



REEB GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

1415 L Street, Suite 870

Sacramento, CA 95814

Seth Reeb: sethr@water-warrior.com

Dana Nichol: danan@water-warrior.com



LEGISLATIVE ADVOCATE REPORT MAY 2025

Legislative Report – May 2025

Prepared by Seth Reeb, Legislative Advocate

As California reaches the halfway point of the 2025–26 legislative session, the political climate in Sacramento has shifted sharply. The recent release of Governor Newsom’s May Revise, paired with the suspense file decisions made by the Senate and Assembly Appropriations Committees, has dramatically altered the landscape for veteran-related legislation. Some of our community’s most promising bills have advanced. Others were abruptly held, paused until 2026, or killed without public explanation.

Despite the state facing a daunting \$28.4 billion budget deficit, momentum around veteran-focused legislation remains. One of the most significant developments came when AB 53, authored by Assemblymember Ramos, was passed out of the Assembly Appropriations Committee. This bill, and a similar proposal in the Governor’s May Revise, would exempt up to \$20,000 of military retirement and Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) income from state taxes for qualifying individuals and couples. While the Senate version of this measure, SB 1 by Senator Seyarto, was held in committee, the fight continues via the budget trailer bill, a critical second path forward.

Our advocacy community also succeeded in advancing a broad portfolio of additional bills. From AB 88, which ensures military dependents don’t lose financial aid when their families are transferred, to SB 296, which would fully exempt 100% disabled veterans from property taxes, key legislation cleared major fiscal hurdles. Bills addressing mental health, higher education, tax parity, and oversight of veteran service providers all remain in play, giving us reasons for cautious optimism.

At the same time, several promising proposals were shelved. These include SB 60, which sought to expand education benefits for California Military Department members, and SB 99, which would have helped streamline childcare access for military families. While these setbacks are disappointing, the strong performance of other bills reminds us that persistence, coalition-building, and grassroots action matter.

The budget itself continues to evolve. The Governor’s May Revise includes \$663.6 million for the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet), an increase of over \$116 million from last year. That funding will sustain operations at veterans homes, boost support for underserved veteran populations, and enhance mental health and skilled nursing services. The budget also fast-tracks over \$1 billion in Proposition 1 housing funds, including significant allocations for permanent supportive housing targeted to homeless veterans with mental illness or substance use disorders.

Budget subcommittees in both houses are now reviewing the Governor’s proposals, and negotiations will intensify as the June 15 deadline approaches. The Legislature must balance the budget, which may mean further cuts, delays, or changes to proposed programs. Veterans’ advocates are working to ensure that critical programs and tax relief measures remain in the final budget.

Nationally, momentum continues to build. The recently enacted Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act removes barriers to community care by eliminating VA referral requirements, particularly critical for veterans in rural and underserved areas. Additionally, the new PACT Act guidance now simplifies enrollment for veterans with toxic exposure claims, including those impacted by Agent Orange, burn pits, and more.

Our community has demonstrated resilience and engagement. On May 14, Capitol Advocacy Day brought veterans and allies to the Legislature to deliver personal stories and policy briefs directly to lawmakers. Meanwhile, our digital infrastructure continues to grow.

Looking forward, the next major deadline is June 15, when the Legislature must adopt a balanced budget. Between now and then, trailer bills, funding allocations, and final negotiations will shape what comes next. If AB 53 passes alongside the Governor's trailer bill, California will finally join 48 other states in recognizing military retirement tax relief. But we're not there yet. We need your voices. Your calls, emails, and outreach to legislators could be the difference between a historic victory and another year of delay.

All Vets Day

Are you ready to make your voice heard at the Capitol? The next Veterans Capitol Advocacy Day will be held on June 11, 2025. If you have not yet signed up or would like more information, please reach out to Dana or myself, Seth Reeb. This is a vital opportunity for veterans, families, and supporters to meet with legislators, share their stories, and advocate for the issues that matter most to our community. Your participation is essential to ensuring veterans' priorities remain front and center during this critical legislative season. Don't miss your chance to be part of the movement. Contact us today to get involved!

Let's keep fighting for the policies that honor and uplift California's veterans.

For questions or to schedule a briefing, contact me at sethr@water-warrior.com.

California Veterans Legislation – Status as of May 27, 2025

1. [AB 53 \(Ramos\) – Personal income taxes: exclusion: Military Services Retirement and Surviving Spouse Benefit Payment Act](#) — Alive
Proposes exempting up to \$20,000 of military retirement or SBP income from California state income tax for qualifying veterans and spouses through 2030. Passed Assembly Appropriations on May 23; on Assembly Second Reading.
2. [AB 81 \(Ta\) – Veterans: mental health](#) — Alive
Directs CalVet to fund a comprehensive study on mental health among women veterans in California. Passed Appropriations; on Assembly Second Reading.
3. [AB 83 \(Pacheco\) – The California Elder Financial Abuse Prevention Act](#) — Dead
Failed committee deadline; may return in 2026.
4. [AB 88 \(Ta\) – Student financial aid: Cal Grants: Middle Class Scholarship Program: eligibility: dependents of members of the armed services stationed outside of California](#) — Alive
Ensures dependents of active-duty military stationed outside California remain eligible for Cal Grants and Middle-Class Scholarships. Passed Appropriations; on Assembly Second Reading.
5. [AB 225 \(Bonta\) – State hospitals for persons with mental health disorders: patient funds](#) — Alive
Expands allowable uses of patient benefit funds in state hospitals. In Senate Health.
6. [AB 259 \(Rubio, Blanca\) – Open meetings: local agencies: teleconferences](#) — Alive
Extends alternative teleconferencing procedures for local agencies until 2030. In Senate Local Government.
7. [AB 264 \(Carrillo\) – Veterans: benefits](#) — Alive
Eliminates a provision that reduced state education benefits for military dependents receiving overlapping federal benefits. On Assembly Second Reading.

8. [AB 282 \(Pellerin\) – Discrimination: housing: source of income](#) — Alive
Clarifies that prioritizing applicants who use housing vouchers is not discrimination. In Senate Judiciary.
9. [AB 556 \(Patterson\) – Public postsecondary education: waiver of campus-based fees: veterans](#) — Dead
Held in Appropriations.
10. [AB 571 \(Quirk-Silva\) – California Environmental Quality Act: exemption: Gypsum Canyon Veterans Cemetery](#) — Alive
Expedites the Gypsum Canyon Veterans Cemetery project by exempting it from CEQA. In Senate Rules.
11. [AB 587 \(Davies\) – Student Aid Commission: membership](#) — Alive
Adds a veteran representative to the California Student Aid Commission. In Senate Rules.
12. [AB 637 \(Flora\) – False or misleading commercial disaster communication](#) — Dead
Failed committee deadline.
13. [AB 798 \(Calderon\) – State Emergency Food Bank Reserve Program: diapers and wipes](#) — Alive
Expands the State Emergency Food Bank Reserve Program to include diapers and wipes for low-income families. On Assembly Second Reading.
14. [AB 826 \(Gonzalez, Jeff\) – Veterans' benefits: protections](#) — Dead
Failed committee deadline; may return in 2026.
15. [AB 901 \(Sharp-Collins\) – Veterans' preferences: eligible spouses](#) — Dead
Failed committee deadline; may return in 2026.
16. [AB 909 \(Schiavo\) – Financial abuse of an elder or dependent adult: fraudulent transactions: liability](#) — Dead
Failed committee deadline; may return in 2026.
17. [AB 1346 \(DeMaio\) – Public postsecondary education: residency: dependents of members of the Armed Forces: reenrollments](#) — Alive
Protects in-state residency status for military dependents returning to California campuses after transfers. In Senate Rules.
18. [AB 1412 \(Gonzalez\) – Special education: pupil transfers: residency requirements: records](#) — Alive
Streamlines special education services for military-connected students moving between school districts. In Senate Rules.
19. [AB 1508 \(Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs\) – Governor's Military Council](#) — Alive
Extends the Governor's Military Council until 2031. On Assembly Second Reading.
20. [AB 1509 \(Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs\) – Veterans: educational assistance](#) — Alive
Establishes the California State Approving Agency for Veterans Education (CSAAVE) within CalVet. In Senate Military & Veterans Affairs.
21. [ACA 5 \(Schiavo\) – Property taxation: veterans' exemption](#) — Alive
Proposes constitutional changes to allow veterans to combine property tax exemptions and remove existing caps. Awaiting committee hearing.
22. [ACR 3 \(Nguyen\) – Veterans of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces Day](#) — Alive
Recognizes June 19, 2025, as Veterans of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces Day. In Assembly Rules.
23. [ACR 4 \(Nguyen\) – Republic of Vietnam Month](#) — Alive
Proclaims October 2025 as Republic of Vietnam Month. In Assembly Rules.
24. [ACR 16 \(Gallagher\) – The POW/MIA Bridge](#) — Alive
Designates the Feather River Bridge as the POW/MIA Bridge. In Senate Transportation.
25. [ACR 23 \(Quirk-Silva\) – Mental Health Peer Appreciation Week](#) — Alive
Recognizes the third week of May 2025 as Mental Health Peer Appreciation Week. Ordered to Senate Third Reading.
26. [SB 1 \(Seyarto\) – Personal income taxes: exclusion: Military Services Retirement and Surviving Spouse Benefit Payment Act](#) — Dead
Held in Appropriations.
27. [SB 23 \(Valladares\) – Property taxation: exemption: disabled veteran homeowners](#) — Dead
Hearing canceled at request of author.
28. [SB 28 \(Umberg\) – Treatment court program standards](#) — Alive
Improves standards for treatment court programs, including those focused on substance use and mental health. Passed Senate Appropriations; on Senate Second Reading.
29. [SB 38 \(Umberg\) – Second Chance Program](#) — Dead
Held in Appropriations.

30. [SB 54 \(Umberg\) – Court fee waivers: veterans](#) — Alive
Ensures VA disability compensation is excluded from income calculations for court fee waiver eligibility. On Senate Third Reading.
31. [SB 55 \(Umberg\) – State parks: facilities pass: Gold Star Family members](#) — Alive
Mandates free access to California state parks for Gold Star Families. On Senate Third Reading.
32. [SB 56 \(Seyarto\) – Property taxation: disabled veterans' exemption: household income](#) — Alive
Excludes VA disability compensation when determining household income for the disabled veteran property tax exemption. On Senate Third Reading.
33. [SB 67 \(Seyarto\) – Student financial aid: Cal Grants: Middle Class Scholarship Program: eligibility: dependents of members of the armed services stationed outside of California](#) — Alive
Expands Cal Grant and MCSP access for military dependents stationed outside the state. On Senate Third Reading.
34. [SB 70 \(Seyarto\) – Public contracts: Small Business Procurement and Contract Act](#) — Alive
Raises the small business procurement threshold to \$350,000, helping veteran-owned small businesses compete for state contracts. On Senate Third Reading.
35. [SB 96 \(Umberg\) – Veterans' benefits](#) — Alive
Technical, non-substantive changes to veterans' benefits law. In Senate Rules.
36. [SB 99 \(Blakespear\) – Family childcare homes: United States Armed Forces](#) — Dead
Held in Appropriations.
37. [SB 284 \(Seyarto\) – Property taxation: change in ownership: family homes and farms](#) — Alive
Provides technical clarity to property transfers among family members to preserve property tax benefits. On Senate Third Reading.
38. [SB 296 \(Archuleta\) – Property taxation: exemption: disabled veteran homeowners](#) — Alive
Establishes a full property tax exemption for homes owned by 100% disabled veterans or their surviving spouses. On Senate Third Reading.
39. [SB 519 \(Archuleta\) – Veterans](#) — Dead
Hearing canceled at request of author.
40. [SB 587 \(Grayson\) – Personal income taxes: credit: manufacturing: sales and use taxes](#) — Alive
Creates a tax credit for certain manufacturing-related sales and use taxes. On Senate Second Reading.
41. [SB 623 \(Archuleta\) – Property taxation: homeowners', veterans', and disabled veterans' exemptions](#) — Alive
Allows dual use of the homeowners' and veterans' property tax exemptions, pending constitutional approval. In Senate Revenue & Taxation.
42. [SB 694 \(Archuleta\) – Veteran service providers](#) — Alive
Requires CalVet to publish a report on the certification of veteran service providers. In Assembly Desk.
43. [SB 798 \(Rubio\) – Veterans](#) — Alive
Increases burial support for indigent veterans from \$350 to \$1,000. In Assembly Military & Veterans Affairs.
44. [SCA 4 \(Archuleta\) – Property taxation: veterans' exemption](#) — Alive
Proposes constitutional changes to allow veterans to combine property tax exemptions and remove existing caps. Awaiting committee hearing.
45. [SCR 18 \(Archuleta\) – National Medal of Honor Day](#) — Alive
Recognizes March 25 as National Medal of Honor Day. Chaptered.