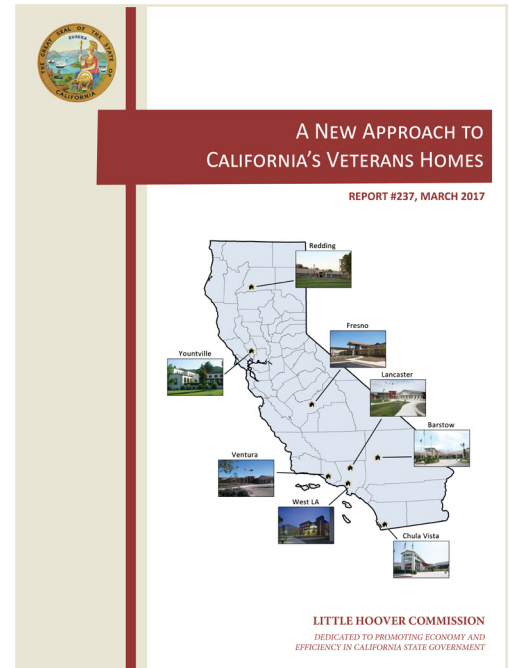


# THE LITTLE HOOVER COMMISSION CALLS FOR A NEW DIRECTION FOR STATE'S \$306 MILLION VETERANS HOMES PROGRAM

The Little Hoover Commission calls for greater self-sufficiency in the state's veterans homes program and less reliance on the General Fund to free up resources to serve more California veterans, particularly those incapable of caring for their own health.

During its 16-month review of the state's eight-home system the Commission found unnecessarily high costs to California taxpayers compared to other states and also determined that fewer than 1 percent of the state's 1.7 million veterans benefit from the 2,610-bed program run by the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet).

The Commission recommends changes in state law to prioritize beds for those who most need the care, as well as intelligently revising residential-only services in the home to focus on skilled nursing care. Those currently living in residential-only housing should be allowed to stay in the veterans home program as the state gradually moves away from this service. The Commission also recommends changing state law to require that residents tap all available resources to help pay for their care, including enrollment in state and federal benefit programs and maintaining health insurance coverage throughout their stay in the homes. Finally, the Commission recommends CalVet consider whether it should modify the program, including closing or repurposing facilities, along with more cost-effective alternatives to its homes, such as home and community-based programs for aged and disabled veterans.



## READ THE FULL REPORT

- Visit <http://www.lhc.ca.gov/studies/237/report237.html>

## ABOUT THE COMMISSION

The Little Hoover Commission is an independent state agency charged with recommending ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of state programs. The Commission's recommendations are submitted to the Governor and the Legislature for their consideration and action.

For more information, please visit our website at <http://www.lhc.ca.gov/>.

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## A NEW APPROACH TO CALIFORNIA'S VETERANS HOMES

### REDEFINING THE ROLE OF CALIFORNIA'S VETERANS HOMES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

**Recommendation 1: The Legislature should amend the Military and Veterans Code to clarify the homes admissions policies and ensure access for the neediest veterans.**

Policymakers should consider prioritizing admission based on financial status, disability rating or other factors.

**Recommendation 2: The Legislature should amend the Military and Veterans Code to eliminate domiciliary care from the state's veterans home program.** Instead, the homes should focus on providing care for veterans in need of high-level medical care, such as skilled nursing care. Existing domiciliary residents should be allowed to remain in the state's veterans homes program as the state gradually moves away from domiciliary care.

**Recommendation 3: To determine whether CalVet should repurpose or shutter one or any of the veterans homes, CalVet should establish a process to systematically evaluate and review each veterans home as it approaches its 20-year mark, and periodically thereafter, and make recommendations to policymakers regarding the future of the home.** Such a review should include consideration of the needs of the regional veteran population, projections about the changing composition of the veteran population, as well as an assessment of resources available to serve them. Veteran residents, as well as community members and other stakeholders should have a participatory role in the process.

**Recommendation 4: CalVet should conduct an assessment to consider the needs of California's overall veteran population. As part of this assessment, the department should project, to the extent possible, the needs of each cohort of veterans over the next several decades.** In addition, the department should assess and catalog the array of services currently available for aged and disabled veterans, making this information available online in a user-friendly, searchable format, and identify any critical gaps in services given conclusions from the department's needs assessment.

**Recommendation 5: As CalVet repurposes its veterans homes program savings should be redirected to home- and community-based veterans services.**

### SIMPLIFY, STABILIZE FUNDING FOR THE VETERANS HOMES

**Recommendation 6: To streamline and modernize the state's veterans home program, the Governor and Legislature should amend the Military and Veterans Code.**

Amendments should include defining the scope of benefits included for veterans home residents, empowering CalVet to establish daily costs of care per resident, clarifying that residents are charged fees based on the cost of their care and requiring residents to maintain adequate health insurance throughout their residence.

**Recommendation 7: CalVet should amend regulations to specify consequences for residents who do not maintain adequate insurance coverage or otherwise pay their share of their costs.**

**Recommendation 8: To enhance fiscal transparency, CalVet should make available, online in an accessible format, its financial reports to the Legislature.** The reports should be augmented to include the amount of state funds budgeted to each home, as well as revenue collected and expected, the costs of care per resident, by level of care for each veterans home and the costs of facility maintenance.