team AMVETS military funeral honor guards
6 average 4,000 military funerals a year, comprising an average of
7 20,000 volunteer hours, to veterans' families across the Golden
8 State, at no cost; and

9 WHEREAS, The federal Department of Veterans Affairs
10 Voluntary Service was founded in 1946 to provide for veterans in
11 federal Department of Veterans Affairs ~~healthcare~~ *health care*
12 facilities. The federal Department of Veterans ~~Affairs'~~ *Affairs*
13 Voluntary Service is the largest volunteer program in the federal
14 government, with more than 350 national and community
15 organizations involved in support of its mission. Volunteers assist
16 patients by augmenting staff in end-of-life care programs, foster
17 care, community-based volunteer programs, hospital wards, nursing
18 homes, and veteran outreach centers. AMVETS serves as one of
19 the 60 major veteran, civic, and service organizations that comprise
20 the Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service National Advisory
21 Committee. Nationally, every year, AMVETS volunteers provide
22 nearly 200,000 hours of service at VA facilities across the country
23 through the volunteer program. AMVETS volunteers have provided
24 about \$3.5 million worth of services each year helping to provide
25 quality care to our nation's heroes; and

26 WHEREAS, Team AMVETS operates ~~six~~ *five* thrift stores in
27 El Cajon, Fresno, Spring Valley, Long Beach, ~~Oakland~~, and San
28 Diego. These Team AMVETS Thrift Stores solicit donated goods
29 from the public, then pick up those goods and sell them to the
30 public to raise revenues to fund programs for veterans. Team
31 AMVETS Thrift Stores also give furniture and household goods
32 to homeless veterans seeking to transition into a home; and

33 WHEREAS, The ~~AMVETS National Youth Leadership~~
34 *AMVETS National Spirit of America Youth* Conference is held
35 annually at the Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge, where
36 students get to experience four days at the Freedoms Foundation's
37 facility and are schooled in constitutional law with respect to the
38 balance between liberty and security. These students participate
39 in leadership building activities and visit sites in Philadelphia and

1 Valley Forge.—~~TEAM~~ Team AMVETS sends about 60 students
2 each year to the conference from California; and

3 WHEREAS, The Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps
4 (JROTC), a federal program that seeks to instill in students
5 attending secondary educational institutions the values of
6 citizenship, service to the United States, and personal responsibility
7 and a sense of accomplishment, has faced funding challenges.
8 Team AMVETS has, in recognition of the value of this program,
9 sponsored JROTC scholarships, events, challenges, exhibitions,
10 drills, and competitions to augment the program; and

11 WHEREAS, Team AMVETS is continually searching for new
12 ways to serve veterans and their families, such as public policy
13 and legislative advocacy related to, among others, employment
14 and training, mandatory funding for government-provided health
15 care, and other entitlement benefits, as well as participating in
16 hospitalized veterans' visits, honor flights, Veterans Homes
17 assistance, scouting, stand-downs, blood drives, and patriotic
18 community programs; now, therefore, be it

19 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly*
20 *thereof concurring,* That Team AMVETS, since 1945, has
21 exhibited leadership, advocacy, and service for California's
22 veterans and their families; and be it further

23 *Resolved,* That the Legislature commends AMVETS Department
24 of California, also known as Team AMVETS, for providing
25 benefits and services to their fellow veterans, as well as playing
26 an important role in the civic life of their communities for 70 years;
27 and be it further

28 *Resolved,* That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
29 this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.