



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 18-1685, **Version:** 1

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Supervisor Ranalli recommending the Board:

- 1) Receive and file a presentation provided by Lance Poinsett, Veterans Service Officer, El Dorado County Veteran Affairs, that recognizes the community volunteers who dedicate their time, knowledge, energy and talents to assist the El Dorado County Department of Veteran Affairs in the delivery of services and programs that support veterans and their family members in the County of El Dorado; and
- 2) Approve and authorize the signatures of all five Board members on Proclamations that recognize these volunteers for their service. (Est. Time: 30 Min.)

The mission of El Dorado County Veteran Affairs is to assist veterans with any facet of their military experience and the administration of laws resulting from such service, as well as to assist their dependents and survivors through the adjudication of claims to the U.S. Government, and that the benefits they receive are the maximum possible under the full extent of the law. Veteran Affairs is the collaborative point of contact between the County, veterans and various veteran service organizations in the local community.

El Dorado County Veteran Affairs was established by the Board of Supervisors to assist veterans, their dependents and survivors in obtaining entitlements from federal, state, and local agencies that administer veterans programs. It is not affiliated with the Federal Department of Veteran Affairs (VA).

El Dorado County Veteran Affairs stands ready to serve the over 17,000 local veterans, their dependents and survivors, as well as other veterans needing assistance by providing guidance and advice to help veterans become aware of and claim the many benefits they earned and are entitled to while in military service to our country.

Entitlements include counseling, education, medical benefits, compensation for service related disabilities, dependent allowances, request for and correction of military records, vocational rehabilitation, Cal-Vet home loan programs, disability pensions, military funeral services and burial benefits. Many veterans are not aware that they have these benefits. The dedicated staff at Veteran Affairs does the work of helping veterans and their family members obtain these benefits. Their outreach program includes being the central advocacy source connecting all the military programs and organizations in the county.

El Dorado County Veteran Affairs is supported by the countless community volunteers (veterans and civilians) who dedicate their time, resources, knowledge and unique talents to support and honor the patriotism and sacrifices of the men and women, and their family members, who have served the cause of freedom in defense of our nation. These volunteers serve as individuals and/or as a member of one of the multiple local organizations that are dedicated to serving and supporting the veterans and their family members in El Dorado County.

Local efforts to serve and support veterans in El Dorado County include the dedicated efforts of organizations that include:

**The "El Dorado Veteran Resources - A Permanent Stand Down Powered by the Military Family Support Group"** that provides at no cost to veterans numerous resources and services that include:

Staffed reception services for veterans and their families 7 hours a day, 5 days a week

Transportation services to connect veterans to the care they need to pursue wellness through professional services

Homeless veteran assistance (supplies & outdoor gear)

Homeless transition assistance (ready to provide household furnishings & supplies to those moving into homes)

Crisis assistance with food, fuel, and clothing

Crisis assistance with housing (temporary & permanent) and utilities

On-site Military Community Food Pantry & Feed Our Vets frozen entree program

One-time crisis financial aid

Automotive crisis assistance (tires, mechanical, etc.)

Fitness Programs (Yoga & GiQuong)

Financial Coaching by a certified professional

Counseling & therapy by certified professionals

Assistance with residential safety & accessibility issues

Collaboration with Veterans Treatment Court

**The El Dorado County Veterans Alliance** honors and assists those veterans of the United States Armed Forces who have served the Cause of Freedom.

The Friends of the Veterans Monument, the parent organization that includes the El Dorado County Veterans Alliance, is a 501c(3) charitable organization comprised of veterans of the United States Armed Forces and their family members, and is designated by El Dorado County Ordinance No. 4743 to care for, oversee improvements to and conduct Memorial Day and Veterans Day ceremonies at the El Dorado County Veterans Monument.

The work of the Friends of the Veterans Monument and the El Dorado County Veterans Alliance extends far beyond their dedication to care for the Veterans Monument. Every year, the El Dorado County Veterans Alliance raises tens of thousands of dollars in direct aid to support El Dorado County veterans and their families. These funds provide the financial support for services and programs to support veterans and their family members that include: college assistance and scholarships, service dogs for veterans experiencing PTSI, hospice care for veterans at the end of

their lives, training for veteran paralympians, aid to homeless veterans and military families, and access to nutritious food.

The El Dorado County Veterans Alliance has established programs that are each supported by their fundraising efforts specifically to support veterans and their families. These programs include:

**Folsom Lake College Veterans Success Center:** The El Dorado County Veterans Alliance raised \$45,000 over the past three years to help local veterans who are attending Folsom Lake College.

**Social Services:** In the past two years, the El Dorado County Veterans Alliance has raised over \$23,000 for the training of service dogs for veterans suffering from PTSD, scholarships for children of veterans, training for veteran paralympians, aid to homeless veterans and military families, and to support the "No Vet Goes Hungry" Program in El Dorado County.

**Hospice:** The El Dorado County Veterans Alliance has contributed \$25,000 to Snowline Hospice over the past two years to provide end-of-life care for El Dorado County veterans.

**Veterans in Law Enforcement:** The El Dorado County Veterans Alliance contributed \$6,000 in the past two years for counseling and family assistance to El Dorado County law enforcement officers who are also veterans.

**Scholarships:** The El Dorado County Veterans Monument Scholarship Fund Advisory Committee (aka El Dorado County Veterans Coalition) oversees the distribution of approximately \$7,500 in annual scholarships for the pursuit of higher education to graduating high school seniors who are the sons and daughters of El Dorado County veterans.

#### **Community Organizations:**

**Sew 4 Vets:** The "Sew 4 Vets" community volunteers sew lap quilts, wheel chair lap quilts, wheel chair bags, walker bags, small comfort pillows, toiletry bags, and bibs. For Alzheimer patients, they make fidget aprons and placemats. In addition to local veterans in health care facilities around El Dorado County, "Sew 4 Vets" supplies veterans hospitals in Yountville, Mather, Martinez, Fresno, Redding, and Palo Alto.

**Quilts of Valor:** Local community volunteers who are members of the Quilts of Valor, a non-profit foundation, provide Freedom Quilts to physically or psychologically wounded servicemembers, honoring them for their sacrifices. The movement was originally started by Catherine Roberts of Seaford, DE in 2003 but has now spread across the United States and even has an international presence.

**4 Paws 2 Freedom:** Community volunteers of "4 Paws 2 Freedom" serve to improve the lives of veterans and first responders with PTSD, through the use of highly trained service dogs, while providing compassionate education to assist in their recovery.

**Vets Food Project/Leo Cooper:** Chef Leo prepares wholesome frozen entrees that are available to veterans at the El Dorado County Veterans Memorial Building.

**Dorcas Quilters:** Each year the community volunteer members of the Dorcas Quilters donate quilts that are used by the Military Family Support Group to decorate the El Dorado County Veterans

Memorial Building. The Dorcas Quilters donate quilts to veterans wounded in the war on terror.

**Daughters of the American Revolution:** The community volunteer members of the Daughters of the American Revolution donate tents for homeless veterans, nonperishable food for the pantry and coffee bar supplies at the El Dorado County Veterans Memorial Building.

**Project Linus:** The community volunteers of Project Linus provide blankets for the children of veterans via the Military Family Support Group.

**Wounded Veteran Run Foundation:** The community volunteers who are members of the Wounded Veteran Run Foundation provide Christmas gifts for the children of El Dorado County veterans and recently painted the food pantry cabinet at the El Dorado County Veterans Memorial Building.

**Military Order of the Purple Heart:** The community volunteer members of the Military Order of the Purple Heart provide financial and material support for the Military Family Support Group.

These efforts are further supported by the countless community volunteers and local businesses who donate their time, resources and knowledge to support veterans directly and the organizations that support veterans and their families through the donation of professional services, coordination of special fundraising events, and in providing assistance with grant writing and funding.

The dedication of these community volunteers, individually and as part of their participation in service groups and organizations, enhances the services and programs provided in partnership with the El Dorado County Department of Veterans Affairs that support and honor the sacrifices of those who have served the cause of freedom in defense of our nation.