



AB 81
Assemblyman Tri Ta

Women Veterans Mental Health Study

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED BILL:

AB 81 would direct the California Department of Veterans Affairs to conduct a study of mental health among women veterans in California. The findings and recommendations of the study are to be reported to the Legislature no later than July 31st, 2029.

BACKGROUND:

RAND Corporation found that the suicide rate for women veterans was nearly twice that of women who did not serve. The Journal of Preventive Medicine reports that around 12% of women veterans experience PTSD (nearly double the rate of male veterans), and also have higher rates of depression according to BMC Women's Health.

These concerning statistics emphasize the need for comprehensive and accessible mental health services for women veterans. And yet, the 2011 California Women Veterans survey found that women veterans in CA underutilize state benefits and participate in veteran events or organizations at a lower rate.

Furthermore, 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.

REASONS FOR THE BILL:

By 2034, the California Department of Veterans Affairs estimates women veterans will comprise 15% of the veteran population in California. As the population of women veterans grows, California has an obligation to understand their unique challenges and to identify the factors causing barriers to mental health care needed to prevent suicides and more.

AB 81 will aim to identify the contributing causes to women veteran mental health challenges in the State of California. Identification of these causes would help ensure women veterans receive the proper services, support networks, and prevention tools required to reduce PTSD, depression, and suicide.

Women veterans have served their country honorably and deserve proper care and attention from their home state. This proposal ensures that, instead of only identifying concerning statistics, the State of California is researching and remedying the root causes driving mental health challenges facing women veterans.

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