

COUNCILMEMBER CHRIS CATE PILOTS PROGRAM FOR DISABLED VETERANS
Proposed Legislation Would Reduce Building Permit Fees in the City of San Diego

San Diego, CA – San Diego has a long, proud history of supporting the United States military, and is called home to over 100,000 active duty military personnel and nearly 240,000 veterans. Many of these brave men and women have made sacrifices to keep our nation safe. Some of nearly 35,000 disabled veterans in San Diego now require accessibility improvements in their homes, such as wheel chair ramps, plumbing and electrical modifications, chair lifts, and hallway and door widening.

“Many disabled veterans in San Diego need help modifying their homes to accommodate their service-connected injuries. This process can be costly, with permitting expenses reaching up to thousands of dollars. Councilmember Cate’s proposal to reduce building permit costs for disabled veterans is crucial to helping these brave individuals safely remain in their homes,” said Bari Vaz, Executive Director, NOLAH.

To help ease the burden of securing building permits for these accessibility improvements, Governor Brown signed Senate Bill (SB) 330 (Berryhill) into law, allowing local governments to waive or reduce all building permit fees for home improvements related to veterans’ service-connected disabilities. Given that disabled veterans in San Diego only receive an average monthly payout of approximately \$1,300 from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), this state legislation seeks to incentivize individuals to obtain otherwise costly building permits, ensuring these accessibility projects are both safe and up to code.

“I believe the City should implement a local pilot program that includes provisions which will reduce building permit fees for ministerial home improvement projects meant to accommodate a disability connected to a veteran’s military service,” stated Public Safety and Livable Neighborhoods Committee Chairman.

Pilot Program Provisions:

- Reducing a portion of building permit fees for ministerial home improvement projects meant to accommodate a disability connected to a veteran’s military service;
- Limiting the program scope to accessibility retrofits or modifications for single-family and multi-family units;
- Requiring project applicants to produce valid VA documentation verifying the residents’ or tenants’ service-connected disability;
- Identifying \$50,000 in the next Mid-Year Budget Monitoring Report to support a one-year pilot program; and
- Instituting a fee reduction cap on a per project basis.

View the memorandum here: <http://bit.ly/2NpHT3g>