SENATE BILL SB-32

Introduced by Senator Bob Archuleta (D-30)

An act relating to Veterans Services and support.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB-32, Bob Archuleta (D-30). Veterans Services and support.

California already has a state agency, the California Department of Veterans Affairs, whose purpose includes providing services and benefits to California veterans and their families. California also works through County Veterans Service Offices, which help veterans access federal, state, and local benefits. This bill would be adding financial support to an existing network of veterans' services.

California law already provides veterans with access to various forms of assistance, including programs connected to housing, employment, education, health care, and other veteran services. The existing system generally focuses on connecting eligible veterans with benefits and services rather than providing every veteran with a direct cash payment. The existing law also allows the state to work with local veterans' organizations and county veterans service offices to help veterans obtain benefits.

My proposed Veterans Financial Security and Assistance Act would expand California's existing assistance for veterans experiencing financial hardship. Current California law already allows counties to provide financial assistance, relief, and support to veterans who are in need. My bill would build on that existing system by creating a larger, statewide financial assistance program for eligible veterans.

My bill would also create greater consistency in how veterans access financial assistance throughout California. Rather than having assistance depend primarily on the resources available in an individual county, my bill would establish statewide eligibility requirements, a maximum benefit amount, and dedicated state funding. The existing county veterans services network would continue to be used to help veterans apply for and receive assistance.

Vote: Majority. Appropriations/fiscal: yes. Local program: no.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

Introduced by Senator Archuleta

September 30, 2026

Is to increase veteran services and support

Legislative Counsel’s Digest

SB TA Assigns#1, as introduced, Archuleta. Veterans Financial Security and Assistance Act of 2026

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Vote: Majority Appropriation: Yes Fiscal committee: Yes Local Program: No

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the Veterans Financial Security and Assistance Act of 2026.

SEC. 2. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) Veterans who have served in the United States Armed Forces have made significant contributions to the safety and security of California and the nation.

(b) Some California veterans experience financial hardship after completing their military service, including difficulty paying for housing, utilities, transportation, food, and employment related expenses.

(c) Veterans experiencing financial hardship may also face challenges related to unemployment, disabilities, homelessness, and the transition from military to civilian employment.

(d) California currently provides veterans with access to benefits and services through the California Department of Veterans Affairs and County Veterans Service Offices.

(e) Additional financial assistance can help eligible veterans address temporary financial emergencies and maintain stable housing and employment.

(f) It is the intent of this act to expand financial assistance available to eligible California veterans experiencing demonstrated economic hardship.

SEC. 3. The California Department of Veterans Affairs shall establish and administer the Veterans Financial Assistance Program.

(a) The purpose of the program shall be to provide temporary financial assistance to eligible California veterans experiencing economic hardship.

(b) The California Department of Veterans Affairs shall establish an application process for veterans seeking

assistance under this act.

(c) The Department shall establish procedures to verify an applicant's veteran status, California residency, and financial hardship.

(d) The Department may work with County Veterans Service Offices to assist veterans with applications and eligibility verification.

SEC. 4. An eligible veteran may receive financial assistance under this act.

(a) An eligible veteran may receive up to five thousand dollars ($5,000) in financial assistance during a 12 month period.

(b) Assistance may be provided as a single payment or through multiple payments based on the financial circumstances of the eligible veteran.

(c) Financial assistance provided under this act may be used for the following purposes:

(1) Rent or mortgage payments.

(2) Utility bills.

(3) Emergency temporary housing.

(4) Food and essential household expenses.

(5) Transportation necessary to obtain or maintain employment or attend medical appointments.

(6) Employment related expenses, including work clothing, tools, licensing fees, and transportation.

(7) Other essential expenses approved by the California Department of Veterans Affairs.

SEC. 5. Priority shall be given to veterans experiencing significant financial hardship.

(a) Priority shall be given to veterans who are experiencing homelessness or are at immediate risk of homelessness.

(b) Priority shall be given to veterans who have a service connected disability.

(c) Priority shall be given to veterans who are unemployed or underemployed.

(d) Priority shall be given to veterans with dependent children or other dependents.

(e) Priority shall be given to veterans experiencing an emergency financial circumstance.

SEC. 6. An applicant shall meet the following requirements to receive assistance under this act.

(a) The applicant shall be a veteran of the United States Armed Forces with an honorable or qualifying discharge.

(b) The applicant shall be a resident of California.

(c) The applicant shall demonstrate financial hardship.

(d) The applicant shall provide documentation reasonably necessary to establish eligibility for the program.

SEC. 7. County Veterans Service Offices shall assist with the local implementation of the Veterans Financial Assistance Program.

(a) County Veterans Service Offices may assist eligible veterans with completing and submitting applications.

(b) County Veterans Service Offices may assist the California Department of Veterans Affairs in verifying eligibility and financial hardship.

(c) County Veterans Service Offices shall provide information to eligible veterans regarding the availability of financial assistance under this act.

SEC. 8. The Veterans Financial Assistance Fund is hereby established within the State Treasury.

(a) Funds appropriated pursuant to this section shall be used to provide financial assistance to eligible veterans under this act.

(b) Funds shall also be used for reasonable administrative costs necessary for the California Department of Veterans Affairs and County Veterans Service Offices to implement the program.