



Resolution recognizing the contributions of County Veterans Service Officers to the State of California and its veterans, and urging the passage of AB718.

WHEREAS, there are approximately 1.8 million veterans residing in the State of California, including over 184,000 female veterans; and

WHEREAS, women veterans face unique challenges in accessing and utilizing standard benefits, such as experiencing additional barriers to receiving healthcare and not self-identifying as veterans, resulting in a higher rate of underutilizing federal and state benefits; and

WHEREAS, women veterans comprised only 5% of the total customer population served by County Veteran Service Offices, despite making up 11% of the total veteran population in California; and

WHEREAS, women veterans have higher rates of physical/mental health problems linked to trauma, such as military sexual trauma (MST), alcohol/drug abuse, relationship difficulties, unemployment, and high rates of homelessness; and

WHEREAS, women veterans are at a higher risk of suicide, with nearly twice the suicide rate of women who did not serve, and experience Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) at nearly double the rate of male veterans, as well as



higher rates of depression and personality disorders; and

WHEREAS, the California Department of Veterans Affairs estimates that by 2034, women veterans will comprise 15% of the veteran population in California, making it necessary to address their unique challenges and identify the factors causing barriers to mental health care needed to prevent suicides and other serious issues; and

WHEREAS, AB 718 directs the California Department of Veterans Affairs to conduct a study of mental health among women veterans in California, including an analysis of demographics, stressors, risk factors, treatment modalities, barriers to access, suicide rate, and other relevant information, and to report their findings and recommendations to the Legislature no later than July 31, 2025; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Veterans Affairs Commission recognizes the unique challenges women veterans face and the need to identify the contributing causes to women veterans' mental health challenges in the State of California; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Commission recognizes the dearth of information about the current state of affairs regarding women veterans' mental health since the prior survey conducted by CalVet in 2013; and, be it



FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Commission recognizes the importance of providing comprehensive and accessible mental health services for women veterans and the need to ensure that women veterans receive the proper services, support networks, and prevention tools required to reduce PTSD, depression, and suicide; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Commission urges the California Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign into law, AB 718 to ensure that California can understand and react to the unique challenges women veterans face so it can provide them with the support they need to thrive.