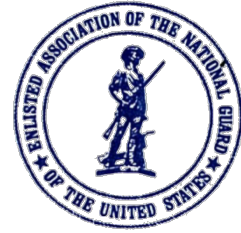




California Enlisted Association
National Guard of the United States



February 4, 2025

The Honorable Senator Bob Archuleta
California State Senate
1021 O Street, Room 6630
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for SB 694 – Deceptive Practices: Service Members and Veterans

Dear Senator Archuleta,

On behalf of the California Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States (CAL EANGUS), I am writing to express our strong support for Senate Bill 694, the Veteran Benefits Protection Act. This bill is a critical step toward protecting our veterans and service members from deceptive, unaccredited businesses that illegally charge for assistance with VA claims. CAL EANGUS represents the voices of thousands of enlisted National Guard members across California, many of whom have served under both Title 10 and Title 32 orders throughout their careers. This unique dual-status service structure often leaves Guardsmen navigating a complex web of benefits and entitlements. Unfortunately, it also makes them a prime target for so-called “claim sharks”—unaccredited companies that use aggressive marketing and misleading promises to charge thousands of dollars for services that are, by law, supposed to be free.

Our members have reported being solicited by companies like Veterans Guardian and Veterans Benefits Guide, particularly during periods of transition between active duty and traditional Guard service. These organizations exploit confusion and urgency, often charging excessive fees for initial claims assistance—services that can and should be provided by VA-accredited County Veteran Service Officers, Veterans Service Organizations, or other recognized advocates.

SB 694 provides California with a vital enforcement mechanism to protect service members and veterans from exploitation. It restores oversight where federal enforcement has fallen short and ensures that only VA-accredited professionals can charge for claims assistance, and only at the legally appropriate stage of the process.

This bill does not restrict choice—it safeguards quality, ethics, and transparency. It empowers veterans by ensuring that those who provide support are properly trained, held accountable, and acting in the veteran’s best interest.

We are grateful for your unwavering leadership and dedication to those who have served. By championing SB 694, you are helping ensure that California leads the nation in protecting veterans and service members from financial harm and reaffirming that our state values honor, integrity, and lawful service.

CAL EANGUS proudly supports SB 694 and urges its swift passage.

Appreciatively,

Josh J. Baker, CMSgt
State President, CAL EANGUS
PO Box 785
Folsom, CA 95763