



Home	Bill Information	California Law	Publications	Other Resources	My Subscriptions	My Favorites
------	------------------	----------------	--------------	-----------------	------------------	--------------

AJR-19 Deported veterans. (2021-2022)

SHARE THIS:  

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 19

CHAPTER 144

Relative to veterans.

[Filed with Secretary of State August 19, 2022.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AJR 19, Eduardo Garcia. Deported veterans.

This measure would urge the federal government to implement and streamline the process for service members and veterans to become citizens immediately, halt deportations of veterans, and pardon all veterans who have been deported and bring them home.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, Nearly 24,000 noncitizen immigrants are currently serving in the Armed Forces of the United States and 5,000 more join every year; and

WHEREAS, Noncitizen members and foreign-born veterans put their lives on the line to defend this country and yet are deported from the country they love, leaving their families behind, leading to mental trauma. For many this is the only country that they have ever known and English is the only language they have ever learned; and

WHEREAS, On June 23, 2021, United States Senator Alex Padilla from California chaired the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, and Border Safety for a hearing to honor veterans and military families by examining immigration and citizenship policies for United States military service members, veterans, and their families; and

WHEREAS, The hearing highlighted that resources are not easily accessible for military members and that reinstating programs stripped in 2018 would help solve naturalization process issues, the negative impacts of deportation on military members in regard to military readiness and military families' access to counsel, and that the critical role immigrants perform in serving the military is not reflected in our immigration policy and that previous and recent policies have led to a 72-percent decrease in military naturalizations; and

WHEREAS, Combat veteran and United States Senator Tammy Duckworth from Illinois released a report titled "Immigrant Veterans: Deported By The Same Nation They Sacrificed To Defend," which detailed the history of immigrants enlisting in the Armed Forces of the United States, the complicated path to military naturalization, and barriers deported veterans face in accessing United States Department of Veterans Affairs' benefits; and

WHEREAS, The report highlighted that immigrant service members possess critical skills that enhance military readiness and strengthen national security, that for more than 200 years, the United States government has passed laws, promulgated policies, and created initiatives that provide service members an expedited path to citizenship, that immigrants willing to serve and defend

our nation deserve a real opportunity to earn citizenship, and that it is the United States government's responsibility to uphold this promise for those who bravely served; and

WHEREAS, In July 2021, the administration of President Joe Biden announced a plan to support noncitizen service members, veterans, and the immediate family of service members to provide a pathway to citizenship for deported veterans and to bring hundreds, possibly thousands, of deported veterans and their immediate family members back to the United States, saying their removal "failed to live up to our highest values"; and

WHEREAS, United States Secretary of Veterans Affairs Denis McDonough stated, "It's our responsibility to serve all veterans as well as they have served us – no matter who they are, where they are from, or the status of their citizenship. Keeping that promise means ensuring that noncitizen service members, veterans, and their families are guaranteed a place in the country they swore an oath – and in many cases fought – to defend"; and

WHEREAS, United States Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas stated, "We are committed to bringing back military service members, veterans, and their immediate family members who were unjustly removed and ensuring they receive the benefits to which they may be entitled;" and

WHEREAS, Immigrants who serve in the Armed Forces of the United States are eligible to become citizens without waiting the normally required years that green card holders must wait, but they must still apply and move through the bureaucratic process. That process can be difficult, especially for service members who are stationed overseas or on remote bases; and

WHEREAS, Over the past two decades, thousands of noncitizens enlisted in the Armed Forces of the United States, provided critical contributions to operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere. Despite their service, the United States government deported perhaps thousands of these veterans from the nation they fought to defend; and

WHEREAS, There is no record of how many United States military veterans have been deported, but advocates have identified hundreds across the globe who are stuck outside of the country they served; and

WHEREAS, Noncitizens have played critical roles in every war that the United States has fought; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of California, jointly, That the Legislature calls upon the federal government to implement and streamline the process for service members and veterans to become citizens immediately, halt deportation of veterans, and pardon all veterans who have been deported and bring them home; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the Majority Leader of the Senate, and to each Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the United States.