A bill for an act to amend Section 102791 of the Health and Safety Code, and to add Section 87 to the Military and Veterans Code, relating to death registration.

Introduced by Assembly Member Cervantes

January 17, 2019

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST


Existing law requires that each death be registered with the applicable local registrar of births and deaths and requires a person completing the certificate of death to record specified information, including whether the decedent was ever in the Armed Forces of the United States. Existing law requires the State Department of Public Health to implement an electronic death registration system and to access data within the system to compile a report on veteran suicide in California that includes information on the veterans’ ages, sexes, races or ethnicities, and methods of suicide. Existing law requires the department to provide that report annually to the Legislature and the Department of Veterans Affairs.
This bill would additionally require the report described above to include information on the veterans’ locations of residency and death, length and locations of service, branches of service, and occupations and industries or businesses.

Existing law establishes the Department of Veterans Affairs, headed by a Secretary of Veterans Affairs, to generally administer programs and benefits for veterans and their families, including, among others, educational assistance, home purchase assistance, and the oversight of veterans’ homes. Existing law also establishes the California Veterans Board, comprised of veterans, to review policy changes that would modify veterans’ programs, as specified.

This bill would establish, within the department, the Commission on Veteran Suicide Prevention, comprised of 5 commissioners, including the secretary who would act as the chair. The bill would require the commission to review each annual report on veteran suicide in California, described above, and make recommendations for preventing veteran suicide from the data collected in each report.


The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SEC. 1. Section 102791 of the Health and Safety Code is amended to read:

(a) The State Department of Public Health shall access data within the electronic death registration system implemented pursuant to Section 102778 to compile a report on veteran suicide in California. The report shall include information on the ages, sexes, races or ethnicities, locations of residency and death, length and locations of service, branches of service, occupations and industries or businesses, and methods of suicide of veterans.

(b) (1) Beginning January 1, 2019, the department shall, notwithstanding Section 10231.5 of the Government Code, annually provide the report compiled pursuant to subdivision (a) to the Legislature and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(2) A report to be submitted pursuant to paragraph (1) shall be submitted in compliance with Section 9795 of the Government Code.

SEC. 2. Section 87 is added to the Military and Veterans Code, to read:
87. (a) There is in state government, within the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Commission on Veteran Suicide Prevention.
(b) The commission shall be comprised of the following five commissioners:
(1) The secretary, who shall serve as the chair.
(2) Two commissioners who are appointed by, and serve at the pleasure of, the Governor.
(3) One commissioner who is appointed by, and serves at the pleasure of, the Senate Committee on Rules.
(4) One commissioner who is appointed by, and serves at the pleasure of, the Speaker of the Assembly.
(c) The commission shall review each report prepared pursuant to Section 102791 of the Health and Safety Code and make recommendations for preventing veteran suicide from the data collected in each report.