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April 2, 2013

The Honorable Lou Correa
Senator, 34th District
State Capitol Room 5061
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: **SB 296 (Correa) – SUPPORT
County Veteran Service Officers**

Dear Senator Correa,

On behalf of Solano County, and the veteran community we represent, I am writing to **SUPPORT** your **SB 296** for increased local assistance funding for County Veterans Services Officers (CVSOs), which will be heard in the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee on April 9th.

If enacted, this bill would increase the amount of State assistance to CVSOs by \$9 million statewide. Currently, counties provide approximately 84% of the cost associated with services provided by CVSOs. The other 16% is provided by the State through the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CDVA).

The State currently allocates \$2.6 million per year to be distributed among the 56 California counties with CVSOs. This "Local Assistance" allocation has remained nearly unchanged for the past 18 years, and is inadequate to properly fund the CVSOs.

According to the CDVA, from 1995 to 2011, the CVSOs have obtained \$3.65 billion in federal veterans' benefits for California veterans and their dependents. This has been done at a cost of \$38 million from the State General Fund. This reflects a return of more than \$95 for every \$1 the State allocates to CVSOs. The return only reflects the actual monetary benefits qualified for in a given year, yet most veterans and their dependents continue to receive those benefits for the rest of their life.

Also not reflected in the annual CDVA report are Medi-Cal cost avoidance savings incurred as a result of CVSOs qualifying and shifting veterans away from Medi-Cal onto a federal veterans program. Presently, there are over 39,000 veterans residing in Solano County. This number does not include dependents or surviving family members.

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Passage of SB 296 would make it possible to expand services to thousands of underserved veterans and their dependents. For these reasons, Solano County strongly **SUPPORTS** your **SB 296** and looks forward to working with you this issue.

Sincerely,



Linda J. Seifert, Chair
Solano County Board of Supervisors

cc: Senator Ben Hueso, Chair, Senate Veterans Affairs Committee
Honorable Members and Consultants of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee
The Honorable Susan Bonilla, Assembly District 14
The Honorable Mariko Yamada, Assembly District 4
The Honorable Lois Wolk, Senate District 3
Paul Yoder, Shaw / Yoder / Antwih, Inc.