

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2025-2026 SIMULATION SESSION

SENATE BILL

NO 20

Introduced by Senator Menjivar

October 1, 2025

An act to expand housing pathways for California veterans by streamlining access to supportive housing programs and services.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

SB 20, as introduced, Menjivar. Veterans Housing Pathways Act.

Existing law, under the Veterans Housing and Homelessness Prevention Act of 2014 (California Proposition 41), establishes the Veterans Housing and Homelessness Prevention (VHHP) Program, which provides funding to developers to construct and rehabilitate affordable housing for veterans. However, many veterans continue to face barriers to accessing housing due to complicated eligibility requirements, lack of coordinated outreach, and insufficient integration between housing programs and supportive services such as mental health care, job training, and substance abuse treatment.

This bill would require the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet), in coordination with the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), to establish the Veteran Housing Navigator Program. This program would streamline housing applications for veterans, create a statewide referral system between housing providers and supportive services, and require local agencies receiving VHHP funds to designate a veteran housing liaison.

The bill does not appropriate additional funds but directs CalVet and HCD to utilize existing resources more efficiently and submit annual reports to the Legislature on progress made in reducing veteran homelessness.

Vote: Majority Appropriation: No Fiscal Committee: Yes Local Program: Yes

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

**SECTION 1. Title**

This act shall be known and may be cited as the Veterans Housing Pathways Act of 2025.

**SEC. 2. Definitions**

In order to provide clarity within this Act, the following terms are defined:

(a) “Veteran” refers to any person who served in the United States Armed Forces, including the National Guard and Reserves, and who was discharged under conditions other than dishonorable.

(b) “Housing provider” refers to any local agency, nonprofit organization, or private entity that receives funds through the Veterans Housing and Homelessness Prevention (VHHP) Program or any other state-funded housing program.

(c) “Supportive services” refers to programs and resources designed to assist veterans in achieving long-term housing stability, including but not limited to:

- (1) Mental health care.
- (2) Substance abuse treatment.
- (3) Job training and workforce development.
- (4) Legal assistance.

(d) “Veteran Housing Liaison” refers to an individual designated by a housing provider to assist veterans with housing applications, referrals, and coordination with supportive services.

### **SEC. 3. Housing Navigator Program.**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet), in coordination with the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), shall establish the Veteran Housing Navigator Program to streamline veteran access to housing programs statewide.

(a) The Veteran Housing Navigator Program shall:

- (1) Create a single statewide application portal for veterans applying for housing assistance.
- (2) Require local housing providers receiving state funding to designate a Veteran Housing Liaison responsible for assisting veterans with applications.
- (3) Establish a referral system connecting veterans with supportive services including mental health care, substance abuse treatment, and job training.

### **SEC. 4. Reporting.**

To maintain transparency and accountability within the program, CalVet and HCD shall jointly submit an annual report to the Legislature. The report shall be made publicly available and submitted no later than March 1 of each year. The report shall include, at a minimum, the following information:

(a) Program Reach

- (1) A detailed account of the number of veterans assisted through the program, broken down by geographic region, type of housing assistance received, and demographic categories including age, gender, and service era.

(b) Impact on Homelessness

- (1) Data on the reduction in veteran homelessness rates attributable to the program, including the number of veterans placed into permanent housing, the average length of time to secure housing, and the rate of housing retention after one year.

(c) Policy Recommendations

- (1) Suggestions for further improvements in housing access and service coordination for veterans, including identification of service gaps, recommendations for targeted funding, and proposals for partnerships with local governments, nonprofits, and community-based organizations.

### **SEC. 5. Implementation.**

The Department of Veterans Affairs shall implement this Act within existing budgetary resources and may adopt regulations as necessary.