

*Assemblywoman Laurie Davies**73rd District***Background**

Notwithstanding their heroism and self-sacrifice, veterans are ambitiously targeted by unethical companies. The numbers are astonishing.

In just one year (2020), veterans reported over 40,000 complaints to the Federal Trade Commission reporting over \$66 million in losses. That's just one year. That's just scams that were somehow reported to a federal government agency.¹

According to a recent AARP study: "veterans, military, and their families continue to be significantly targeted more by con-artists and are losing money more than nonmilitary/non-veterans when approached by similar scams or schemes. In addition, among those military and veteran respondents to the survey who received service-related scam attempts, nearly a third reported that they lost money supporting fake veteran or military charities or causes, or updating their military records, and nearly half erroneously signed over their U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) pension or disability benefits."² According to AARP:

- 4 in 5 military/veteran adults were targeted by scams related to their military service or benefits
- 1 in 3 military/veterans lost money to service-related scams
- 35% of military/veterans lost money to a scam versus 25% of civilians
- 47% of military/veterans receive 10 or more robocalls each week, versus 38% of civilians.³

Veterans are targeted by s because of the appropriately generous government benefits and paychecks they receive. Unethical companies often use the veteran's military service against them, by using military jargon into robocalls, spam emails and text messages to seem more legitimate, or by using trusted fellow veterans (or those claiming to be) to contact them, or by

slyly implying they are connected to the military or related charities.

AB 1730***Protecting heroes from being the targets of scams*****Problem Being Addressed**

Recognizing that seniors and the disabled are often targets of scammers, California law at Civil Code section 3345 permits a court to award treble the already-available civil fines or penalties to them if the court finds that the defendant (i) knew or should have known that their conduct was directed at seniors or the disabled; (ii) the defendant's conduct caused one or more senior citizens or disabled persons to suffer major losses such as the loss of their home, job, benefits, or retirement; or (iii) whether one or more senior citizens or disabled persons are substantially more vulnerable than other members of the public.

Notwithstanding our duty to honor our veterans and veterans being disproportionately targeted by unethical businesses, veterans are not embraced by this statutory disincentive to defraud them. We owe our veterans more.

Summary

AB 1730 adds veterans to Civil Code section 3345.

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¹ https://www.ftc.gov/system/files/documents/reports/consumer-sentinel-network-data-book-2020/csn_annual_data_book_2020.pdf at p. 17, <https://oag.ca.gov/news/press-releases/veterans-day-attorney-general-bonta-warns-against-scams-targeting-veterans-and>

² https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/research/surveys_statistics/econ/2021/fraud-scams-military-veterans-report.doi.10.26419-2Fres.00502.001.pdf

³ Ibid.