



A G E N D A

ORANGE COUNTY VETERANS ADVISORY COUNCIL

August 9, 2023

3:00 P.M.

www.veterans.ocgov.com/advisory

Location:

1300 S Grand Ave, Building B
Santa Ana, CA. 92705

****In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, those requiring accommodation for this meeting should notify the Orange County Community Services office 72 hours prior to the meeting at (714) 480-6555****

This agenda contains a brief general description of each item to be considered. The Council encourages your participation. If you wish to speak you may do so during Public Comment. Once acknowledged and prompted by the Chair, you may begin to speak. Except as otherwise provided by law, no action shall be taken on any item not appearing in the agenda. When addressing the Council, please state your name and city of residence for the record prior to providing your comments.

This agenda contains a brief description of each item to be considered. Except as provided by law, no action shall be taken on any item not appearing in the agenda. To speak on a matter not appearing in the agenda, but under the jurisdiction of this Advisory Council, you may do so during Public Comments. Speaker request forms must be submitted prior to the beginning of the meeting, the reading of the individual agenda items and/or the beginning of Public Comments. When addressing the Board, it is requested that you state your name for the record. Address the Board as a whole through the Chair. Comments to individual Members or staff are not permitted. Speakers are limited to three (3) minutes.

Materials/handouts can be requested up to 72 hours in advance of the meeting by visiting www.veterans.ocgov.com/advisory.

1. CALL TO ORDER: Chair Stephanie Wade
2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
3. COUNCIL ROLL CALL: OC Community Services Representative
4. INTRODUCTIONS: Chair Stephanie Wade
5. PUBLIC COMMENTS:
At this time, members of the public may address the Council regarding any items within the subject jurisdiction, provided that no action is taken on off-agenda items unless authorized by law. (Comments shall be limited to three (3) minutes, unless the Chair pre-identifies a different time at the start of meeting for all public speakers).
6. PRESENTATION:

Orange County Master Plan on Aging
Tammy Peng, Director of Operations, Advance OC
7. ACTION ITEMS:
 - i. OCVAC Meeting Minutes:
Recommendation to request the Veterans Service office take written OCVAC meeting minutes.
 - ii. SJR 6: Don't Ask, Don't Tell: Discharge Characterizations
Recommendation to review and approve re-sending the 2021 OCVAC Letter of Support regarding SJR 6: Don't Ask, Don't Tell to the Orange County Board of Supervisors.
 - iii. Welcome Home Program
Recommendation to review and approve re-sending the 2022 OCVAC Letter of Support regarding the Welcome Home Program to the Orange County Board of Supervisors.
8. DISCUSSION ITEMS:
 - i. Committee Reports
9. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT: Chair Stephanie Wade
10. OCVSO UPDATE: Claudia Harris, Director, Aging and Veterans Services
11. CALVET LINC UPDATE: Ben Gales, Local Interagency Network Coordinator
12. COMMITTEES:
 - i. Communications Standing Committee Report: Council Member Alex Maslin
 - ii. Events/Outreach Standing Committee Report: Council Member Michael Radigan
13. COUNCIL COMMENTS

At this time, members of this Advisory Council may comment on agenda or non-agenda matters and ask questions of or give directions to staff; provided that NO action may be taken on off-agenda items unless authorized by law.

14. ADJOURNMENT:

Next Meeting:
October 11, 2023
3:00 PM

“Have We Helped A Veteran Today?”

DISCLAIMER: No member of the Orange County Veterans Advisory Council (OCVAC) shall sign a letter or make a statement purported to represent the position of OCVAC as a body. Letters or verbal statements of support or opposition on any issue shall only be made or signed by the Chair of OCVAC and shall be submitted to the Board for approval. The policy of the Board of Supervisors does not allow OCVAC or its Chair to sign a letter of position on any matters pertaining to legislation. OCVAC members may write personal letters or speak as individuals stating personal positions but may not do so as representing the position or opinion of OCVAC.

REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

Tuesday, July 18, 2023, 9:00 A.M.

BOARD HEARING ROOM, FIRST FLOOR
400 W. Civic Center Drive
Santa Ana, California

DONALD P. WAGNER
CHAIRMAN
Third District

ANDREW DO
VICE CHAIRMAN
First District

VICENTE SARMIENTO
SUPERVISOR
Second District

DOUG CHAFFEE
SUPERVISOR
Fourth District

KATRINA FOLEY
SUPERVISOR
Fifth District



ATTENDANCE: All Present

EXCUSED: None

PRESENT:	COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICER	Frank Kim
	COUNTY COUNSEL	Leon J. Page
	CLERK OF THE BOARD	Robin Stieler

INVOCATION: Supervisor Foley, Fifth District, gave the invocation

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Vice Chairman Do, First District, led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance

I. PRESENTATIONS/INTRODUCTIONS

Chairman Wagner presented a resolution proclaiming July 16-22, 2023 as "Probation Services Week"

II. CONSENT CALENDAR (Items 1-8)

14253 **APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED WITH THE EXCEPTIONS ITEMS 1, 2 AND 5 WHICH WERE PULLED FOR DISCUSSION AND SEPARATE VOTE**

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

1. **Chairman Wagner - [Orange County Child Care and Development Planning Council - Reappoint](#)** Amanda Selogie, Huntington Beach, Teresa "Traci" Stubbler, Irvine, Sandra Avzaradel, Rancho Santa Margarita, Maureen Fitzpatrick, San Juan Capistrano and Fredrika "Fritzi" Gragg, Trabuco Canyon, for terms ending 8/5/25; appoint Delila Outlaw, Santa Ana, Jennifer Triolo, Orange, Alycia McInnish, Santa Ana, Cristina Blevins, Orange and Kaitlynn

Truong, Garden Grove, to complete terms ending 8/5/25; and appoint Maria Morris, Fullerton, to complete term ending 8/5/24

31245 **APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED**

HEALTH CARE AGENCY

2. [Approve amendment 3 to contract MA-042-19011809 for professional credentialing verification services to incorporate Assignment, Novation and Consent Agreement from Verge Solutions, LLC dba Verge Health to Datix \(USA\) Inc., effective 7/18/23; and authorize County Procurement Officer or Deputized designee to execute amendment and agreement - All Districts](#)

15243 **APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED**

OC PUBLIC WORKS

3. [Approve Final Tract Map 19188; approve Subdivision Improvement Agreement S23-022206 with Pulte Home Company, LLC; accept dedication of easements for emergency access, public utility and public service vehicle ingress and egress purposes - District 5](#)

4. [Approve Final Tract Map 19189; approve Subdivision Improvement Agreement S23-022208 with AG EHC II \(LEN\) CA 3, L.P.; accept dedication of easements for emergency access, public utility and public service vehicle ingress and egress purposes; and accept vehicular access rights to Williams Way and Pablo Way - District 5](#)

5. [Approve stipend payment of \\$40,000 each to Swinerton Builders and Snyder Langston, LLC for submitting a proposal for design and construction services for Orange County Health Care Campus at El Toro Project; and authorize and direct Auditor-Controller or designee to make payments - District 3](#)

53124 **APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED**

N

SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY

6. [Approve amended Bylaws to Orange County Child Care and Development Planning Council Bylaws to incorporate Bylaws Template - All Districts](#)

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

7. **Clerk of the Board** - [Approve proposed amendment to the list of Boards, Commissions and Committees Conflict of Interest Code Designated Filer Exhibits to include Orange County Historical Commission - All Districts](#)

8. **County Executive Office** - [Approve amendment 3 to contract MA-017-20011228 with California Physicians' Service, dba Blue Shield of California for dental claims administration for self-insured Management and Attorney Dental Plan, 1/1/24 - 12/31/24; and authorize Chief Human Resources Officer or designee to execute amendment - All Districts](#)

END OF CONSENT CALENDAR

III.DISCUSSION ITEMS (Items 9-S29P)

ELECTED DEPARTMENT HEADS

Sheriff-Coroner:

9. [Approve amendment 3 to contract MA-060-20010085 with Stancil Corporation for Stancil](#) Voice Logging Recorders and Network-Attached Storage server maintenance, 10/9/23 - 10/8/24 (\$10,397; cumulative total \$46,603); and authorize County Procurement Officer or Deputized designee to execute amendment - All Districts
15243 **APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED**
10. [Ratify amendment 2 to contract MA-060-20011205 with Baker Electric & Renewables LLC](#) dba Baker Electric for maintenance and repair of high and medium-voltage equipment, 5/15/23 - 5/14/24 (\$300,000); renewable for one additional one-year term; and authorize County Procurement Officer or Deputized designee to execute amendment - All Districts
14253 **APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED**
11. [Ratify agreement 23112445 with State of California Commission on Peace Officer Standards](#) and Training (POST) for coroner training courses, 7/1/23 - 6/30/24 (\$96,961); and authorize Sheriff-Coroner or designee to execute agreement - All Districts
15243 **APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED**

HEALTH CARE AGENCY

12. [Approve amendment 2 to contract MA-042-23010693 with Charitable Ventures of Orange County, Inc.](#) for Re-Entry Success Center services, 3/7/23 - 6/30/25 (\$5,688,676; cumulative total \$17,334,515); and authorize County Procurement Officer or Deputized designee to execute amendment - District 2
21453 **APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED**

OC COMMUNITY RESOURCES

13. [Approve contract MA-012-23011571 with Regents of the University of California, on behalf of its](#) Davis Campus Wildlife Health Center, for mountain lion consultation services, effective upon Board approval for three years (\$120,000; cumulative total \$360,000); renewable for two additional years; authorize County Procurement Officer or Deputized designee to execute contract; and make California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) exemption findings under CEQA Guidelines section 15306 - All Districts
15243 **APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED**

OC PUBLIC WORKS

14. [Approve amendment 4 to renew contract MA-080-20010291 with Bear Electrical Solutions, Inc. for](#) traffic signal maintenance services, 10/1/23 - 9/30/24 (\$325,000; cumulative total \$1,625,000); and authorize County Procurement Officer or Deputized designee to execute amendment - All Districts
42153 **APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED**
15. [Approve purchase order PO-280-23011099 for retroactive payment to TYCO Fire Security US](#) Management Inc, dba Johnson Controls Fire Protection LP for fire alarm system maintenance and repair at John Wayne Airport, 7/1/21 - 6/30/22 (\$22,554) - District 5
52143 **APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED**



Orange County Veterans Advisory Council

1300 S. Grand Avenue, Building B, Rm 247

Santa Ana, CA 92705

714-480-6555

714-567-7577 Fax

Council Members

David Han, Chairman

Erik Duane, Vice Chairman

Vladimir Anderson

Alex Maslin

Robert McDonald

Mario Munoz

Alexis Paschedag Federico

Stephanie Wade

February 10th, 2021

Orange County Board of Supervisors

333 W. Santa Ana Blvd.

Santa Ana, California 92701

Re: Recommendation for Supportive Action Regarding LGBT Related Military Discharges

Dear Board of Supervisors:

Between 1949 and 2011 when the “don’t ask don’t tell” policy ended, some 114,000 veterans were involuntarily separated from the U.S. military for their sexual orientation or gender identity.¹ There are also thousands of transgender veterans who have legally changed their name and gender after leaving the service but bear discharges that list a former name.² Military discharge documents (DD Form 214 “Certificate of release or Discharge from Active Duty”) that contain adverse remarks related to veterans’ gender nonconformity or sexual orientation or incorrect names due to transgender status continue to affect the honor, medical and financial benefits, and employment status of these veterans, well after the Department of Defense acknowledged their right to serve in the military.

Unfortunately, the existing process to correct military records is complex, burdensome, stigmatizing, and time consuming and very few veterans successfully obtain these corrections. We estimate that 1,000 to 1,600³ lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) Orange County veterans are currently affected by this issue—many of whom are among Orange County’s most at-risk for housing instability, homelessness, poverty, substance abuse, mental health disparities, and suicide.⁴ The Veterans Advisory Council has recently heard from several of the Orange County’s LGBT veterans and, after researching and discussing this issue, we believe that federal action is needed to streamline LGBT related corrections.

We recommend the Board of Supervisors send a letter to certain state and federal officials advocating for a federal action to remedy this problem. We believe that we have a responsibility to bring this change as quickly as possible and that your support would help improve the lives of many Orange County veterans.

BACKGROUND

A significant number of LGBT veterans separated from the U.S. military for their sexual orientation or gender identity are unable to access VA benefits because of their discharge status. Many others, like those who have changed their name and gender marker or those who received administrative discharges, may qualify for VA benefits but are unwilling to seek them because they lack the understanding or ability to undergo the complex, burdensome, and lengthy process to change that information or because of the stigma experienced during this process. Further, a military discharge document (referred to as the “DD 214”) is commonly required by employers and prospective employers. Presenting a DD 214 with an adverse LGBT related comment or a former name effectively “outs” the veteran and subjects them to serious possibilities of discrimination in employment.

Under current law, the only way LGBT veterans can correct this information is through “request” to the very service that has caused their injury. The process, which is intended for considerations of clemency in criminal cases rather than the now overturned ban on non-conforming sexual or gender minorities, is complex. Veterans often require the assistance of an attorney or Veterans Service Organization.

Unfortunately, these obstacles are so great that most LGBT veterans do not even apply for their corrections or upgrades. It is also time consuming for both the veteran and the Department of Defense. According to Jennifer Dane, the Executive Director of the Modern Military Association of America, the average wait after submission of an upgrade or correction request is 2 years.⁵ The ineffectiveness of this existing system for LGBT related upgrades can be seen in very stark numerical terms, as noted in a recent study that revealed that as late as 2018 *only 8%* of veterans involuntarily separated for the being lesbian or gay had applied for upgrades to their discharges.⁶ Nor is there anything in President Biden’s January 25th Executive Order on transgender military service that is likely to improve the experience or increase the numbers of LGBT veterans willing and able to apply for upgrades or corrections to their service records.⁷

Taken together—the lack of access to medical and financial benefits, the employment obstacles created by adverse discharge information, and the stigmatizing process—this is an especially harsh burden for a community that already suffers significantly higher rates of discrimination, suicide, substance abuse, mental health disparities, poverty, joblessness and housing insecurity. While we are currently unable to offer definitive statistics on how many Orange County veterans are affected by these discharge issues, we estimate the number to be over a thousand and possibly as high as 1,687. Veterans need a streamlined, culturally appropriate administrative process for the quick and fair upgrade or correction of LGBT related discharges. We encourage you to act on their behalf principally because it is the right thing to do, but also because it is in the County’s best interest to help secure federal funds that can support this high-risk population.⁸

We believe that a streamlined administrative process would enjoy large support from Orange County veterans and the public at large. The right of lesbian, gay, and transgender Americans to serve in the armed forces has been settled Department of Defense policy at least since at least the repeal of the ban on transgender military personnel in 2016. We believe the service of our LGBT veterans should be honored and acknowledged and they should receive the benefits to which they are entitled.⁹

RECOMMENDATION

Military discharges are governed by Title 10 of the U.S. Code which means that reforming this process will require federal legislation or, at a minimum, an executive order creating a new process for administering the law in a fair and efficient manner. The Veterans Council believes that Orange County Board of Supervisors can help expedite and signal its support for this necessary reform by writing to:

1. California Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Dr. Vito Imbasciani, who has expressed an interest in lobbying on this issue and who will have greater leverage to do so if you write to support it.
2. Senators Feinstein and Padilla.
3. The seven members of the U.S. House of Representatives who represent the County.

We have enclosed a template for such a letter (see Encl. 2 “Proposed Text for a Resolution or Letter on LGBT Related Military Upgrades and Corrections). Please know that your Veterans Advisory Council is ready to answer questions about this recommendation or help in any way you might direct us.

Sincerely,

David Han
Chairman
Orange County Veterans Advisory Council

CC: Supervisor Andrew Do, Vice Chairman, District 1
Supervisor Michelle Steel, Chair, District 2
Supervisor Donald P. Wagner, District 3
Supervisor Doug Chaffee, District 4
Supervisor Lisa Bartlett, District 5

Dylan Wright, OCCR Director
Renee Ramirez, OCCS Director
Frank Kim, CEO

- Enc: 1.) "Estimate of OC Veterans Who May Benefit from LGBT Discharge Reform."
2.) "Proposed Text for a Resolution or Letter on LGBT Related Military Upgrades and Corrections"

¹ David F. Addlestone, et al, "Do Ask, Do Tell: Pursuing Justice for LGBTQ Military Veterans, A Summary Report from a Two-Day Summit, Held at Harvard Law School April 19 & 20, 2018, (Cambridge, MA, <https://www.legalservicescenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Do-Ask-Do-Tell-Do-Justice-Summit-Report-June-2018.pdf> accessed 1/9/2021).

² Gary J. Gates and Jody L. Herman, "Transgender Military Service in the United States," (The Williams Institute, University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, 2014, <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Trans-Military-Service-US-May-2014.pdf>, accessed 1/19/2021

³ These estimates are based upon the most recent national data available and applying that data proportionally to Orange County's veteran's population. For a more detailed explanation, including citations, please see the enclosure 1, titled "Estimate of OC Veterans Who May Benefit from LGBT Discharge Reform."

⁴ See, e.g., U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, *Veterans Experiencing Homelessness*, available at <https://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/nchav/resources/veteran-populations/lgbt.asp#:~:text=Transgender%20Veterans%20are%20more%20than.among%20the%20general%20U.S.%20population> (last visited February 1, 2021).

⁵ This estimate squares with the practical experience of the attorney's at the Orange County based Veterans Legal Institute. They noted, in a recent phone call with OCVAC Commissioner Stephanie Wade, that each service has its own board and that these service specific boards vary in their response time with the Army being the slowest at 3 years or more for most cases and the Navy-Marine Corps being the fastest at about 18-24 months but all the serves probably netting out at about 2 years to respond to most petitions for upgrade or correction.

⁶ Addlestone, et al, "Do Ask, Do Tell: Pursuing Justice for LGBTQ Military Veterans, *supra*.

⁷ "Executive Order on Enabling All Qualified Americans to Serve their Country in Uniform" Jan. 25, 2021 (<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/01/28/2021-02034/enabling-all-qualified-americans-to-serve-their-country-in-uniform>, accessed 2/3/2021). The order does direct the Secretary of Defense to "issue guidance" regarding "the corrections of the military records" of those "involuntarily separated, discharged, or denied reenlistment or continuation of service under circumstances relating to their gender identity." However, this vague language merely gives transgender veterans the same ability to appeal for upgrades and corrections that has existed since the 2011 end of 'don't ask don't tell' for gay and lesbians who were discharged for their sexual orientation. Unfortunately, it does effectively nothing to change a process that, as was previously noted, is so problematic that only 8% or so of the veterans separated involuntarily for being gay have even attempted to access it.

⁸ See Enclosure 1 "Estimate of OC Veterans Who May Benefit from LGBT Discharge Reform."

⁹ It is notable that even President Trump's policy on transgender service, which President Biden has now repealed, went to great pains to make certain that it was not a ban on transgender service but on those who had obtained or sought medical transition.



ANDREW DO **DOUG CHAFFEE**
CHAIRMAN, FIRST DISTRICT VICE CHAIR, FOURTH DISTRICT
ORANGE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
ORANGE COUNTY HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
333 W. SANTA ANA BLVD., SANTA ANA, CALIFORNIA 92701

April 8, 2021

Representative Lou Correa

Senator Dianne Feinstein

Representative Young Kim

Senator Alex Padilla

Representative Mike Levin

Representative Alan Lowenthal

Representative Katie Porter

Representative Linda Sanchez

Representative Michelle Steel

Re: Recommendation for Supportive Action Regarding Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Related Military Discharges.

Dear Orange County Federal Delegation Members:

We write in support of potential legislative action regarding the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) related military discharge process. On January 25th, 2021 President Biden signed an Executive Order formalizing the policy that all Americans who are qualified to serve in the Armed Forces of the United States should be able to serve. President Biden's Executive Order prohibited the discharge or denying reenlistment to service members because of their gender identity and directs the Department of Defense (DOD) to correct the record of anyone dismissed from service solely for their gender identity.

When the "don't ask don't tell" policy ended in 2011, approximately 114,000 veterans were involuntarily separated from the U.S. military for their sexual orientation or gender identity. Thousands of transgender veterans legally changed their name and gender after leaving the service but bear discharges that list a former name. Unfortunately, military discharge documents (DD Form 214 Certificate of release or "Discharge from Active Duty") may contain adverse remarks related to veterans' gender nonconformity, sexual orientation or incorrect names due to transgender status. Such actions affect the honor, medical and financial benefits, and employment status of these veterans well after the Department of Defense acknowledged their right to serve in the military.

Under current law, the only way LGBT veterans can correct this information is through a "request" to the very service that has caused their injury, a process intended for considerations of clemency in criminal cases. It is complex and often requires the assistance of an attorney or Veterans Service Organization; less than 10 percent of veterans apply through the DOD for upgrades or corrections. In Orange County, it is estimated that 1,000 to 1,600 LGBT veterans are currently affected - many of whom are most at-risk for housing instability, homelessness, poverty, substance abuse, mental health disparities or suicide.

Members, Orange County Federal Delegation

April 8, 2021

Page 2

For these reasons, we support efforts for federal action to appropriately revise and streamline the process of correcting discharge documents for LGBT veterans, either by amending Title 10 of the U.S. Code or an executive order to create a new process for administrating the law in a fair and efficient manner. Federal action to correct the administrative military discharge process would help more than 100,000 Americans and over 1,600 Orange County veterans.

Thank you for your continued support for the County of Orange as we work together to address the needs of all our residents. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Peter DeMarco, Director of Legislative Affairs, at 714-834-5777.

Sincerely,



ANDREW DO
Chairman, Orange County Board of Supervisors
Supervisor, First District



DOUG CHAFFEE
Vice Chairman, Orange County Board of Supervisors
Supervisor, Fourth District

Cc: Members, Orange County Board of Supervisors
Frank Kim, County Executive Officer
Dylan Wright, Agency Director, Orange County Community Resources
Elena Kim, Orange County Veterans Service Officer
David Han, Orange County Veterans


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SJR-6 Don't Ask, Don't Tell: discharge characterizations. (2023-2024)

SHARE THIS:



CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE— 2023–2024 REGULAR SESSION

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

NO. 6

Introduced by Senators Caballero, Eggman, and Menjivar
(Principal coauthors: Senators Atkins, Laird, Padilla, and Wiener)
(Principal coauthors: Assembly Members Cervantes, Jackson, Lee, Low, Ward, and Zbur)
(Coauthors: Senators Alvarado-Gil, Becker, Bradford, Durazo, Grove, Limón, Newman, Rubio,
Stern, and Umberg)
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Addis and Juan Carrillo)

June 29, 2023

Relative to veterans' benefits.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SJR 6, as introduced, Caballero. Don't Ask, Don't Tell: discharge characterizations.

This measure would urge the President and the Congress of the United States to address the issue of servicemembers who were unjustly discharged under "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" with an effective policy to unify efforts to upgrade discharges issued under the DADT policy, and to restore benefits.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, In the 1940s and the 1980s, the United States Department of Defense (DOD) established policies that penalized military members and resulted in the discharge of gay, lesbian, and bisexual members regardless of their behavior. During the 1980s, more than 17,000 military members were dismissed from their duties because of their sexual preferences; and

WHEREAS, In the military, there are administrative and punitive discharges. The three types of administrative terminations that exist are honorable, general, and other than honorable. The punitive discharges are bad conduct and dishonorable; and

WHEREAS, Receiving a dishonorable discharge represents the most serious form of punitive termination. Thousands of brave women, men, and transgender people have been discharged simply for expressing themselves and for whom they love; and

WHEREAS, Historically, the military deemed 134,000 people as "unfit" and "not compatible" for service; and

WHEREAS, Thousands of veterans have carried that emotional burden for decades. The different areas of the DOD have labeled their discharges with "sexual perversion," "homosexual," and other codes, which are derogatory, harmful, and outdated; and

WHEREAS, Almost 30 years ago, "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT) brought a new wave of homophobia and persecution to the military. In 1993, President Clinton signed the DADT policy into law, which would ultimately lead to the discharge of more than 14,000 servicemembers over the 17 years in which it was enforced; and

WHEREAS, This discriminating rule prevented servicemembers from being open and is still punishing them. It limited the ability of servicemembers from being themselves and if other members or supervisors found out about their preferences; gay, lesbian, and bisexual members would be discharged under the "other than honorable" and "dishonorable" categories; and

WHEREAS, Such discharges have left members without benefits and further opportunities. Veterans that received "other than honorable" or "dishonorable" discharges have not had access to health care and their full benefits. This limits their ability to access benefits such as a debt-free college education and other employment opportunities. Furthermore, with these discharges, members are prevented from careers within the federal government; and

WHEREAS, In 2010, President Obama signed the repeal of the policy into law, which went into effect the next year; and

WHEREAS, The repeal of DADT provided a pathway for veterans that received an "other than honorable" discharge to undergo an upgrade, and the ones with a "dishonorable" discharge to apply for a "character of discharge process." While this was an important step to help right a wrong, it is the responsibility of the discharged veteran to initiate the process to clear their record; and

WHEREAS, Despite that initial effort, and further changes to the policy, thousands of veterans still have not upgraded their discharges, and have not had access to their benefits; and

WHEREAS, Thousands of former members face different obstacles to access the discharge upgrade. Many are unaware the process to update their discharge is available. Some of the members that have been working on their discharges learned about it by chance or because of their families. There have not been other forums to educate former servicemembers of the possibility of utilizing this process; and

WHEREAS, Another barrier that exists is the emotional trauma associated with reengaging the military that wrongfully discharged them. When members have to go back to the entity that discriminated against them, it becomes an emotional strain. And there is still resistance from the boards that are processing discharge upgrades. Boards are harsh, they do not see the harm, and there is no recognition of the context; and

WHEREAS, A further burden when applying for a discharge upgrade is the accessibility and complexity of the process. Veterans often need to retain legal guidance and the overall process can take over a year. If a servicemember's record was destroyed or misplaced, that can add even more time to the process; and

WHEREAS, Transgender people have also faced discrimination while serving our country. In 2019, President Trump barred them from joining the military. Those already in the military had to refrain from gender-affirming health care and serve according to their assigned sex at birth. In 2021, President Biden issued an executive order repealing this discriminatory policy; and

WHEREAS, Despite the many obstacles, there have been many great efforts to help discharged military members. Most of the work has been done through legal service providers, which have been working with unfairly discharged veterans to provide free or low-cost services to upgrade their discharge; and

WHEREAS, For the last 70 years, much harm was caused to the thousands of veterans unfairly discharged under the DADT policy. For many, the damage and the trauma can be permanent. Discharged members have struggled with feelings of shame and anxiety. The true cure must be addressed with more effective policies to restore their dignity; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and the Assembly of the State of California, jointly, That the Legislature denounces the obstacles and harm that members of the military discharged before, under, and even after the DADT policy have undergone and suffered; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature urges the President and Congress of the United States to address the issue with an effective policy to unify efforts to upgrade "other than honorable" and "dishonorable" discharges issued under DADT policy. The federal government should address the obstacles veterans and organizations have encountered to create a streamlined, simple, and immediate option to upgrade an "other than honorable" discharge and restore benefits to veterans who have served our country honorably are entitled to; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the Majority Leader of the Senate, to each Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the United States, and to the author for appropriate distribution.

March 9th, 2022
Orange County Board of Supervisors
333 West Santa Ana Boulevard
Santa Ana, California 92701

Re: OCVAC Proposal: OC Welcome Home Event for Post 9-11 Veterans

Dear Board of Supervisors:

We write to encourage you to lead a county-wide “welcome home” event for post-9-11 veterans that we believe will be of great benefit to the wellbeing of both pre and post-9-11 veterans.

Executive Summary

This event was conceived at the September meeting of the Orange County Veterans Advisory Council (OCVAC) when all the council members were feeling and sharing their deep distress they felt during and after the chaotic withdrawal of American Forces from Afghanistan. Those conversations have resulted in this plan to help post-9-11 veterans by giving them a county-wide welcome home ceremony.

The Veterans Advisory Council have taken as their inspiration the federally funded Vietnam Commemoration program that honors Vietnam-era military veterans and gold star families with a lapel pin and a certificate at ceremonies that are hosted by local government and non-profit organizations around the country. We envision a similar ‘pinning ceremony’ in which the county would provide commemorative lapel pins and certificates of recognition to post-9-11 veterans. The ceremony would utilize older veterans, elected officials and other dignitaries. We propose conducting the ceremony at an outdoor venue in Central Orange County and suggest the addition to the program of a resource fair, a military colors ceremony, a military fly-over, a short speaking program, a small ceremony honoring allies of partner nations and such other elements as the county may see fit.

We believe the event proposed here is necessary to the well being and full reintegration of our post-911 veterans. It would also benefit the larger veterans community by increasing the sense of belonging that veterans should feel amongst one another and within a civilian population that greatly values their service but have, heretofore, lacked an appropriate way to express their admiration. It is our hope that this event will provide a positive sense of closure from a series of wars that have wound down without official recognition or ceremony, to the great detriment of those who have sacrificed so much in our name. We also believe that our proposal can be carried out at modest cost to the County which will be able to leverage considerable good will among veterans groups, municipal governments and the broader civilian community.

Background

The veterans of the Vietnam War often returned to a civilian world that criticized or even mocked them for their service in an unpopular war. But the sheer number of Vietnam veterans, who were part of a vast conscripted military, eventually allowed them to advocate for themselves. By the 1980s, the national will had changed. Americans began to understand that no matter what their views were on the Vietnam War or any other conflict, that those who serve in the uniformed military provide heroic, selfless contributions on which our liberty has and will always depend. No cohort of veterans, including post-9-11 vets, has or, thankfully, seems likely to ever suffer that kind of popular disdain again. Nevertheless, the shift to an all volunteer

military that began with the abolition of the draft in 1973 has left today's veterans in a position every bit as vulnerable as the Vietnam veterans who preceded them.

Whereas roughly 13% (12.838%) of the US population were veterans in 1970, less than 7% of today's U.S. population and a mere 4.6% of Orange County's population have served in uniform, percentages that are falling every day as the draft era veterans reach their twilight years. It's a situation that post-9-11 veterans are very aware of. Indeed, with the active duty military staying at roughly 1.2 million sailors, soldiers, airmen and Marines throughout our recent conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Africa, or about 0.5% of the US population, the members of our all-volunteer warrior class grew bitterly fond of saying "we went to war; America went to the mall." It is a situation where the experiences of those who have served and carried as heavy a load in defense of freedom as any previous generation came home to a civilian population that had been relatively shielded from the conflict due to the geographical distance from the war and the prolonged nature of the conflict which led to media coverage fatigue. Thus civilians, no matter how well-intentioned they might be, have been at pains to say anything more than 'thank you for your service' and veterans have felt equally estranged by having no clear manner to explain their experience.

This is a frustration that the members of the OCVAC have heard from our fellow veterans for more than decade, something that comes up again and again when we speak, be it in private conversation or our public meetings and forums. Indeed, it is a wound that each of us has felt and that was greatly exacerbated last August when the American War in Afghanistan petered out in an ignominious withdrawal from the Kabul Airport amidst a bombing that took the lives of 13 service members and included a botched evacuation plan that abandoned thousands of our allies to a ruthless, vengeful enemy. Some of our peers had to seek counseling and many of us cried private tears, our only solace coming from private circles of fellow veterans. There has been no public event, no parade, funeral oration or remembrance in which our twenty-years of war was acknowledged or put into a patriotic context. So where the Vietnam generation came home to vitriol and disdain, the post-9-11 generation faced what has felt like—even if it wasn't intended as—callous indifference.

Your Veterans Advisory Councilmembers hope that this narrative description convinces you of the need for a county welcome home event. But we also want to remind you of some of the statistical evidence that veterans, especially post-9-11 veterans are suffering. While the vast majority of veterans overcome the difficulties of readjusting to civilian life to lead exemplary careers and family lives, a significant minority suffer greatly. Rates of unemployment, homelessness, incarceration, substance abuse, depression and suicide are all higher in the veterans population than they are in the broader U.S. population but are particularly high for younger, post-9-11 veterans. For instance, in 2018 the suicide rate for the general U.S. population was 18.3 per 100,000 people, was 27.5 per 100,000 for veterans as a whole but were a shockingly, unacceptable 45.9 per 100,000 for post--9-11 veterans. This recommendation is an appeal for the county to address these disparities by providing the welcome home they deserve.

Event Concept

The importance of memorializing veterans, especially war veterans, as a part of a healthy and healing transition has been well-documented, most notably in the experience of Vietnam veterans who now benefit from the Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Act of 2017. The law funds DoD sponsored ceremonies in which local governments and community groups give veterans, gold star families and POWs certificates of recognition and a commemorative lapel

pin. We have designed a county program that is similar to the federal program but with a more focused timeline and a greater emphasis on connecting veterans to resources and networks around that event. While the BOS and it's staff are free to modify or revise our proposals in any way they see fit, we are presenting here a broad outline for an event conducted in four phases.

Phase 1: Planning, Site Selection, Community Liaison and Budgeting (April-June)--If approved by the BOS, this period would be used to plan out and budget the funding for the event. This would also be the period in which OC Community Services would solicit price quotes for required items and services including the design and production of an "OC Welcomes Home it's Post-9-11 Heroes" lapel pin.

Phase 2: Preparation and Advertising (June to September)--OC Community Services would use this time to do public outreach and advertise the event, including a web portal where veterans would be encouraged to pre-register for the event. This would also be the period in which each Supervisor's office staff would print certificates for each of the volunteers who registered.

Phase 3: Execution (TBD Saturday in September)--On a Saturday in mid-to late September the county would host an event. We propose the following timeline as an easily modified template:

0900 Hrs	Event/Resource Fair Opens -rectangle w/ food trucks at one end, resource tables under EZ-Ups on long sides and a stage at the far end.
1000 Hrs	Resource Fair Closes Temporarily for Program
1015-1100 Hrs	Speaking Program from Center Stage -Veterans seated in front rows. - Acknowledgements, Post the Colors, National Anthem, invocation, Military Fly-Over, Short BOS Speeches and address from one special guest.
1100-1115 Hrs ranks of	Pinning Ceremony ('pinning ambassadors' recruited from the veterans organizations, elected officials and other dignitaries will give pins and certificates to each registered nominee.
1115-1130 Hrs Military	Flag and Flower Ceremony for Allied Soldiers, Interpreters and Contractors who have settled in Orange County (event ambassadors give each ally a handheld flag and a flower).
1130-1300 Hrs	Food trucks and resource booths open

Phase 4: Legacy Program (September to ?)--On an ongoing/rolling basis, each Supervisor would now have a program to "Welcome" each "Post-9-11 Veteran" home with a lapel pin and a certificate of recognition.

Suggested Venues for Consideration

1. Heroes Hall at the OC Fairgrounds (Costa Mesa)
2. UC Irvine-(home of the OC Veterans & Families Collaborative, significant population of post-9-11 student veterans & an excellent ROTC Program.
3. Tustin Regional Park

Suggested County Resources and Other Partners

1. County Resources–Veterans Resource Center, Workforce Development and the Orange County Veterans Advisory Council.
2. Federal Agencies–Veterans Health Administration, Veterans Benefits Administration, Veterans, National Cemetery Administration, OC Congressional delegation.
3. State Agencies-California Department of Veterans, California Employment Development Department.
4. Veterans Advocacy Organizations: Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, Iraq and Afghan Veterans of America (IAVA), Modern Military Association of America.
5. Veterans Service Agencies: Wounded Warriors, Veterans Business Network of Southern California, USVets, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Veterans Legal Institute, Orange County Veterans and Military Families Collaborative.
6. Educational Institutions: All accredited county colleges and universities.
7. College ROTC and Junior ROTC Units–Great volunteering opportunity for veterans and color guards for ceremony.
8. Prospective Employers: large as well as small businesses looking to hire and government and nonprofit employers.
9. The event is loosely modeled on a Department of Defense program that was funded by Congress in 2012 in which Vietnam Veterans are welcomed home in their own communities with a lapel pin and certificate at events held in local communities by government and community groups who work with DoD to host these events.
10. Orange County Veterans Court.
11. Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton Band
12. A Military rotary or fixed-wing aircraft squadron to perform the missing man flyover

The members of the Veterans Advisory Council greatly appreciate your consideration of this important endeavor and pledge to support you in any variation of this plan you wish to pursue.

Sincerely,

Erik Duane
Chairman
Orange County Veterans Advisory Council

CC: Supervisor Andrew Do, District 1
Supervisor Katrina Foley, District 2
Supervisor Donald P. Wagner, Vice Chairman, District 3
Supervisor Doug Chaffee, Chairman, District 4
Supervisor Lisa Bartlett, District 5

OCVAC Ad Hoc Committee on LifeScore® Health Application Review.

Chair: John Burick

Members: Steve Vargas

Overview: OCVAC Chairperson Stephanie Wade appointed this Ad Hoc Committee to assess the LifeScore Health application then recommend if OCVAC supports Orange County awarding a Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Innovation Grant of \$2 million for two years.

Summary of findings:

LifeScore Health App Overview

LifeScore Health is an application downloadable to your phone or other mobile device. This application promotes the health and wellbeing of individuals, including veterans, who suffer from mental health challenges and potential risks of self-harm. The user interface relies a combination of on ongoing self-monitoring to drive self-care, access to wellness resource directories, peer-to-peer support networks, and prompt external intervention to improve mental health status and reduce the risk of suicide. LifeScore provides veterans their health history in real time, while ensuring the security and privacy of Personal Identification Information.

LifeScore Current Status

LifeScore is an emerging technology for mental health solutions. Currently, no government and non-governmental organization has yet to fund, test, and deploy the application for veterans. Because the technology does show promise, LifeScore has received letters of support from the Department of the Air Force and the Adjutant Generals of Vermont, Maine, and Colorado. In Southern California, LifeScore proponents report working with the LA County MHSA and Mental Health Commission officials and the Orange County Veterans and Military Families Coalition to develop a pilot project. To date, the Department of Veterans Affairs and California Department of Veterans Affairs have not endorsed or funded LifeScore.

LifeScore Request

LifeScore proponents seek the MHSA grant from Orange County. These grants are earmarked for funding promising technology for mental health issues. The funding is required to fully scale the application, bypassing any beta test or pilot program.

Recommendations:

The Ad Hoc Committee recommends that OCVAC not support Orange County awarding a MHSA Innovation Grant of \$2 million for two years.

In our opinion, LifeScore needs to be piloted supporting the improvement of veteran mental health at a county, state, or national level. Based on those results, OCVAC can only then properly assess and recommend support for awarding the Orange County MHSA grant to fully scale up LifeScore. OCVAC applauds LifeScore proponents working with other counties to develop a pilot project that allows them to measure and learn about the application's User Interface and User Experience. OCVAC would be interested in those interim results during the pilot project and welcome regular updates for future decisions.