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**AB-325 Veterans: discharge upgrades.** (2021-2022)

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Date Published: 09/19/2022 02:00 PM

**Assembly Bill No. 325**

**CHAPTER 377**

An act to add Section 885 to the Military and Veterans Code, relating to veterans.

[ Approved by Governor September 17, 2022. Filed with Secretary of State September 17, 2022. ]

**LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

AB 325, Irwin. Veterans: discharge upgrades.

Existing law provides certain benefits to veterans who have been honorably discharged from the Armed Forces of the United States, including burial benefits and financial assistance, relief, and support to indigent veterans. Existing law establishes the Department of Veterans Affairs and authorizes it to assist every veteran of the Armed Forces of the United States and the dependent or survivor of every veteran in presenting or pursuing any claim against the United States arising out of the veteran's military service. Existing law establishes a competitive grant program that is administered by the department for veteran service providers to provide supportive services that improve the quality of life for veterans and their families.

This bill would, subject to an appropriation by the Legislature, require the department to establish the Veteran's Military Discharge Upgrade Grant Program to help fund service providers who will educate veterans about discharge upgrades and assist veterans in filing discharge upgrade applications, as specified.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

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

**SECTION 1.** Section 885 is added to the Military and Veterans Code, to read:

**885.** (a) The department shall establish the Veteran's Military Discharge Upgrade Grant Program to help fund service providers who, for free or at low cost, will educate veterans about discharge upgrades and assist qualifying veterans in filing discharge upgrade applications.

(b) The department shall develop criteria, procedures, and accountability measures as may be necessary to implement the grant program. The department may prioritize veteran recipients of the services, such as prioritizing those who are able to demonstrate their less than honorable characterization of service was connected to a mental health condition, traumatic brain injury, sexual assault or harassment, or sexual orientation.

(c) Funding for the grant program is subject to appropriation by the Legislature.