



LITTLE HOOVER COMMISSION

April 3, 2017

The Honorable Timothy Grayson
State Capitol, Room 4164
Sacramento, CA 95814

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Carole D'Elia
Executive Director

RE: SUPPORT FOR ASSEMBLY BILL 998 (GRAYSON)

Dear Assemblymember Grayson:

The Little Hoover Commission supports Assembly Bill 998, the measure you authored to require the Department of Veterans Affairs to make the application process to one of the state's veterans homes more user-friendly.

In its 2017 report, *A New Approach to California's Veterans Homes*, the Commission found that at any given time, there may be hundreds of Californians waiting for a spot in one of the state's eight veterans homes. As of January 2017, when the Commission conducted its review, more than 750 veterans were waiting for a spot in one of the homes' 2,610 funded-beds to become available. The Commission also found that rules governing admission to the homes allow veterans to apply to one home at a time, rather than to the system overall. This means a resident may wait months for a bed at a certain level of care in one home. If rejected, a candidate must reapply for either a different level of care or to a different home, resetting the process and his or her space on the wait list if no bed is immediately available. Without an automated system to track wait lists across the homes, or a centralized place to contact when questions arise, potential residents and their families may be left with a great deal of uncertainty regarding their future.

Another report by the Commission released in October 2015, *A Customer-Centric Upgrade for California Government*, identified a number of strategies government agencies could use to become more responsive to their customers, the public. Based on findings and recommendations from that report, the Commission suggested the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet), which operates the state's eight veterans homes, should regularly notify potential residents of their status on the wait list and offer a contact should questions arise. Ideally, this communication could be done through a secure site online where potential residents and their families can track all steps of the application process.

As applicants seek residence in one of the state's veterans homes and make other difficult decisions about where to live and receive medical care, it is vital for them to have timely information about the status of their application. Because Assembly Bill 998 would require CalVet to make the admissions process more user-friendly, by allowing potential residents to apply and track the status of their application online, the Commission supports this measure. As the bill moves through the legislative process, I will be writing letters on behalf of the Commission to legislators urging aye votes. If I or the Commission can provide any further assistance or expertise, please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,

Carole D'Elia
Executive Director

c: Commissioners, Little Hoover Commission