



VETERANS AND LABOR – PARTNERS IN SERVICE

POLICY PLATFORM

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1. **Create and grow good jobs for veterans**

According to the Department of Veterans Affairs annual survey of veterans, jobs are their number one concern. Yet, among states that receive grants for vets from the U.S. Department of Labor, California has one of the lowest rates of placing veterans in jobs. We must align our state resources – incentives, contracts, purchasing, hiring – to encourage and reward the hiring of veterans, who represent the best in possible employees.

2. **Match training and skills to veterans**

Veterans come out of active duty with significant skills that can be translated into a variety of careers. Too often, the language used to describe military job duties doesn't match the language of those hiring in the civilian world. Military training doesn't match with licensing requirements, apprenticeship requirements or public employee requirements. We support policies that capture and maximize the skills vets have acquired to gain them the best jobs in growing fields that pay living wages

3. **Protect jobs for veterans**

Workers should be rewarded, not disadvantaged, when they go into active or reserve service. Vets should have guarantees that their jobs will be there when they return, that they be able to maintain their health care coverage, and that they will have recall rights should their jobs get eliminated. We will support policies that promote job protections for veterans and prevent discrimination.

4. **Streamline veteran job services**

According to a January 2013 memorandum prepared by the Senate Office of Research (SOR) entitled *Employment Opportunities for Veterans*, California does not provide a coordinated, integrated system that streamlines employment-related services to veterans. According to SOR, veterans find many services fragmented and without a single point of entry. An October 2013 Bureau of State Audits report states that the Employment Development Department fails to meet veteran employment goals set by federal grants. We support policies and programs to streamline the delivery of job services to veterans and that tailor services to the special needs and skill sets of veterans.



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5. Provide more housing for veterans

Various studies indicate that veterans are more likely than the general population to become homeless, and make up a disproportionate share of the homeless population. That is simply wrong. No one should be homeless after serving our country. We support legislation, such as AB 639 (Speaker Perez), policies, and funding to build more housing, including rental units, for veterans.

6. Ensure veterans receive their benefits

Over 1.8 million veterans live in California, more than in any other state. Yet California lags behind other states in the amount of benefits claimed by veterans. Veterans are eligible for federal pensions and health benefits, and many vets rely on public state programs rather than collecting the benefits they've earned. A 2013 Little Hoover Commission report estimates that California leaves between \$500 million and \$1 billion in federal dollars on the table due to veterans not signing up for benefits. We applaud the state Assembly for directing \$3 million in strike force funds to assist vets in claiming benefits. We support more funding, policies, programs and outreach to ensure that veterans receive the federal benefits they've earned and deserve.

7. Provide services for diverse veteran populations

The demographics of the veteran population are changing in California. The veteran population is aging and currently 70 percent of veterans in California age 50 or over. Large numbers of younger veterans are returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. African-American and Latino veterans experience higher unemployment rates than white veterans. An increasing number of women are returning from service, and the numbers of women veterans is expected to rise. Different groups of veterans will need different services for their transition to civilian life. We support tailoring programs and policies to the needs of the diverse veteran populations in the state.