



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

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Senator Alex Padilla
Hart Senate Office Building, Room 112
Washington, D.C. 20510-0506

Senator Laphonza Butler
11111 Santa Monica Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90025

Representative Jared Huffman
Rayburn House Office Building, Room 2445
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: Support for County Veteran Service Officers (H.R.984/S.106)

Dear Senators Padilla and Butler, and Representative Huffman,

Humboldt County appreciates your work and dedication to efforts improving the lives of California residents, particularly those that have served in our military. As part of those efforts, we urge you to support and consider co-sponsoring the *Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach Act* (H.R.984/S.106) which would authorize federal funding to expand and strengthen County Veteran Service Officers (CVSOs).

CVSOs are local county employees who are national accredited by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to prepare, present and prosecute VA claims. Often, CVSOs are the veterans' first point of contact in the community for accessing needed services. CVSOs assist veterans in accessing a range of benefits, including service-connected benefits, enrollment in VA health care, VA home loans, education benefits and available job placement assistance.

Though CVSOs' primary focus is helping veterans navigate the federal benefits system, these offices are currently funded almost entirely by counties, which creates challenges in rural areas such as Humboldt County.

There is currently no federal funding directly available for CVSOs despite their critical work serving our nation's finest.

The bipartisan Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach (CVSO) Act (H.R. 984/S. 106) has been re-introduced in the 118th Congress. The legislation would offer federal funding for CVSOs for the first time, authorizing annual award grants over five years to expand and support CVSOs or similar local entities. The VA would award competitive grants to CVSOs, through the states, to create, expand or support CVSOs or similar local

entities, prioritizing areas with high rates of veteran suicide, Veteran Crisis Line referrals or CVSO shortages. The new personnel resources outlined under the CVSO Act would enable counties to better meet the needs of local veterans given the significant expansion of VA benefits under the recently enacted Honoring Our Pact Act.

The CVSO Act is currently supported by NACo, the National Association of County Veteran Service Officers (NACVSO), the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA), the American Legion, the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), the Wounded Warrior Project (WWP), the Military Officer's Association of America (MOAA), the America's Warrior Partnership (AWP), and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP).

Humboldt County joins these organizations in support of the Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach Act and asks that you support this needed legislation.

Sincerely,

Steve Madrone, Chair
Humboldt County Board of Supervisors

Cc: National Association of Counties (NACo)
Paragon Government Relations