

CDP Veterans Caucus
Veterans Caucus Membership Meeting
Minutes of August 25, 2021

1. Call to order: Ron Cohen, Chair, at 1936.
2. Pledge of Allegiance: Basil Kimbrew, Vice Chair
3. Verification of Quorum: (20 minimum): Antonio Chapa.
 - Quorum was met.
4. Approval of Agenda
 - Chair, Ron Cohen, added the Afghanistan conversation to item 7 C. Chair asked if any other modifications to agenda – no more were mentioned. Item was moved and seconded. Agenda as modified was approved.
5. Welcome and Introduction of Theme: Ron Cohen
 - A. COLLABORATION * TRANSPARENCY * INCLUSION
 - Chair welcomed all to the Summer CDP E-Board and the Veterans Caucus meeting. Encouraged membership to visit the CDP Veterans Caucus website. Resources have been expanded and added press releases such as: Juneteenth, July 4, Memorial Day, Pride Month, and Afghanistan messages. Chair asked membership stay muted unless called upon via Zoom raise hand function or phone *9. Expectation is you will not ask to be called upon prior to the breakout sessions unless making a motion, a second and/ or have Robert Rules issues in which case will call upon the Parliamentarian to render an opinion. All requested to speak will be limited to one minute. an additional request from same person will be honored only after everyone else's request to speak has been exhausted. After the breakout session we will continue anyone who requested to speak. Before we start the breakout sessions you will see a screen that comes up you will get to pick which breakout session you want. You will be given 20 sec to decide. If no decision we can assist you decide. Theme of meeting is Collaboration, Transparency, and Inclusion.
6. Committee/Officer Reports: (Introduction: members/reports).
 - A. Vice Chair: Basil Kimbrew
 - Good to see members that have been with caucus for a while returning and joining meetings. Our goal is to increase our membership and be the most active in the Nation. We will defeat this recall. Thank you to the great E-Board and membership.
 - B. Recording Secretary: Antonio Chapa
 - If request of any past minutes please check website however is a copy is needed please contact me – cdpveteranscaucus.rsec@gmail.com
 - C. Treasurer: Lizet Angulo
 - Report – Beginning of year balance \$5845.55, as of July 31, 2021, balance is \$10,200.55. Five new paid members join in July. Currently we have 203 paid members.

Chair recognized Rusty Hicks, CDP Chair.

- At the start of our Aug Executive Board meeting, to get ready in 19 days to defeat the republican recall. Statewide officers have divided up which caucuses they will be connected to. He is the assigned State Officer to the CDP Veterans Caucus and feel free to contact him.
- Focus of the Executive Board meeting is in defeating the republican recall. We know what is at stake and the potential of taking our state backwards. We know we have the right candidate in Governor Gavin Newsom. Who has led us through a pandemic, leading a strong economic recovery, and tackling some of the biggest issues for CA. Republicans started this, we got the opportunity to finish it. This is not persuasion campaign, it's a turn-out campaign. So every phone call, every text message and door knock that any of us all of us make is going to make over the course of 19 days will make big big difference. We have about a 1.5 million ballots in already, about 57% are ballots come from Dems. We do have a bit of a margin We can't stop now; we need to build a big lead heading into election day to weather any republican big turnout on election day. Over the next 19 days we need to stay active and thank you to those who continue to volunteer. Encouraged to volunteer to text, call and door knock. Tell your family, friends, neighbors, or anyone who will listen for 20 seconds to vote no and return that ballot.
- Lastly, I thank the Chair for adding the Afghanistan moment. Encouraged to check-in on those who served and served in Afghanistan. He served in Afghanistan, its been a complicated time over the last 10 days or so. A moment of deep sadness I believe we have done the right thing by stepping away of this 20-year conflict yet disappoint in the way it has gone down. As the nation is processing this moment and those who served in that conflict are also processing what that does mean as a nation for us as individuals. He encouraged us to do a buddy check to make sure we are all standing together during this hard moment.

D. Corresponding Secretary/Communications: Angela Scott

- Delivered several press releases mentioned by Chair. Launched on bi-monthly newsletter. Please visit CDP Veterans Caucus website and feel free to let us know your suggestions for website. We want to keep lines of communication open. Resources on CDP Facebook page on phone banking for no on recall.

E. Policy & Legislation: Diana Love, Committee Chair

- Welcome and thank you to our Policy & Legislation members for the work. In the next segments we will provide information on the work being done. Look forward to hearing feedback.

F. Organizational Development: Tai Sunnanon, Committee Chair

- Our group helps internally our group, that we are spun up with our own resources and have the collaborative tools to move as a team. Org Dev within the community especially to our Veteran groups and Democratic clubs. Spoke to 7 of them. This E-Board believes in Collaboration, Transparency, and Inclusion.

G. Programs: Polly Counts, Chair.

- Thank you to our Veterans Caucus members which has grown. We had 300 people register for this membership meeting however we don't have that many who have joined us tonight. Even though we don't have 300 people joining us, we do have people thinking about the Veterans Caucus based on registration. Tonight, we will not have speakers to focus on us. We want to share the vision of the CDP Veterans Caucus.

- We have three breakout groups; support for Veterans legislation, provide resources for Veterans, and expand veterans democratic clubs/Afghanistan issue. Members can decide which group they chose to participate in. Each groups will have 45 minutes and then we will return to main group to discuss breakout rooms reports.

Chair – click on join for one of the three rooms.

7. Establishment of three goals – Tangible, measurable and supports Veterans and their families.

A. Support Veteran Legislation – this helps veterans and their families but must be broader than just for one cause – Diana Love

- Discussed affordable housing and homelessness, suicide awareness, helmets to hard hats, burn pits, assist Veterans in the technical field, various numbers of bills at the House and Assembly, training for jobs, and VA property.

- Jonathan Ryne: AB 107 (Salas, et al) Licensure: Veterans and military spouses. Expands to all Dept of Consumers Affairs (DCA) licensing boards the requirement that specified boards issue temporary licenses to the spouses of active-duty members of the US Armed Forces, as specified, and requires the DVA, the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, the Department of Real Estate, and the Dept of Public Health to compile information on military Veterans, and spouse licensure into an annual report for the Legislature. On July 15, 2021, AB 107 was heard in Senate Military and Veterans Committee and received a 5-0 vote and moved to Appropriations.

- Diana: AB 225 (Gray, et al) Requires certain boards within the Dept of Consumer Affairs (DCA) to issue temporary licenses to Veterans and active-duty members of the Armed Forces who meet specified criteria. Status of AB 225 is in the "Second House," policy committee. On June 30, 2021, it was postponed – 2-year bill. Similar to AB 107.

- Diana: AB 411 (as amended, Irwin) Veterans Housing and Homeless Prevention Bond Act of 2022. Hearing postponed by committee. Two-year bill and be taken up in Jan of 2022. Existing law, it authorizes the issuance of bonds in the of no more than 600 million dollars to provide additional funding for Veteran Housing and homeless prevention.

- Steve MacDougall: SB 607 (Min, Roth) tailored toward spouses or dependents of active duty personal to streamline license process that are govern by DBCA. It also waives fees therefore must go through appropriations in both houses. It has gone through the Assembly and will be heard at Assembly Appropriations on Oct 26, 2021. No opposition to this bill at this time.

- Diana Love: Contractors State License Board – Military Veterans Application Assistance Program aides those who are transitioning from military service to civilian employment. In some cases, Veterans possess transferable skills that help meet the minimum experience and training requirements to apply for a contractor’s license. This program offers expedited processing of Veterans’ applications, including the evaluation of transferable military experience and training, as well as education. If you know of anyone you can reach out to the Chair.
- Diana Love: HR 1182 – Previously 4890 (2019) (Vargas, San Diego). Veterans Deportation Prevention and Reform Act) to correct this policy of deportation of non-citizens currently servicing in the US Armed Forces. Referred to the Subcommittee on immigration and Citizenship.
- Diana Love: Assembly Joint Resolution 10, as amended, Choi. Veterans cemeteries: Republic of Korea Veterans. Legislature urges the US Congress and the President of the US to extend burial and memorial benefits in national cemeteries to Republic of Korea Veterans who served in the Vietnam War and who subsequently become US citizens.
- It is on the Senate third reading, special consent calendar which means it passing out of the Senate with no opposition then goes back to Assembly for another vote.

B. Provide resources for veterans – have multiple sections in the website, Transitioning from military to civilian life, Veterans Health benefits, Calvet, VA disabilities, Veterans discounts, etc. – Angela Scott

- Angela Scott: There is a lack of known resources for jobs, medical, housing, and mental health benefits. Veterans just do not know. Richard Valdez informed we need highly encouraged Elected officials to get information to Californians. David Brahman, we need to take a 58-county strategy to engage within these counties to provide comprehensive resource. Ron Howard, Oceanside area there are grants for Veterans who wish to start businesses. Antonio Chapa, there are families who lost loved ones and are not aware how to go about in receiving services. These ideas we will continue to discuss and provide via our website and other means. If you have any resources, please send to Chair and we will post on website under resources.
- Cheryle, has been compiling a list of resources, throughout CA, for Veterans.

C. Expand Veterans democratic clubs in central and northern California – provide awareness of Veterans in democratic party that provides candidates, endorsement, and candidate training – Tai Sunnanon

- Tai Sunnanon, thanked all for staying with us despite length of meeting. Hope attendees realize how the caucus’ Collaboration, Transparency, and Inclusion. Most Veterans, within breakout session, were Vietnam Veterans. It was shared what we are seeing in Afghanistan we have seen time and time again, not only in our US history but globally. We discussed the impact Afghanistan Veterans will endure as like Vietnam Veterans. Betty Yee, CA State Controller, there is funding for programs and services at the Federal, and State levels. Tai, on Afghanistan, this was a failed mission on all fronts. We made half a dozen companies very very rich – over two trillion dollars. We need to hold our Elected officials accountable. Why are we not holding President George W. Bush accountable? President Biden was a

Senator when this War began. This was a weapons race; we sold and gave weapons to the Taliban who are using them now to hold people hostage at the Kabul airport. We have roughly 14 hundred Americans in Afghanistan trying to get home. There is a dozen of San Diego school children who are trying to get back home but cannot get to the Kabul airport. Darrell Issa said there is not much we can do. We had 20 years to get an exit strategy. If you know of an Afghanistan Veteran, invite them to join our Veterans Caucus.

11. Conclusion – Polly Counts: Goal was to foster the Collaboration, Transparency, and Inclusion. We are interested in hearing your voice and how we can better represent you.

Chair opens floor.

- Caroline Menjivar, USMC Veteran, and first-time attending CDP Veterans Caucus. Running for office District 18 in the San Fernando Valley. CarolineMenjivar.Com.
- Cheryle, meeting went well and learned a lot. Discussion on how we can reach Veterans and raise awareness on their needs. We should be discussing Afghanistan and holding those accountable. We need to speak our minds and direction we need to head-in.
- Fernando, Army Veteran, Vietnam, issues with agent orange, burn pits, and deported Veterans. Hope bills on deported Veterans are resolved quickly in hope to get our deported Vietnam Veterans home.
- Antonio, we have families who lost loved ones, either on Active Duty or Veteran side, who do not have any idea of what services and/ or benefits are available. Some of these families are monolingual Spanish speakers therefore a little more of a challenge due to documentation not in their language. Here in Los Angeles, we try to connect families to VA and/ or County Veterans Affairs. We link them to others with like experience. We follow up with them and assess for other needs.

Chair - we will have a forum for Veterans who plan to run for office at the next meeting.

14. Adjournment Notes: - Next Exec Board meeting – Sep 30, 2021

Motion to adjourned by Tai, it was seconded.

Meeting Adjourned at 2111.