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AB-298 Honoring Our Blind Veterans Act. (2023-2024)

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Assembly Bill No. 298

CHAPTER 299

An act to add Section 14635.5 to the Government Code, relating to the State Capitol.

[Approved by Governor October 04, 2023. Filed with Secretary of State October 04, 2023.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 298, Mathis. Honoring Our Blind Veterans Act.

Existing law provides for various memorials and monuments within the State Capitol Building and on the State Capitol grounds. Existing law prescribes various duties of the Department of General Services in connection with the development and maintenance of the State Capitol Building and grounds.

This bill would authorize a nonprofit organization that represents blind veterans, in consultation with the Department of General Services, to plan, construct, and maintain a braille American flag to serve as a monument to the blind veterans of California and the United States in the State Capitol Building. The bill would specify duties for the Department of General Services in connection with the planning, construction, and maintenance of the monument. The bill would prohibit the construction of the monument until the Joint Rules Committee of the California Legislature approves and adopts a plan for the monument and the committee and the Department of Finance determine that sufficient private funding is available to construct and maintain the monument.

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

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

SECTION 1. This act shall be known as the Honoring Our Blind Veterans Act.

SEC. 2. Section 14635.5 is added to the Government Code, to read:

14635.5. (a) A recognized nonprofit organization that is tax exempt pursuant to Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and that represents blind veterans, in consultation with the Department of General Services, may plan, construct, and maintain in the State Capitol Building, in accordance with this section, a braille American flag to serve as a monument to the blind veterans of California and the United States.

(b) The Department of General Services, in consultation with the nonprofit organization representing blind veterans, shall do all of the following:

- (1) Review the preliminary design plans to identify potential maintenance concerns.
- (2) Ensure compliance with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. Sec. 12101 et seq.) and address safety concerns.

(3) Review and approve any documents, if applicable, prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (Division 13 (commencing with Section 21000) of the Public Resources Code) for any work performed on the grounds of the State Capitol or within the State Capitol Building.

(4) Review final construction documents to ensure that the documents comply with all applicable laws.

(5) Prepare the right-of-entry permit outlining the final area of work, final construction documents, construction plans, the contractor hired to perform the work, insurance, bonding, provisions for damage to state property, and inspection requirements.

(6) Prepare a maintenance agreement outlining the responsibility of the nonprofit organization for the long-term maintenance of the monument due to aging, vandalism, or relocation.

(7) Inspect all construction performed pursuant to this section by the contractor selected by the nonprofit organization.

(c) If a nonprofit organization representing blind veterans undertakes responsibility for planning, constructing, and maintaining a braille American flag pursuant to this section, it shall submit a plan to the Joint Rules Committee for its review and approval. The organization shall not begin construction of the flag until both of the following have occurred:

(1) The Joint Rules Committee has approved and adopted the plan for the flag.

(2) The Joint Rules Committee and the Department of Finance have determined that sufficient private funding is available to construct and maintain the flag.

(d) The planning, construction, and maintenance of the braille American flag shall be funded exclusively through private funding.