



**PUBLIC REQUEST TO ADDRESS
THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA**

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

HILDA L. SOLIS
HOLLY J. MITCHELL
LINDSEY P. HORVATH
JANICE HAHN
KATHRYN BARGER

Correspondence Received

Agenda #	Relate To	Position	Name	Comments
17.		Favor	Annie Tran	Im an Army veteran living in Horvath's district. We shouldn't have to pay to get our benefits.
			Anthony Allman	
			Brian Heyman	
			David West	
			Esreruleh Mohammad	Submission by Dr. Esreruleh Mohammad (BCCP™/B2C3A™; County record Apr 10, 2025; TXu 2-486-534). Convergence: Consumer protections for veterans are essential. The ban on fees for initial claims, penalties for predation, and access expansion align directly to BCCP's anti-exploitation lane. Recognition-only: Include the neutral prior-work note and docket my attachments. This is a provenance filing only; no methods disclosed; no license granted.
			Latia Suttle	September 1, 2025, Dear Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, In addition to Supporting agenda item #17, there must also be Protection for Veterans after their claims are approved and they start receiving VA Disability Compensation. Specific protection is needed in Family Court and DCFS. Veterans with service-connected disabilities, meaning conditions or illnesses caused or aggravated by military service, often receive VA Disability Compensation as recognition of the sacrifices they made in service to our country. While these benefits are intended to support veterans and their families, many veterans in California, particularly in Los Angeles County, are being victimized by predatory practices within the Family Court system and the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). Rather than protecting veterans, Family Court and DCFS processes often disqualify veterans receiving VA Disability Compensation from fee waivers, forcing them into years-long legal battles that drain their benefits. Veterans report cases being deliberately dragged out for years, with matters bouncing back and forth between Family Court and DCFS, creating endless costs that target VA Disability Compensation as a funding source. The individuals and entities profiting from this exploitation include Officers of the Court, minors' counsel, custody evaluators, child visitation monitors, therapists, and attorneys. These actors routinely charge veterans thousands of dollars in fees and court costs, including requiring veterans to pay for their own court reporters—an expense that can exceed \$3,000 per hearing. Veterans have further reported that orders allowing recording in Los Angeles County courts are not being honored in Family Court, leaving them without a

As of: 9/3/2025 7:00:05 AM



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Family Court is not a criminal court, yet many veterans are treated as if they are criminals simply for exercising their parental rights while receiving disability compensation. Domestic Abuse is often ignored in Family Court and by DCFS leading victims to be revictimized. This systemic treatment contributes directly to homelessness and suicidality among veterans. In Los Angeles County alone, there are over 3,400 homeless veterans, and across California, that number exceeds 11,000. Nationally, the veteran suicide rate stands at approximately 18 per day—twice the civilian rate. These alarming numbers highlight the devastating consequences of ongoing exploitation within the Family Court system and Family Policing System.

Veterans deserve the same protections after they begin receiving VA Disability Compensation as those advocated for when filing initial claims. Without these safeguards, the very benefits intended to stabilize veterans' lives are instead weaponized against them by predatory actors within the legal system.

Therefore, it is imperative that policymakers act to establish protections for veterans in Family Court, including prohibiting exploitative fees and costs tied to VA Disability Compensation, ensuring access to fair and timely proceedings, enforcing orders related to court recording, and holding accountable those who target veterans' earned benefits through unethical practices.

I, THEREFORE, request that the Board of Supervisors consider the protecting veteran benefits before and after they receive VA Disability Compensation and direct the Chief Executive Office's Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations (CEO-LAIR) to:

Take a standing position in support of state and federal legislation that protects veterans in Family Court from financial exploitation, ensures that VA Disability Compensation cannot be weaponized against veterans in custody or DCFS cases, and advances protections that guarantee fair access to justice for veterans and their families.

Advocate for the inclusion and preservation of penalty provisions to ensure accountability and deter predatory practices targeting veterans within Family Court and DCFS.

Support legislative reforms that provide oversight, enforcement mechanisms, and consumer protections specifically designed to protect veterans in Family Court from predatory fees, unethical practices, and prolonged case manipulation.

Veterans should not face exploitation or homelessness because the very benefits they earned through service are being used against them. Let us protect veterans both before and after they begin receiving VA Disability Compensation.



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		<p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Latia Suttle U.S. Army Veteran Parent With Lived Experience</p>
	Latia Suttle	<p>September 1, 2025,</p> <p>Dear Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors,</p> <p>In addition to Supporting agenda item #17, there must also be Protection for Veterans after their claims are approved and they start receiving VA Disability Compensation. Specific protection is needed in Family Court and DCFS. Veterans with service-connected disabilities, meaning conditions or illnesses caused or aggravated by military service, often receive VA Disability Compensation as recognition of the sacrifices they made in service to our country. While these benefits are intended to support veterans and their families, many veterans in California, particularly in Los Angeles County, are being victimized by predatory practices within the Family Court system and the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). Rather than protecting veterans, Family Court and DCFS processes often disqualify veterans receiving VA Disability Compensation from fee waivers, forcing them into years-long legal battles that drain their benefits. Veterans report cases being deliberately dragged out for years, with matters bouncing back and forth between Family Court and DCFS, creating endless costs that target VA Disability Compensation as a funding source. The individuals and entities profiting from this exploitation include Officers of the Court, minors' counsel, custody evaluators, child visitation monitors, therapists, and attorneys. These actors routinely charge veterans thousands of dollars in fees and court costs, including requiring veterans to pay for their own court reporters—an expense that can exceed \$3,000 per hearing. Veterans have further reported that orders allowing recording in Los Angeles County courts are not being honored in Family Court, leaving them without a fair record of proceedings and vulnerable to additional violations of their rights. Family Court is not a criminal court, yet many veterans are treated as if they are criminals simply for exercising their parental rights while receiving disability compensation. Domestic Abuse is often ignored in Family Court and by DCFS leading victims to be revictimized. This systemic treatment contributes directly to homelessness and suicidality among veterans. In Los Angeles County alone, there are over 3,400 homeless veterans, and across California, that number exceeds 11,000. Nationally, the veteran suicide rate stands at approximately 18 per day—twice the civilian rate. These alarming numbers highlight the devastating consequences of ongoing exploitation within the Family Court system and Family Policing System. Veterans deserve the same protections after they begin receiving VA Disability Compensation as those advocated for when filing initial claims.</p>



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Support legislative reforms that provide oversight, enforcement mechanisms, and consumer protections specifically designed to protect veterans in Family Court from predatory fees, unethical practices, and prolonged case manipulation.

Veterans should not face exploitation or homelessness because the very benefits they earned through service are being used against them. Let us protect veterans both before and after they begin receiving VA Disability Compensation.

Sincerely,

Latia Suttle
U.S. Army Veteran
Parent With Lived Experience

Shannon Corbeil

Steve V Ramirez

Tina Rios

I support agenda item #17 and urge added protections for veterans receiving VA Disability Compensation. Family Court and DCFS processes can create financial and legal burdens, impacting veterans' mental health and housing stability. Veterans and their families deserve fair treatment, access to justice,

				and protection from practices that compromise their earned benefits. They deserve our support abroad and at home. So that they receive the respect they deserve and the services that will help them thrive in Los Angeles County and United States.
			Zack N Zenner	I am going to school on the CalVet fee waiver because of my dad. The VSO didn't charge me and my dad shouldn't be charged to get his benefits.
		Other	Vanessa Lopez	
		Item Total	12	
Grand Total			12	



California Association of County Veterans Service Officers

PO Box 1, Davis, CA 95617
CACVSO.ORG

David O. West II
President

August 29, 2025

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 W. Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: *Item 17 – Protecting Veterans Benefits*

Dear Honorable County Board of Supervisors:

On behalf of the California Association of County Veterans Service Officers (CACVSO), I respectfully urge your support for Item 17 to support Senate Bill 694 (SB 694), Deceptive practices: service members and veterans, by Senator Bob Archuleta. Adoption of Item 17 will add LA County to a broad coalition of counties, veterans service organizations, and military-connected partners calling on California to protect veterans from predatory practices and to uphold the integrity of the veterans' benefits system.

LA County is home to one of the largest veteran populations in California and in the nation. Your Board's visionary investment in veterans through the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and through efforts across County departments set a standard in how to support veterans' well-being. SB 694 directly protects your investments by safeguarding your county's veterans from unlawful or exploitative actors who charge thousands of dollars for services that, by law, should be free.

County Veterans Service Officers work on the front lines helping veterans, service members, and their families secure life-changing benefits, including VA health care, disability compensation, housing support, education, and pensions. We take a comprehensive approach, using every interaction to assess needs, connect to additional benefits, and support long-term stability. This stands in clear contrast to unaccredited, fee-for-service operations that treat veterans as transactions rather than people with interconnected needs.

Although federal law prohibits unaccredited individuals from charging fees for assistance with initial claims, federal enforcement is limited, and bad actors continue to flourish. California should not tolerate a system in which veterans are asked to pay simply to apply for the help they have already earned. We would not allow this in Medi-Cal, unemployment insurance, or Social Security.

SB 694 gives California the tools to act by establishing civil penalties for illegally charging fees on initial claims and by reinforcing the role of accredited representatives who serve lawfully and at no cost. The bill aligns with CalVet's vision that California's veterans are connected,

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors

August 29, 2025

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respected, and protected, and it complements the Governor's investments by ensuring that consumer protections keep pace with need.

CACVSO deeply appreciates this Board's leadership. Supporting Item 17 sends a clear message that LA County stands with its veterans and will not allow them to be exploited.

Respectfully,

David O. West

David O. West II, President

California Association of County Veterans Service Officer

September 1, 2025,

Dear Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors,

In addition to Supporting agenda item #17, there must also be Protection for Veterans after their claims are approved and they start receiving VA Disability Compensation. Specific protection is needed in Family Court and DCFS.

Veterans with service-connected disabilities, meaning conditions or illnesses caused or aggravated by military service, often receive VA Disability Compensation as recognition of the sacrifices they made in service to our country. While these benefits are intended to support veterans and their families, many veterans in California, particularly in Los Angeles County, are being victimized by predatory practices within the Family Court system and the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).

Rather than protecting veterans, Family Court and DCFS processes often **disqualify veterans receiving VA Disability Compensation from fee waivers**, forcing them into years-long legal battles that drain their benefits. Veterans report cases being deliberately dragged out for years, with matters bouncing back and forth between Family Court and DCFS, creating endless costs that target VA Disability Compensation as a funding source.

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2. Advocate for the inclusion and preservation of penalty provisions to ensure accountability and deter predatory practices targeting veterans within Family Court and DCFS.
3. Support legislative reforms that provide oversight, enforcement mechanisms, and consumer protections specifically designed to protect veterans in Family Court from predatory fees, unethical practices, and prolonged case manipulation.

Veterans should not face exploitation or homelessness because the very benefits they earned through service are being used against them. Let us protect veterans both before and after they begin receiving VA Disability Compensation.

Sincerely,

Latia Suttle

Latia Suttle
U.S. Army Veteran
Parent With Lived Experience

LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL IDEA

1. What issue does this bill address?

Veterans who have no criminal charges, who are unemployed and receiving VA Disability Compensation for their service connected illness or injuries in an amount greater than the Federal Poverty Level Income Guidelines do not qualify for housing assistance, legal aid/assistance, court fee waiver, nor court reporter for court hearings.

2. Why is current law insufficient to address the issue?

When unemployed veterans who receive VA Disability Compensation greater than the Federal Poverty Level Income have cases in Family Law Court, the veteran has to pay full price for an attorney which is \$300 to \$500 per hour, after a \$10,000 or more retainer fee is paid by the veteran upfront. VA Disability Compensation is Tax Exempt.

In addition, the veteran may also have to pay for the following but not limited to the following items when cases are open in Family Court:

1. Monitored Visitation with their children: \$1,000 to \$2,000 per month
2. Evaluations that also include MMPI-2 exams: \$15,000 to \$30,000
3. Court Expert Witness Testimony: \$500 to \$1,000 per appearance
4. Court Bond with no Criminal Charges: \$10,000
5. Court Transcripts: \$60 to \$3,000
6. Classes and/or therapy sessions: \$40 to \$300 per sessions
7. Court Reporter for Hearings and/court Proceedings: \$3,000 to \$5,000.

In addition to the Court Fees and Costs, the veteran still has to pay full price for rent while unemployed and only receiving VA Disability Compensation. Los Angeles County has a current average rent cost of \$2,768 in 2025.

Even low income housing becomes challenging to obtain or maintain when the VA Disability Compensation is counted as income because counting it disqualifies the veteran from the majority of the assistance that may be available. After paying \$3,000 to \$5,000 for a Court Reporter and adding on other Court Costs and fees there is nothing left to even pay for subsidized rent.

Veterans Access to Legal Organizations & Resources is non-existent when a veteran is unemployed and receiving VA Compensation. Legal Service Providers for Veterans count VA Compensation as income. Legal Service Providers for Veterans follow the Federal Poverty Level Income guidelines to determine eligibility for legal assistance .

The same issue exists when veterans apply for Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH).

All Veterans do not qualify for HUD-VASH as the VA Disability Compensation is counted against that as well. Even if the veteran is allowed to go through the HUD-VASH process the Landlord will still put the “Market Rate” on the RTA packet causing the veteran to pay more for the housing than if the veteran didn’t use the HUD VASH Voucher at all.

Legal Service Providers for Veterans follow the Federal Poverty Level Income guidelines to determine eligibility for legal aid services.

3. Recommended Solution: Exempt VA Disability Compensation when veterans are filing paperwork with any type of Court, applying for Legal Aid, requesting a Court Reporter, apply for HUD VASH and any type of housing assistance.

4. Studies, Reports, Statistics & Facts:

<https://www.lls.edu/media/loyolalawschool/newsroom/legalassistance/Valor%20Guide%20Los%20Angeles%20County%202012.pdf>.

Average Cost of Apartments in Los Angeles:

<https://www.rentcafe.com/average-rent-market-trends/us/ca/los-angeles/>

VA Disability Benefits Are Tax Exempt:

<https://www.ftb.ca.gov/file/personal/filing-situations/military.html>

-
Va Compensation Rates:

<https://www.va.gov/disability/compensation-rates/veteran-rates/>

Federal Income Poverty Level Guidelines:

<https://www.healthcare.gov/glossary/federal-poverty-level-fpl/>

Sources:

1. [Video of Veterans Denied Housing on West Los Angeles VA Campus Due to Veteran Received VA Disability Compensation](#)
2. [Florida Shortage of Court Reporters](#)
3. [Texas Shortage of Court Reporters](#)
4. [Illinois Shortage of Court Reporters](#)
5. [New York Shortage on Court Reporters](#)
6. [Nationwide Shortage on Court Reporters](#)
7. [The Ducker Report: Nationwide Shortage](#)
8. [PUBLIC WILL HAVE TO FIND AND PAY FOR OWN COURT REPORTERS IN MANY LOS ANGELES CIVIL CASES](#)

5. Fiscal Impacts (How much will it cost? Is there General Fund money already allocated for this purpose? Will it cost local communities money to implement?) N/A

6. Examples of other states that have addressed or resolved the problem successfully: No other states have resolved the problem.

7. Urgency (Is there a need for speed? How fast must this matter move?): Urgent because it was urgent to deploy service members to Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait, etc., separating them from their families in order to serve their country.

8. Prior or Similar Legislation in progress, or already passed in California (Bill number, author, year and final disposition): SB 907 by Senator Bob Archuleta only assists Active Duty Military but not Veterans and Retirees. Wrote and called the Senators office in 2020 to address the issue and to possibly amend the bill or create a new one but his

office never confirmed a meeting date nor addressed the issue with leaving out Veterans and Retirees. SB 1182 (Eggman) to start identifying veterans in Family Court was approved in 2022 and went into effect as Law in Jan 2024. SB 694 (Archuleta) in 2025 only seeks to protect veterans when they are trying to make a claim and not protection for veterans after the claim is approved and they start receiving VA Disability Compensation. Protection of veterans benefits should be before and after they start receiving VA Disability Compensation. There are other predators awaiting to take the VA Disability Compensation which some of them await in Family Court and within the Child Welfare System.

Possible Support: A Child's Dream, Altadena, Inc

Latia Suttle
U.S. Army, Veteran