



CALIFORNIA ENLISTED  
ASSOCIATION



VETS ADVOCACY



CALIFORNIA AFRICAN AMERICAN  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



SAN BERNARDINO  
COUNTY



Long Beach Area  
**VETERANS  
COLLABORATIVE**



September 3, 2025

The Honorable Bob Archuleta  
California State Senate  
1021 O Street, Suite 7420  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Support for SB 694 (Archuleta) – Veterans Benefits Protection Act of 2025**

Dear Senator Archuleta,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we write in **strong support of Senate Bill 694**, which strengthens consumer protections for California's veterans by ensuring that only accredited individuals may charge for services related to filing claims for U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits. Our coalition represents a broad cross-section of veteran service providers, community organizations, legal advocates, and labor and senior groups committed to protecting veterans from exploitation.

SB 694 builds on the framework of SB 1124 (Menjivar, 2024) and addresses the alarming rise in unaccredited and often predatory actors—commonly known as “claim sharks”—that charge excessive or illegal fees for assisting veterans with benefit claims. These bad actors, who lack VA accreditation and oversight, pose serious risks to vulnerable veterans by promising guaranteed outcomes, pressuring veterans into dubious contracts, and compromising access to sensitive personal data.

SB 694 will:

1. **Prohibit unaccredited individuals** from charging for the preparation, presentation, or prosecution of VA benefit claims;
2. **Enhance penalties for unauthorized access** to veterans' data on secure VA systems; and
3. **Codify reasonable fee standards** by clarifying under the Consumer Legal Remedies Act that fees exceeding those allowed for VA-accredited representatives are unlawful.

California's veterans deserve transparent, qualified, and accountable representation when navigating the VA benefits process. This bill ensures that only individuals who meet federal standards and adhere to strict ethical requirements can charge for these services—protecting veterans from exploitation and reinforcing existing legal frameworks.

We commend your leadership on this important issue and respectfully urge the Legislature to support SB 694. Please consider the undersigned organizations as committed partners in this effort.

Sincerely,



**Richard Taite**  
Executive Chairman  
1 Method

**Rafi Nazarians**  
Advocacy Director  
AARP California



**Ahmad R. Holmes, MBA**  
President & CEO  
California African American Chamber of Commerce



**Pat Fong Kushida**  
President & CEO  
California Asian Pacific Chamber of Commerce

**Jake Johnson**

Chief Executive Officer and President  
California Association of Highway  
Patrolmen



**Julian Canete**  
President and CEO  
California Hispanic Chambers of Commerce

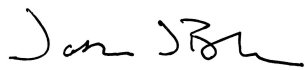
**Dawn Ortiz-Legg, President**  
Latino Caucus of CA Counties  
San Luis Obispo County



**Doug Subers**  
Director of Governmental Affairs  
California Professional Firefighters

**J.R. Wilson**

Legislative Director  
Department of California  
Disabled American Veterans



**Josh J. Baker, CMSgt**  
State President

California Enlisted Association of the  
National Guard

**Richard Wilkenson, Jr.**  
Commander  
Korean War Veterans Association, Redding,  
California Chapter



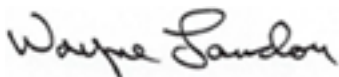
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**Mike Alcorn**  
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**David West II**  
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**Wayne Landon**  
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**Brian Marvel**  
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