



# Communicator

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## UPCOMING TRAINING



**June 10-14, 2024**  
**Cache Creek Casino Resort-**  
**Brooks, CA**



**2024 Fall Virtual Conference**  
 Dates to be determined



**2025 Winter Conference**  
 Dates to be determined



To bring a gift basket to be raffled off at the Conference. The gift(s) can be something unique to your County or something fun. See you all soon.



## Presidents Message



As we get ready to honor those who have fallen in our own ways over this Memorial Day weekend, I wanted to take a moment and update you on things we have been working on over the past month to positively impact the veterans who live in California.

Senate Bill 1124 was placed in suspense in committee on May 16, 2024. This bill would have protected our veterans from the predatory practices of "claim sharks" and "pension poachers". Even though we lost this time around, we are not giving up on our efforts. This legislation is too important and will not be an easy task. These claim sharks have built an enormous financial war-chest and have hired some of the top lobbying firms in California to push their message. We will learn and get better from this minor setback. We will be looking to reframe the conversation as an attack on local county government and how we as CVSOs are having the most impact on serving California's veterans.

Jim Zenner, Director LA County, was able to fund the production of a documentary/PSA to assist with our messaging against these claims' sharks. It was a wonderful experience and we will be screening the video at our June Conference. Here is a story that was written in the Washington Post about the efforts these companies are putting into taking advantage of our veterans: [Companies made millions charging veterans for help applying for benefits - The Washington Post](#).

Continuing, our June Conference, it would be greatly appreciated if any or all your offices could evaluate sending at least 1-2 more staff to this conference. As it currently stands, we will struggle to break even on our expenses to host this conference for all our benefit. I also understand that this ask puts many of your offices in a situation of being short-staffed for a week. Your leadership team is asking you to please look and see if you can send more participants. Remember that you get reimbursed \$1,500 for every staff member sent.

Marion Moses our Executive Director was asked to be the keynote speaker at the Florida County Veterans Services Offices Association banquet this past month. She was asked to speak on the CACVSO and the growth we have made as association over the years. She talked about our uniqueness as an association to have a paid Executive Director, lobbyists, training consultant, policy adviser, and financial advisor. She did such a great job of representing our association that three members of Florida's leadership team will be attending our conference to learn from us! This is truly a significant achievement for our association and shows just how special our Executive Director is.

The National Association of County Veterans Services Officers (NACVSO) Annual Conference was attended last week by members from Santa Clara, San Francisco, Yuba-Sutter, Stanislaus, Nevada, and Fresno County. This was an awesome conference with NACVSOs first ever claims clinic where over 800 veterans were assisted during the five days of the conference. This was a successful event with 437 on-site C&P exams being completed, with over 100 veterans receiving same-day decisions. The success of this event has led to Santa Clara planning to host a "Greater Bay Area" claims clinic during their Stand-Down in October and Los Angeles hosting a similar event. I am looking forward to discussing these opportunities during our conference. Finally, we got to see the Federal Court of Veterans Appeals conduct a real case live in front of us. This was the first time that the court conducted a hearing in front of a group like ours and it was a great experience. Next years conference will be held in Louisville, Kentucky in July. I am hoping to see more of you there next year.

I also wanted to please ask our committee chairs to submit information on their committees to our Executive Director as soon as possible if you have not already done so. Marion is working hard on our new website and this information is critical to the design of our new site. We are asking you for the following information:

- Committee Chair
- Number of members
- A description of the work your committee performs
- When you meet
- Any special projects you are working on

Finally, as we get ready for our upcoming conference if you are a committee chair, please get your report to our Secretary, Yvette Mason. We are working our best to make sure that our members are properly informed of everything our association is working on. We can only be successful in that mission if our committee chairs inform us of all the great things you are working on.

I look forward to seeing each of you next month. Please enjoy this weekend in the manner that makes you feel good and remember to speak the names of those that you miss. That is how we breath life into their memory and make sure that they are not forgotten.

## Legislative Committee Update



I am delighted to present you with an update on recent Legislative Committee activities, reflecting our ongoing commitment to serving and supporting our veteran community.

Since our last update, some bills have successfully continued their journey through the process, while others have not. During the last few months, we've been laser-focused on moving along SB 1124 (Anti-Claim Predator (Shark) bill, which would have aligned California with current federal law, respective to the activities of unaccredited claims agents/organizations. CACVSO representatives testified alongside the author and co-sponsors, CA Attorney General and VFW, in the Senate Judiciary and Military and Veterans Affairs Committees. The team felt we were making good progress, only to have the bill left on suspension in the Senate Appropriations Committee (this body analyzes several of the implementation factors, to include cost) – effectively killing the bill, prior to an actual floor vote. Rest assured, we are engaged in after action evaluation/lessons-learned and crafting an alternative strategy for the next round.

Notably, AB 46 remains in the Senate Appropriations Committee suspension file; however, there is much anticipation that it will see a floor vote, with expected amendments, making it more appealing to the budget-hawks (it's already been through the Assembly) and make it onto the Governor's desk. It is at that point that we will rejoin forces with the author and co-sponsors, to press Governor Newsom to sign the bill.

There are more issues looming; however, there are two of the most impactful pieces of legislation we've engaged in. As esteemed members of CACVSO, let us steadfastly continue our advocacy for policies that safeguard the well-being and rights of our veteran community.

## Funding Process Committee Update

The Funding Process Committee is chaired by Jim McHugh, Ventura County VSO. There is ample room on the committee for anyone who wants to join. The committee is tasked with, as stated in the association by-laws, to be concerned with all aspects and potential revenue, which may be available to Association members, particularly with Subvention and Medi-Cal Cost Avoidance (AB 1807) Programs, and VSOF administered by the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet). We are currently working on a project with our association consultant, Jack Kirwan, on how changes to subvention regulations are done. We are actively interacting with CalVet on this project. We are attempting to make the subvention regulations easier to amend as we deal with the real-world realities of constant change driven mostly by third parties, such as USDVA. The primary purpose in proposing these changes is NOT to change the basic way the subvention process is implemented, but rather to establish flexibility to allow CalVet to make less consequential changes administratively, without having to undertake a formal rulemaking process. Changes to the Subvention Manual have been proposed to CalVet to facilitate this regulation amendment process. They are currently reviewing those proposals and the committee is standing by for their decision. It is hoped that by the June conference we will have an update to report.

## By Laws Committee Update

The CACVSO Bylaws provide the basic framework for conducting the Association's affairs, determining internal processes & procedures (election of officers, meetings, etc.), defining key positions and duties, and structuring relationships/interactions within the Association and with external stakeholders. The Bylaws is a "Living Document" with mechanisms that allow for updates and amendments to meet the needs of the Association. The most current version (including recent amendments) is as of May 2024 and includes the most recent addition of the Yvette Mason Veteran Representative Award for Excellence.

The Parliamentarian (appointed by the CACVSO President) serves as Chair of the Bylaws Committee. The current structure calls for three (3) voting members. There is no limit on the number of total members. As of May 2024, the Bylaws Committee has two (2) members. Bill Cook (Plumas County) and Dell Pratt (Parliamentarian).

Current projects include adding more members to the committee and conducting a line-by-line review of the Bylaws. Additionally, the Bylaws Committee will meet/coordinate with all other committee chairs to strengthen our committees and have the Bylaws reflect the duties/responsibilities more accurately.

## Education Committee Update

As you have heard Eric Ensley, Orange County Veteran Services Officer has accepted the role as Chair, Education and Training Committee. He comes with a lot of energy, experience and ideas and will take our training to the next level. I'd like to welcome two new team members to the So Cal CVSRA training team: Adam French from Riverside County and Chris Harris from Los Angeles County. To date there have been four CVSRA classes (2 in Nor Cal and 2 in So Cal), 46 attendees and an 87% pass rate.

What started out as a love for training and an desire to assist Virginia Wimmer at the time quickly took on a whole new perspective. Just as I was stepping into the role I had to take a quick step back and was extremely grateful for Celestina and David to tackle what should have been my first conference. It's been an amazing opportunity to put together training agenda's over the past two years that I hope you have found to be beneficial in your work. None of this would be possible without the leadership from our Executive Director, Marion and Past Junior President Rhonda, and wise council from many of you. A special thank you to Jim and Katrina for their love of training and passion for the people they serve; Kimberly Dickerson for sharing her immense wisdom with us over all these years and David Lawrence for partnering with us. I look forward to seeing you at our June conference and partnering with Eric.



*"The Capacity to learn is a gift; the ability to learn is a skill; the willingness to learn is a choice." Brian Herbert*

## Cemetery Committee Update

The Cemetery Committee is comprised of Brian Galicia, CVSO Calaveras County (Chair) and Richard "Steve" Johnson, CVSO Placer County.

The goals for our committee is to visit as many of the National and State Veterans Cemeteries in California as well can and update the membership regarding any changes to the cemetery, whether interments are currently being accepted and some history of the cemeteries, including notable persons interred at the cemeteries.

We will also provide information regarding eligibility for interment into any of the cemeteries, including watching national legislation regarding the proposed changes to eligibility for interment at Arlington National Cemetery. Currently U. S. House of Representatives bill 1413, known as "Expanding America's National Cemetery Act of 2023", tasks the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to select, expand and "otherwise modify" a national cemetery currently under the control of the National Cemetery Administration (NCA), to ensure full military honors are provided at such cemetery in a manner consistent with honors currently provided at Arlington National Cemetery. The Secretary is also to work with the Secretary of Defense to provide a proposal on increasing cemetery capacity through expansion or modification of the selected National Cemetery under NCA control.

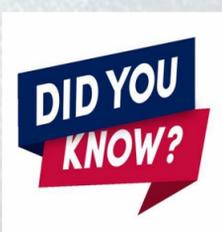
## Chaplain Message

**"Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones."**  
**Proverbs 16:24**

Words can sting more than the actual sting from a bee and yet the bee in its intricate ways creates a sweet treat and can sooth a cough. I'm guilty of being rash in a response not thinking of the sting until it's already off my tongue and spit out of my mouth. I try to apologize quickly in these times but the words have already caused damage. I am then grateful when someone shares the gift of grace with me. I want to encourage each of you today to pause and consider if your words will sting or bring encouragement to the person receiving them. I requested to be your Association Chaplain as an opportunity to dive deeper into "the word" and be a support to you and intercede in prayer as you need it. Please feel free to contact me with prayer and/or card requests at: [tammy.bender@ventura.org](mailto:tammy.bender@ventura.org)



## Secretary's Corner



- Any questions
- Office Updates/Changes
- Roster Updates/Changes
- Conference Information
- Website additions/changes
- Newsletter submission deadline



Can be directed to your secretary and she will assist you or connect you to the appropriate contact person?

For further information, contact your secretary today at

[secretary@cacvso.org](mailto:secretary@cacvso.org)

