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**ACR-36 California Association of County Veterans Service Officers.** (2015-2016)

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**Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 36**

**CHAPTER 199**

Relative to the California Association of County Veterans Service Officers.

[ Filed with Secretary of State September 25, 2015. ]

**LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

ACR 36, Gray. California Association of County Veterans Service Officers.

This measure would recognize the California Association of County Veterans Service Officers for helping veterans secure their federal and state benefits over the past 70 years.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, Some California counties established County Veterans Service Officers (CVSO) after World War I to assist California's veterans to obtain the federal veterans benefits they earned by virtue of their service to our country; and

WHEREAS, San Bernardino established the first CVSO office in California in 1926, and at least 10 other counties with large veteran populations also established CVSO offices between World War I and World War II; and

WHEREAS, At the end of World War II, most California counties recognized the need to help their returning veterans to obtain federal benefits and quickly established CVSO offices in their counties; and

WHEREAS, In 1945, with the end of World War II and the return of thousands of veterans to California, the California Association of County Veterans Service Officers (CACVSO) was formed; and

WHEREAS, The CACVSO was created to assist returning veterans in accessing their earned entitlements as authorized by Congress, such as the GI Bill for education and the veteran home loan program, as well as compensation and pension benefits for wounded veterans and their families; and

WHEREAS, The CACVSO promotes state and federal legislation and policy supportive of veterans' rights and issues, in harmony with our national obligation to veterans of the United States Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, The CACVSO provides a medium for the exchange of ideas, information, training, and support to facilitate delivery of services to nearly two million California veterans; and

WHEREAS, The CACVSO recognizes the importance and merit of the congressionally chartered veterans service organizations and is committed to fostering a mutually beneficial relationship with them for the common good of all veterans, since it is the intent of all these organizations that every veteran residing in California receives the benefits and services to which they are entitled by law and moral obligation; and

WHEREAS, The CACVSO is an organization of professional veterans advocates whose purpose is to mutually promote the professionalism of all CVSOs; and

WHEREAS, Through CVSOs, the CACVSO is committed to California counties to provide a vital and efficient system of services and advocacy for veterans, their dependents, and their survivors; and

WHEREAS, The State of California has adopted and is currently using the CVSO model that is used in 27 other states as the primary method of delivering services to veterans; and

WHEREAS, In California, a CVSO plays a critical role in the veterans advocacy system and is often the initial contact in the community for veterans services; and

WHEREAS, The CVSOs and the California Department of Veterans Affairs work closely together to assist California's veterans in obtaining federal and state veterans benefits, with CVSOs serving as the "boots on the ground" for the department; and

WHEREAS, CVSOs are primarily funded by the counties and receive some state funding; and

WHEREAS, Since 1995, CVSOs have assisted veterans in qualifying for and receiving \$4.6 billion in federal benefits, which are sent directly to veterans and ultimately spent in the local economy; and

WHEREAS, In the 2013–14 fiscal year, CVSOs assisted California's veterans in filing claims with the federal government that resulted in payments of more than \$545 million, an increase of over 23 percent from the \$445 million that the CVSOs helped veterans claim during the previous fiscal year, which is attributable to increased state funding from \$2.6 million in 2013 to \$5.6 million in 2014, which allowed CVSO offices to increase outreach activities and hire additional staff to assist veterans in the claims process; and

WHEREAS, CVSOs are responsible for planning and administering a countywide program, so they must be knowledgeable about all entitlements, programs, and ancillary services as administered by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Defense, the California Department of Veterans Affairs, and other federal, state, and local agencies; and

WHEREAS, The CACVSO has raised the professionalism of all CVSOs through training and working to improve the federal claims process with the California Department of Veterans Affairs, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, and congressionally chartered veterans service organizations; and

WHEREAS, The CACVSO promotes the welfare and rights of veterans statewide through legislative advocacy, provides training and education to CVSOs and their employees, promotes the mission of CVSOs throughout the state, and provides members of the CACVSO with a collaborative network of resources, information, and ideas; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature commends the California Association of County Veterans Service Officers for 70 years of service to California's veterans and their families through the advancement of professionalism within its ranks and the pursuit of advocacy across all levels of government so that veterans may receive the benefits to which they are entitled by virtue of their military service to our country; and be it further

Resolved, That the CACVSO has maintained and nurtured the high professional standards of California's CVSOs so that these veterans advocates can fulfill the CACVSO's slogan of "Serving Those Who Served"; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.