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Social Services | Public Health | Mental Health

## news release

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November 6, 2015

### Veterans Day brings improved service for local vets

New legislation taking effect Thursday will allow Humboldt County's veterans to access all of their well-earned benefits simply by presenting a California driver's license.

Assembly Bill 935, recently signed into law, will allow a vet to apply for a driver's license or identification card with a designation that clearly identifies the individual as a veteran.

The improved identification process is timely as Veterans Day on Wednesday, Nov. 11 will honor the sacrifices of the country's military service people. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, over 10,000 of them reside in Humboldt County.

There are a number of federal, state and local benefits and services available to Humboldt County veterans, including assistance with employment, housing, health and counseling, educational opportunities and more. Historically veterans have been required to bring lots of documentation and discharge papers to benefit appointments. The veteran IDs will remove that red tape.

"This is going to be an awesome opportunity for all veterans who served honorably to be able to show their veterans status with a photo ID," says Veterans Service Officer Rená Maveety. "We are proud to be part of the steps for further recognition of our veterans service to our country."

The designation received the support of medical and law enforcement organizations. Advocates have argued that the driver's license designation will inform medical workers and police about an individual's veteran status so that they can appropriately treat a veteran who may be suffering from medical trauma, such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, as a result of their service.

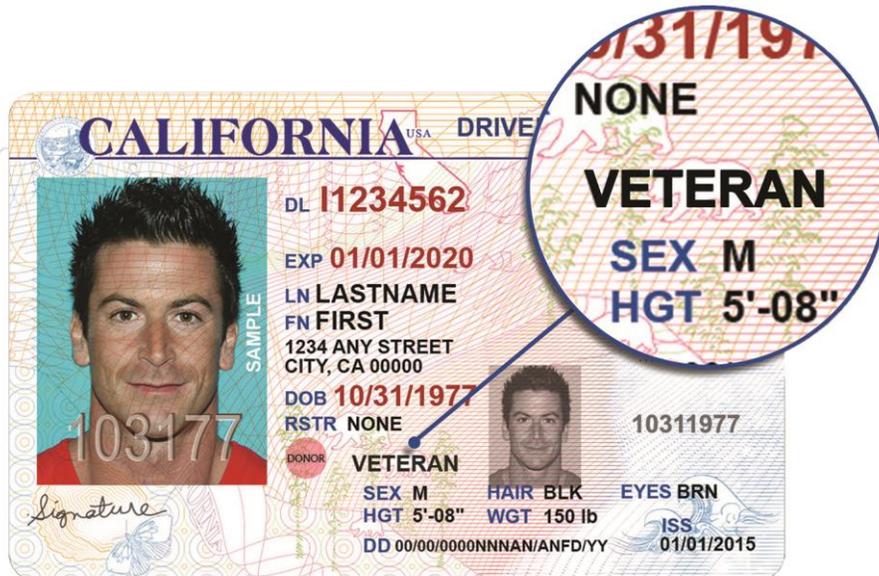
Local veterans will have to collect their original or certified military discharges commonly known as a (DD214) one final time, however, and bring it in to the Humboldt County Veterans Service Office (VSO). The county VSO, located in the Humboldt County Courthouse, will sign off on a Veteran Status Verification form. "With a quick verification and small chat about other possible benefits that may be available to them, our office will strive to make our portion of the process smooth," says Maveety. Next, the status verification can be brought into a California Department of Motor Vehicles office.

The Humboldt County VSO also helps guide vets through local resources and remains in close communication with Humboldt State University's Veteran Enrollment & Transition Services, College of the Redwoods' Veterans Resource Center, the Employment Development Department, the Eureka VA Community-Based Outpatient Clinic and the Eureka Vets Center. Veterans may not be aware that they qualify for CAL-VET home loans and college tuition waivers. Their dependents may be eligible for tuition waivers, as well.

For more information, contact the Humboldt County VSO at 825 Fifth St., Room 310, Eureka, or call 707-445-7611. Walk-ins are welcome, but appointments are available.

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Example of veterans driver's license.