

Memorandum



Date: September 13, 2021

To: Legislative Committee

From: Jasmine McGinty, Legislative Coordinator

Subject: Consideration of request from Santa Barbara County Veterans' Advisory Commission for letters of support for Stopping the Deportation of Veterans and Restoration of the MANVI Program, and Justice for Military Sexual Assault Victims from the Board of Supervisors

Intro

On August 16, 2021, during their regular commission meeting, the Santa Barbara County Veteran's Advisory Commission voted to send documentation on Stopping the Deportation of Veterans and Restoration of the MANVI Program, and Justice for Military Sexual Assault Victims to the Board of Supervisors to ask for support letters for both of the issues. Staff is asking the Legislative Program Committee to consider this request for support letters and provide direction to staff as appropriate. If the Committee should direct staff to do so, staff can prepare a Board item for consideration of full Board.

Background

The Santa Barbara County Veterans' Advisory Commission (VAC) is a commission made of up seven members. Five regular members represent each Supervisorial District and appointed by each member of the Board of Supervisors. Additionally, one at-large member from the north county represents the 3rd, 4th, and 5th Supervisorial Districts, nominated by VAC regular membership and appointed by the Board of Supervisors and there is one at-large member representing the south county and the 1st and 2nd districts. The mission of the VAC is to advise the Board of Supervisors about current and unmet needs of veterans residing in Santa Barbara County and recommend action intended to meet those needs.

A few of the goals and objectives of this commission are to study and advise the Veterans' Service Officer and the Board of Supervisors on special problem areas relating to veterans within the Santa Barbara County and the Tri-County areas and to serve as a liaison between the veteran, our Veterans' Service Officer and the Board of Supervisors in order to improve and enhance their relationships and coordinate community activities. This includes recommending to the Board of Supervisors such action as may enhance the welfare of veterans located in our service area.

Discussion

The two attachments are SCVAC resolutions relating to two national issues: 1) Stopping the Deportation of Veteran's and Restoration of the MAVNI Program, and 2) Providing support to amend H.R. 4104, Section 2(d), to remove the military entirely from handling claims of sexual assault and instead be referred to local civilian law enforcement. During the August 16, 2021 VAC meeting, the commission voted for these issues be sent to the Board and request support letters to

Congressman Carbajal's office. During the meeting, member Bod Handy motioned and member Roy Hale seconded. VAC has brought forth resolutions for BOS consideration for their support:

Deportation of Veterans/ MAVNI Program

- The Military Accessions Vital to the National Interest Program (MAVNI) was created in 2008 to help foreign nations earn citizenship through military service and it was changed in 2017 to make the process to naturalization more difficult, resulting in the deportation of veterans in the United States.
- VAC is requesting support for the BOS to request legislation which would prevent the deportation of veterans who are permanent legal residents that have not been charged with a felony and instruct the military to honor existing MAVNI contracts.

H.R. 4104/ Military Sexual Assault Victims

- VAC is requesting a letter from the BOS to amend H.R. 4104, Section 2 (d) to remove the military entirely from handling sexual assault claims, and refer to local law enforcement instead.

Recommended Action

- A) Receive and file VAC requests for letters of support; and
- B) Provide direction to staff on recommendation to the full Board of Supervisors.