

CALIFORNIA STATE COMMANDERS VETERANS COUNCIL

LEGISLATION & BUDGET UPDATE

Prepared by: Seth Reeb - Reeb Government Relations
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AB 2032-E. Garcia; Ending Military and Veteran Suicide Task Force

AB 2032 will establish an Ending Military and Veteran Suicide Task Force within the Department of Public Health's Office of Suicide Prevention. This bill is authored by Assemblyman Eduardo Garcia (D-Coachella) and is sponsored by the California State Commanders Veterans Council.

AB 2032 thus far has had broad support from the Legislature. This bill is expected to pass the Senate Military & Veterans Affairs Committee on June 28, 2022. The bill will then go to the Senate Appropriations Committee for a review of the estimated \$400,000 for staff and contract costs to convene the Task Force for multiple meetings using a professional facilitator, develop recommendations, prepare the plan, analyze data, and perform evaluations and develop the annual reports. During the Legislature's summer recess in July, Reeb government Relations will be working with the author's office and the Department of Public Health to address any concerns regarding cost.

As AB 2032 moves forward, we will keep you updated on our progress.

State budget FY 2022-23

The state Constitution requires the Legislature to submit a budget to the Governor by June 15. The Governor is required to sign the budget by June 30. At the time of this writing, the FY 2022-23 State Budget is nearing completion on the final compromises between the Legislature and the Governor and the budget should be signed any day. The highpoints of the budget regarding veterans are:

- **California Veterans Health Initiative:** The budget includes a \$50 million one-time General Fund allocation, to be spent over three years, to establish the California Veteran Health Initiative (CVHI) to provide a comprehensive, coordinated approach to addressing veteran suicide. The Initiative will focus on prevention, early intervention, and direct services to effectively combat the risk factors associated with suicidal ideation, thereby reducing the number of veterans who die by suicide.

\$40 million will be available to provide competitive grants to local jurisdictions that provide matching grants to expand mental health service capacity by supporting a network of veteran-specific mental health services throughout the state. The intent of this program is to assist the creation of self-sustaining, ongoing programs that support veterans and maximize available federal programs (U.S. Veteran's Affairs and Medi-Cal).

- **Vietnam Veterans Memorial repair:** \$110,000 for repair of the California Vietnam Veterans Memorial (CVVM) in Capitol Park. In late 2020, the CVVM was vandalized. Because of COVID closures, repairing the damage was not able to be addressed until early 2022. Under the current system relating to repairs of the memorial, private funds are required to be raised. Historically, repairs were made by veterans organizations such as the Vietnam Veterans of America-California State Council (VVA). In response to the vandalism, a survey of the site was performed by a contractor, and a bid was submitted for about \$108,000. We put in a budget request through the Senate and the Assembly to obtain state funding to repair the CVVM. That funding is now contained in the final draft versions of the budget and should be signed in to law any day.

Active bills:

Below are the bills currently still moving through the Legislature that the California State Commanders Veterans Council has taken a position on. Currently, Senate bills are in the Assembly and moving through the committee process and vice versa. AB 1730 is on its way to the Governor's desk and we have submitted a letter on your behalf to the Governor requesting he sign it into law.

The Legislature will continue to hear bills in committee until July 1, at which point they will then adjourn for Summer Recess until August 1. When they return from recess, they will hear the last of the bills assigned to fiscal committees until August 12. From August 15-31, bills that survived the committee process will be heard on the Senate and Assembly Floors. On August 31, the Legislature will adjourn for the 2021-22 Legislative Session. The General Election will be on November 8 and on December 5, the new Legislature will convene for the 2023-24 Legislative Session. After this brief organizational session, the legislators will head back to their districts for the holidays. The 2023-24 session will begin in earnest in the beginning of January 2023.

To view information on all bills, including text, amendments, analyses, votes, and status, go to:

<https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billSearchClient.xhtml>

AB 411 (Irwin D) Veterans Housing and Homeless Prevention Bond Act of 2022.

Status: 6/15/2022-From committee: Do pass and re-refer to Com. on APPR. (Ayes 5. Noes 0.) (June 15). Re-referred to Com. on APPR.

Summary: Existing law, the Veterans Housing and Homeless Prevention Bond Act of 2014 (the 2014 bond act), authorizes the issuance of bonds in the amount of \$600,000,000, as specified, for expenditure by the California Housing Finance Agency, the Department of Housing and Community Development, and the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide housing to veterans and their families pursuant to the Veterans Housing and Homeless Prevention Act of 2014 (VHHPA). This bill would enact the Veterans Housing and Homeless Prevention Bond Act of 2022 to authorize the issuance of bonds in an amount not to exceed \$600,000,000 to provide additional funding for the VHHPA. The bill would provide for the handling and disposition of the funds in the same manner as the 2014 bond act. This bill contains other related provisions.

Position Support

AB 738 (Nguyen R) Community mental health services: mental health boards.

Status: 6/2/2022-Read second time and amended. Re-referred to Com. on APPR.

Summary: The Bronzan-McCorquodale Act governs the organization and financing of community mental health services for persons with mental disorders in every county through locally administered and locally controlled community mental health programs. Current law requires each community mental health service to have a mental health board consisting of members who are appointed by the governing body, and encourages counties to appoint individuals who have experience with and knowledge of the mental health system. Current law requires at least 50% of the board membership to be consumers, or the parents, spouses, siblings, or adult children of consumers. Current law specifies the duties of mental health boards, including acting in an advisory role to the governing body. This bill would require at least one member of the board to be a veteran or veteran advocate in counties with a population of 100,000 or more. In counties with a population of fewer than 100,000, the bill would require these counties to give a strong preference to appointing at least one member of the board who is a veteran or veteran advocate.

Position Support

AB 1595 (Quirk-Silva D) Veterans cemetery: County of Orange.

Status: 6/1/2022-Referred to Com. on M. & V.A.

Summary: Current law requires the Department of Veterans Affairs to acquire, study, design, develop, construct, and equip a state-owned and state-operated Southern California Veterans

Cemetery in the County of Orange at one of 2 possible sites, as specified. Existing law requires the department to, after completing acquisition studies on both sites, consult with the Department of General Services to determine which site to pursue based on the economic feasibility, benefits to veterans and City of Irvine residents, and availability of each location. Current law makes honorably discharged veterans, their spouses, and dependent children eligible for interment in the cemetery, as specified. This bill would delete those site selection requirements and would instead require the department to acquire, study, design, develop, construct, and equip a state-owned and state-operated Southern California Veterans Cemetery in the County of Orange.

Position Support

AB 1600 **(Nguyen R) California Commission on the United States Semiquincentennial.**

Status: 6/8/2022-Referred to Com. on G.O.

Summary: Would, until January 1, 2029, establish the California Commission on the United States Semiquincentennial in state government to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the founding of the United States of America. The bill would require the commission to plan and coordinate commemorations and observances of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence and the American Revolution. The bill would require the commission to be solely supported by private or federal funds made available for the purpose of supporting the commission. The bill would require that these funds be deposited in the Semiquincentennial Fund, and would create that fund in the State Treasury. The bill would require funds in the Semiquincentennial Fund to be available, upon appropriation by the Legislature, as specified. The bill would require the records, files, and other memoranda of the commission, other than any private possessions, to be deposited and filed with the State Archives before January 1, 2029, and would require the State Archives to receive those materials.

Position Support

AB 1633 **(Sevarto R) Public postsecondary education: veterans' educational benefits: information sharing.**

Status: 6/8/2022-From committee: Do pass and re-refer to Com. on M. & V.A. with recommendation: To Consent Calendar. (Ayes 7. Noes 0.) (June 8). Re-referred to Com. on M. & V.A.

Summary: Would require the California State University, and request the University of California, to electronically transmit specified personal information regarding students whose tuition or fees, or both, are paid, or intended to be paid, using GI Bill educational benefits, as defined, to the Department of Veterans Affairs for each academic year, starting with the 2023–24 academic year, as provided. The bill would, or before June 1, 2023, require the office of the Chancellor of the California State University, and request the office of the President of the University of California, to develop a template for a written consent to be used by campus financial aid offices that permits a student to opt in to having the student's personal information shared with the Department of Veterans Affairs, as provided.

Position Support

AB 1692 **(Voepel R) Veterans: mental health.**

Status: 6/8/2022-Referred to Com. on M. & V.A.

Summary: The Department of Veterans Affairs, among other services, provides veterans and their dependents and survivors with assistance in processing service-related disability claims, assistance in obtaining affordable housing, and information about health ailments associated with military service. This bill would require the department to establish a program to fund, upon appropriation by the Legislature, an academic study of mental health among women veterans in California, as specified. The bill would require the department to submit a report summarizing the findings and recommendations of the study to the Legislature no later than July 31, 2024.

Position Support

AB 1730 **(Davies R) Penal damages: veterans.**

Status: 6/20/2022-Read third time. Passed. Ordered to the Assembly. (Ayes 37. Noes 0.). In Assembly. Ordered to Engrossing and Enrolling.

Summary: Current law requires the trier of fact, in a civil action to redress unfair or deceptive acts or practices or unfair competition brought by, on behalf of, or for the benefit of senior citizens or disabled persons, to consider specified factors in determining the amount of a discretionary fine, penalty, or remedy to be imposed. Current law authorizes the trier of fact, upon a finding of one of those factors, to impose a fine, penalty, or other remedy in an amount up to 3 times greater than the amount authorized by statute or the amount the trier of fact would impose in the absence of the affirmative finding. This bill would make these provisions applicable to veterans.

Position Support

AB 1731 **(Davies R) Postsecondary education: Title 38 awards: postsecondary educational institutions: application for approval or renewal.**

Status: 6/15/2022-From committee: Do pass and re-refer to Com. on M. & V.A. (Ayes 6. Noes 0.) (June 15). Re-referred to Com. on M. & V.A.

Summary: Current law establishes the Title 38 award program, which provides student financial aid to military veterans under the administration of the California State Approving Agency for Veterans Education (CSAAVE). Current law requires an institution headquartered or operating in California desiring to enroll students eligible for federal Title 38 awards to apply for approval of its courses to CSAAVE, and authorizes CSAAVE to approve the application of the school when the school and its courses satisfy specified criteria and any additional reasonable criteria established by CSAAVE. This bill would require, on or before January 1, 2024, CSAAVE to establish regulations requiring postsecondary educational institutions to provide specified information to CSAAVE as part of an application for approval or renewal.

Position Support

AB 1762 **(Mathis R) State Capitol: Gold Star Families monument.**

Status: 6/8/2022-Referred to Com. on G.O.

Summary: Would authorize a nonprofit organization representing Gold Star Families, in consultation with the Department of General Services, to plan, construct, and maintain a monument to the Gold Star Families of California on the grounds of the State Capitol. The bill would require the nonprofit organization to submit a plan for the monument to the Joint Rules Committee for its review and approval. The bill would require the monument to be funded exclusively from private sources.

Position Support

AB 1828 **(Chen R) CalFresh: income eligibility: basic allowance for housing.**

Status: 6/20/2022-From committee: Do pass and re-refer to Com. on APPR. (Ayes 4. Noes 0.) (June 20). Re-referred to Com. on APPR.

Summary: Would require the State Department of Social Services, on or before July 1, 2023, and annually thereafter, to submit a request for a federal waiver to exclude the basic allowance for housing provided to specified uniformed service members from countable income in the determination of eligibility and benefit level for purposes of receiving CalFresh benefits. The bill would, upon federal approval of the waiver, require the department, in consultation with the County Welfare Directors Association of California, advocates for CalFresh recipients, and the Military Department, to issue an all-county letter instructing counties on updated eligibility requirements and benefit calculations for uniformed service members receiving a basic allowance for housing. To the extent the bill would expand the duties of counties, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

Position Support

AB 2032 (Garcia, Eduardo D) Ending Military and Veteran Suicide Task Force.

Status: 6/23/2022-From committee: Do pass and re-refer to Com. on M. & V.A. with recommendation: To Consent Calendar. (Ayes 9. Noes 0.) (June 22). Re-referred to Com. on M. & V.A.

Summary: Would require the State Department of Public Health to establish an Ending Military and Veteran Suicide Task Force within the Office of Suicide Prevention to systematically reduce military and veteran suicides and to develop a plan to eliminate all military and veteran suicides in the state, as specified. Commencing June 1, 2024, the bill would require the task force to submit a specified report to the Governor and the Legislature on the state of veteran suicide prevention, as specified, including, among other things, an analysis of the plans, activities, strategies, and programs undertaken pursuant to the task force's recommendations and their effects on reducing military and veteran suicides in the state.

Position SPONSOR

AB 2105 (Smith R) Contractors: initial license fee reduction: veterans.

Status: 6/6/2022-From committee: Do pass and re-refer to Com. on M. & V.A. with recommendation: To Consent Calendar. (Ayes 12. Noes 0.) (June 6). Re-referred to Com. on M. & V.A.

Summary: The Contractors State License Law provides for the licensing and regulation of contractors by the Contractors State License Board, which is within the department. Existing law authorizes the board to set fees by regulation, according to a prescribed schedule. This bill would require the board to grant a 50% fee reduction for an initial license or registration fee to an applicant who provides specified documentation to the board that the applicant is a veteran who has served as an active duty member of the United States Armed Forces, including the National Guard or Reserve components, and was not dishonorably discharged.

Position Support

AB 2509 (Fong R) Vehicles: registration fees: exemptions.

Status: 6/15/2022-From committee: Do pass and re-refer to Com. on M. & V.A. with recommendation: To Consent Calendar. (Ayes 15. Noes 0.) (June 14). Re-referred to Com. on M. & V.A.

Summary: Current law exempts, except as specified, a vehicle that is owned by a disabled veteran, a former American prisoner of war, or a Congressional Medal of Honor recipient, or the surviving spouse of a former American prisoner of war or Congressional Medal of Honor recipient who has elected to retain special license plates, that is of a type subject to registration under the Vehicle Code, and that is not used for hire, compensation, or profit, from certain fees imposed pursuant to the Vehicle Code. This bill would additionally exempt a Purple Heart recipient, and the surviving spouse of a Purple Heart recipient who has elected to retain special license plates, from those fees.

Position Support

AB 2627 (Bauer-Kahan D) Electronically collected personal information: local agencies: the California Community Colleges: memorandum of understanding.

Status: 6/23/2022-Read second time and amended. Re-referred to Com. on APPR.

Summary: Would authorize a local agency, at the request of the governing board of a California Community College district, to enter into a memorandum of understanding that would allow the agency and the district to share electronically collected personal information about users, unless the user has not provided informed written consent for that disclosure, for purposes of facilitating outreach to, and enrollment of, individuals in the California Community Colleges system and notifying the user of all available support resources.

Position Support

AB 2949 (Lee D) Vehicles: toll exemptions.

Status: 6/15/2022-From committee: Do pass and re-refer to Com. on M. & V.A. with recommendation: To Consent Calendar. (Ayes 15. Noes 0.) (June 14). Re-referred to Com. on M. & V.A.

Summary: Under current law, a person who enters a vehicular crossing becomes liable for any tolls imposed. Current law prescribes the means by which a toll may be collected or paid, including by the use of an electronic transponder or by means of capturing a license plate number and billing the registered owner. Current law prohibits a person from evading, or attempting to evade, the payment of tolls on any vehicular crossing or toll highway. A violation of this prohibition is subject to civil penalties, but it is not a crime. This bill would exempt a vehicle that is registered to a veteran, displaying a specialized veteran license plate, as specified, and registered to a transponder or other electronic toll payment device from payment of a toll or related fines on a toll road, toll bridge, toll highway, a vehicular crossing, or any other toll facility, except a high-occupancy toll lane.

Position Support

ACR 121 (Sevarto R) Purple Heart Day.

Status: 6/23/2022-From committee: Be adopted. To Consent Calendar. (Ayes 8. Noes 0.) (June 23).

Summary: Would declare August 7, 2022, as Purple Heart Day in California.

Position Support

AJR 17 (Waldron R) Military behavioral health care.

Status: 6/20/2022-Adopted and to Assembly. (Ayes 37. Noes 0.) In Assembly. Ordered to Engrossing and Enrolling.

Summary: Would urge the President, the Congress of the United States, and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to take all measures to ensure that military veterans can access necessary treatment for mental health and substance abuse disorders in a timely manner.

Position Support

SB 837 (Umberg D) Driver's licenses: veteran designation.

Status: 6/21/2022-From committee: Do pass and re-refer to Com. on APPR. with recommendation: To consent calendar. (Ayes 14. Noes 0.) (June 20). Re-referred to Com. on APPR.

Summary: Current law allows an in-person applicant for a driver's license or identification card to request the word "VETERAN" be printed on the face of the driver's license or identification card, subject to certain requirements, including, among others, verification of veteran status, as specified, and payment of a \$5 fee, which the department is authorized to increase by regulation, in an amount not to exceed \$15, as specified. Current law prohibits a fee from being charged for that request if made by a person who has been determined to have a current income level that meets the eligibility requirements for specified assistance programs, or a person who can verify their status as a homeless person, in accordance with specified provisions. This bill would repeal the requirement that an applicant pay the above-described fee.

Position Support

SB 949 (Laird D) Veterans: California Central Coast State Veterans Cemetery.

Status: 6/23/2022-Read second time. Ordered to consent calendar.

Summary: Current law requires the Department of Veterans Affairs to design, develop, and construct the state-owned and state-operated California Central Coast State Veterans Cemetery at Fort Ord and to oversee and coordinate the design, development, construction, and equipping of the veterans cemetery. Current law establishes the California Coast State Veterans Cemetery at Fort Ord Endowment Fund, to be allocated, upon appropriation, to the department for nonreimbursable costs of design, construction, and annual operation of the veterans cemetery. Current law requires the Controller, after consultation with the department, to annually report on the status of the Endowment Fund, as specified. This bill would remove the requirement that the Controller annually report on the

status of the Endowment Fund. The bill would additionally remove obsolete provisions regarding the construction of the cemetery.

Position Support

SB 1182 **(Eggman D) Family law.**

Status: 6/14/2022-From committee: Do pass and re-refer to Com. on APPR. with recommendation: To consent calendar. (Ayes 10. Noes 0.) (June 14). Re-referred to Com. on APPR.

Summary: Would require a court, in family law proceedings, to provide self-identified veterans with a list of resources for veterans, including information about how to contact the local office of the Department of Veterans Affairs. The bill would authorize a veteran to provide the information about their veteran status on a Judicial Council military service form, file the form with the court, and serve it on the other parties to the action. The bill would require the court to transmit a copy of the form to the Department of Veterans Affairs, and would require the department, within a reasonable time of receipt, to contact the person using the information provided on the form. The bill would authorize the Judicial Council to develop the rules and forms needed to implement those provisions on or before January 1, 2024.

Position Support

SB 1193 **(Newman D) Department of Motor Vehicles: electronic notifications and transactions.**

Status: 6/9/2022-Coauthors revised.

Summary: Would, among other things, for a provision of the Vehicle Code or of Title 13 of the California Code of Regulations that requires the DMV to mail, notify, deliver via certified or first class mail, provide information in written form, or otherwise references the use of paper, a writing, or the mail to convey information to a person, authorize that requirement to be satisfied by electronic notification, if certain conditions are established by the DMV, including that the person consented to the electronic receipt of the document or information delivered. The bill would authorize the DMV to adopt regulations to implement these provisions, and would make conforming changes.

Position Support

SB 1195 **(Grove R) Veterans homes.**

Status: 6/15/2022-Coauthors revised. From committee: Do pass and re-refer to Com. on APPR. (Ayes 7. Noes 0.) (June 14). Re-referred to Com. on APPR.

Summary: Current law establishes veterans homes in the State of California, under the jurisdiction of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Current law requires the department to review the use of each home no later than 5 years before the expiration of the use restriction imposed on the home by federal law to determine the best continued use of the home. In making that determination, current law requires the department to review, among other things, the current needs of the regional veteran population. When the department reviews the use of each home, this bill would require the department to assess, among other things, the potential for the Veterans Health Administration to place satellite medical clinics on state veteran home campuses and within a 30-minute drive of a state veteran home campus, to serve both residents of the veteran homes and nonresident veterans in the communities where state veteran homes are located.

Position Support

SB 1209 **(Eggman D) Sentencing: members of military: trauma.**

Status: 6/14/2022-From committee: Do pass and re-refer to Com. on APPR. (Ayes 5. Noes 0.) (June 14). Re-referred to Com. on APPR.

Summary: Current law requires a court, if it concludes that a defendant convicted of a felony offense is or was a member of the United States military who may be suffering from sexual trauma, traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, or mental health problems as a result of the defendant's military service, to consider that circumstance as a factor in mitigation when imposing a sentence. Current law allows a defendant who is currently serving a felony

sentence and meets these criteria to petition for resentencing if those criteria were not considered at the time of sentencing and the person was sentenced prior to January 1, 2015. This bill would allow a defendant meeting these criteria to petition for recall of sentence and resentencing, as specified, without regard to whether the defendant was sentenced prior to January 1, 2015.

Position Support

SB 1237 (**Newman D**) **Licenses: military service.**

Status: 6/14/2022-From committee: Do pass and re-refer to Com. on M. & V.A. with recommendation: To consent calendar. (Ayes 16. Noes 0.) (June 14). Re-referred to Com. on M. & V.A.

Summary: Current law provides for the regulation of various professions and vocations by boards within the Department of Consumer Affairs and for the licensure or registration of individuals in that regard. Current law authorizes any licensee or registrant whose license expired while the licensee or registrant was on active duty as a member of the California National Guard or the United States Armed Forces to reinstate the licensee's or registrant's license without examination or penalty if certain requirements are met. Current law requires the boards described above, with certain exceptions, to waive the renewal fees, continuing education requirements, and other renewal requirements as determined by the board, if any are applicable, of any licensee or registrant who is called to active duty as a member of the United States Armed Forces or the California National Guard if certain requirements are met. Current law, except as specified, prohibits a licensee or registrant from engaging in any activities requiring a license while a waiver is in effect. This bill would define the phrase "called to active duty" to include active duty in the United States Armed Forces and on duty in the California National Guard, as specified.

Position Support

SB 1311 (**Eggman D**) **Veterans: protections.**

Status: 6/21/2022-From committee: Do pass and re-refer to Com. on M. & V.A. (Ayes 8. Noes 0.) (June 21). Re-referred to Com. on M. & V.A.

Summary: Current law requires a person who engages or proposes to engage in unfair competition to be liable for a civil penalty of not more than \$2,500, per violation, which is assessed and recovered in an action brought by certain public officials, including the Attorney General. This bill, the Military and Veteran Consumer Protection Act of 2022, would make a person who violates those provisions, if the violation is perpetrated against one or more service members or veterans, liable for an additional civil penalty not to exceed \$2,500 for each violation, as specified.

Position Support

SB 1357 (**Archuleta D**) **Property taxation: exemption: disabled veteran homeowners.**

Status: 6/21/2022-From committee: Do pass and re-refer to Com. on M. & V.A. (Ayes 11. Noes 0.) (June 20). Re-referred to Com. on M. & V.A.

Summary: The California Constitution and existing property tax law provide various exemptions from taxation, including, among others, a disabled veterans' exemption and a veterans' organization exemption. This bill would exempt from taxation property owned by, and that constitutes the principal place of residence of, a veteran, the veteran's spouse, or the veteran and the veteran's spouse jointly, if the veteran is 100% disabled. The bill would provide an unmarried surviving spouse a property exemption in the same amount that they would have been entitled to if the veteran was alive and if certain conditions are met. The bill would require certain documentation to be provided to the county assessor to receive the exemption and would prohibit any other real property tax exemption from being granted to the claimant if receiving the exemption provided by the provisions of this bill. The bill would make these exemptions applicable for property tax lien dates occurring on or after January 1, 2023, but occurring before January 1, 2033.

Position Support

SB 1435 (Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs) **Veteran home use: reporting.**

Status: 6/23/2022-Read second time. Ordered to consent calendar.

Summary: Current law establishes veterans homes in the State of California, under the jurisdiction of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Current law requires the department to review the use of each home no later than 5 years before the expiration of the use restriction imposed on the home by federal law to determine the best continued, unrestricted use of the home. Current law also requires the department to conduct the same review 5 years after the date of the expiration of the use restriction imposed by federal law on a home and to update that review every 5 years. This bill would require the department to review the homes on a specified schedule and to update the report every 5 years.

Position Support

For More information:

Scott Holwell

Chair, Legislative Committee

Scott.Holwell@co.kings.ca.us

Seth Reeb, Veterans Advocate

Reeb Government Relations

sethr@water-warrior.com