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LEGISLATORS WHO ARE VETERANS

CALIFORNIA STATE LEGISLATURE 2017-2018

Senator Josh Newman (D-SD30-Fullerton)

Elected in 2016

This is Senator Newman's first term in the Legislature. He is a veteran who served as an officer in the United States Army. His active duty assignments included service in South Korea with a nuclear weapons detachment and conventional artillery units in the 25th Infantry Division at Schofield Barracks in Hawaii.

Upon graduation from Yale University, he was commissioned through the US Army Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Georgia. In 2012, Newman founded ArmedForce2Workforce, a non-profit organization to assist young veterans in the Orange County and the greater Los Angeles find employment.

Senator Newman is a current member of the Steering Committee for the Orange County Veterans & Military Families Collaborative (OCVMFC) and is the Chair of its Employment Working Group. He also serves as the 1st Vice Chair of the California Democratic Party Veterans Caucus, Chair of its Legislative Committee, and is a co-founder and board member for the Veteran Business Network of Greater Los Angeles.

Senator Newman is a member of the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Senator Richard Roth (D-SD31-Riverside)

Elected in 2012

Major General Roth was commissioned in June 1972. He attended Emory University School of Law, graduating with a Juris Doctor degree in 1974. General Roth entered active duty in February 1975 and served with Strategic Air Command and Pacific Air Forces units in Arizona, Okinawa and California. Upon his release from active duty in April 1979, the General transferred to the Air Force Reserve and was assigned as an individual mobilization augmentee with Strategic Air Command bomb and refueling wings from 1979 to 1985. He subsequently served three times as a Staff Judge Advocate at the wing and group levels in Air Force Reserve Command, then served as the mobilization assistant to the Judge Advocate General of the U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C. He retired in 2007.

Assemblyman Bill Brough (R-AD73-Dana Point)

Elected in 2014

After high school, Bill Brough enlisted in the U.S. Army serving on active duty from 1986-1990 and was recalled to active duty in support of Desert Shield/Desert Storm in January 1991. Bill was a Cobra Helicopter mechanic and graduated from the U.S. Army Airborne School. His duty stations included Fort Bragg, NC, Hanau, Germany and Schofield Barracks, Hawaii.

Bill graduated from the University of Connecticut after his military service and served as a Presidential Appointee at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in the Bush Administration from January 22, 2001 through November 2004. He is a founding officer of American Legion Post 281 (Laguna Niguel, Dana Point, Laguna Hills and Aliso Viejo) and was elected to the California State Assembly in November 2014 representing the 73rd District.

Assemblyman Rocky Chavez (R-AD76-Oceanside)

Elected in 2012

Colonel Chavez worked his way through California State University in Chico and earned a BA degree. He then served over 28 years as a United States Marine. He was subsequently appointed Chief of Staff for the 4th Marine Division. Upon retirement from the Marine Corps, he went on to spend nearly a decade on the Oceanside City Council. In 2009, Colonel Chavez was appointed by Governor Schwarzenegger as Undersecretary of the California Department of Veterans Affairs in Sacramento, later serving as Acting Secretary.

Assemblywoman Susan Talamantes-Eggman (D-AD13-Stockton)

Elected in 2012

After graduating from high school, Susan Eggman served four years as a medic in the U.S. Army. She then attended California State University, Stanislaus, where she earned a B.A. in psychology and a master's in social work. Susan worked as a mental health provider and a medical social worker, before receiving her Ph.D. from Portland State University. Ms. Eggman most recently served on the Stockton City Council. While there, she successfully lobbied the federal Veterans Administration to build their new facility in San Joaquin County.

Assemblyman Devon Mathis (R-AD26-Visalia)

Elected in 2014

After graduating from Reedley High School in 2001, Devon joined the California National Guard where he served as Sergeant for nearly 10 years, including 2 combat tours to Iraq, with the 1114th Transportation Company.

He was awarded a Purple Heart during his second tour in Iraq, when he sustained major injuries from a road side bomb attack in 2008. After returning home, Mathis went through extensive VA therapy. This road to recovery prepared him for a return to civilian life and to his college success.

In 2009, while attending at Porterville City College Devon served as the Veterans Club President. He completed his studies in counseling and graduated with an AA in Social Science in 2011.

He graduated from Fresno State University, he changed majors to Public Administration. Devon received a BA in Public Administration and graduating as the President of the Veterans Fraternity.

Assemblywoman Melissa Melendez (R-AD67-Lake Elsinore)

Elected in 2012

Melissa Melendez entered the United States Navy upon graduating high school. She attended the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, Calif., where she spent a year and a half in a Russian language course, becoming a fluent Russian speaker. She then became one of the first women approved by the U.S. Navy to fly aboard an Orion EP-3 reconnaissance aircraft overseas, conducting intelligence-gathering operations in partnership with our allies. She served as a Russian translator for ten years during the Cold War, as well as during Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm. While serving in the Navy full-time, Melissa also attended college and received her BA in History and Political Studies from Chaminade University in Honolulu, Hawaii. After the Navy, she then formed her own successful transcription company, contracting with the Chief of Naval Operations and the Secretary of the Navy. Her husband is a Navy veteran, having served 10 years on active duty as a journalist and public affairs officer. Ms. Melendez is a member of the American Legion.

Assemblyman Randy Voepel (R –AD71- Santee)

Elected in November 2016

Randy Voepel enlisted in the U.S Navy in 1969 and separated in 1978. Voepel served tour of duty in Vietnam, from 1969 to 1970 and again in 1972. After the navy he for worked in the insurance industry 39 years. He served as the Senate City Commander Mayer for 16 years. Randy is a member of the American Legion and the VFW.

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