

COUNTY OF EL DORADO

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April 2, 2013

The Honorable Lou Correa
California State Senate
Chairman, Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs
1020 N Street, Room 251
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 296 (Correa) Support – County veterans service officers

Dear Senator Correa:

The County of El Dorado supports your SB 296, as proposed to provide increased local assistance for County Veterans Service Officers (CVSO's). If enacted, as introduced on February 15, 2013, this legislation would increase the amount of State assistance to County Veterans Services Organizations by \$5 million statewide.

Currently, counties provide approximately 84% of the cost associated with services provided by CVSO's. The other 16% is provided by the State through the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CDVA). The State currently allocates \$2.6 million per year to be distributed among the 56 California counties with CVSO's. This allocation has remained nearly unchanged for the past 18 years, and is inadequate to properly fund the CVSO's. According to the CDVA, from 1995 to 2011, the CVSO's have obtained \$3.65 billion in federal veterans benefits for California's veterans and their dependents. This has been done at a cost of \$38 million from the State's General Fund, reflecting a return of more than \$95 for every dollar the State allocates to CVSO's.

Presently, there are over 17,874 veterans residing in the County of El Dorado. This number does not include dependents or surviving family members. Passage of SB 296 would make it possible to

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expand services to the hundreds of underserved veterans and their dependents living in our County. For these reasons, the County of El Dorado is honored to support SB 296. Thank you for your efforts to support our veterans.

Respectfully,

Ron Briggs
Chairman, Board of Supervisors
County of El Dorado

cc: The Honorable Ted Gaines, California State Senate
The Honorable Beth Gaines, California State Assembly
The Honorable Frank Bigelow, California State Assembly
California State Association of Counties
Regional Council of Rural Counties