



ASSEMBLY MEMBER

Freddie Rodriguez

DISTRICT 52

FACT SHEET

Assembly Bill 85 (Rodriguez): General Assistance “Thank You for Your Service Act of 2017” *As introduced 1/5/2017*

Summary

AB 85 will extend General Assistance benefits provided by counties to honorable discharged veterans who meet specified requirements for up to 12 months in a calendar year. These benefits include emergency food, housing, and food cash or vouchers and are available for individuals not otherwise eligible for state and federal assistance programs.

Background

Existing law requires each county to provide aid to its indigent residents not supported by other means. These county programs are known as general assistance programs.

Existing law permits a county to prohibit an employable individual from receiving general assistance benefits for more than 3 months in any 12-month period, whether or not the months are consecutive, if he or she has been offered an opportunity to attend job skills or job trainings.

Current law allows counties to limit general assistance benefits to a three month period, even to veterans who were honorable discharged after serving their country.

This three month limitation has been a contributing factor to California’s veteran homelessness crisis. 68% of veterans reside in principle cities, 50% of the homeless are aged 51 or older, and the most recent homelessness count revealed that California has 137,000 homeless veterans. A Los Angeles Times article cited a study showing that 16% of the veterans in Los Angeles County are living in poverty. AB 85 would make critical changes to address this crisis.

The Legislation

AB 85 would provide that the law permitting a county to prohibit an employable individual from receiving general assistance benefits for more than 3 months in an 12-month period, whether or not the months are consecutive, should not apply to any employable veteran who was honorable discharged from the armed forces.

Counties will have an option to adopt an ordinance within 6 months of the enactment of this bill to opt out of providing aid to honorable discharged veterans.

Support

- Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations (CCROW)- Co-Sponsor
- Western Center on Law & Poverty -Co-Sponsor

Additional Information

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