

By: White

H.B. No. 2445

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to veterans placed on community supervision or confined in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Section 501.024(b), Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

(b) The department shall:

(1) in consultation with the Texas Veterans Commission, investigate and verify the veteran status of each inmate by using the best available federal data; and

(2) use the data described by Subdivision (1) to assist inmates who are veterans in applying for:

(A) federal benefits or compensation for which the inmates may be eligible under a program administered by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs; and

(B) state benefits or compensation for which the inmates may be eligible under any state law or program.

SECTION 2. Subchapter C, Chapter 501, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 501.1021 to read as follows:

Sec. 501.1021. REENTRY AND REINTEGRATION SERVICES FOR VETERANS. (a) The department shall develop a comprehensive plan to ensure the successful reentry and reintegration into the community following discharge from the department of offenders whose veteran status has been verified by the department under Section

1 501.024(b)(1). The reentry and reintegration plan developed under
2 this section must utilize all benefits that the offender is
3 eligible for as determined by the department under Section
4 501.024(b)(2) to provide for the following, as applicable, after
5 the offender's discharge:

6 (1) housing;

7 (2) employment;

8 (3) education;

9 (4) financial support for the offender's family; and

10 (5) medical or mental health care.

11 (b) The department may contract with private vendors or
12 other entities to implement the comprehensive reentry and
13 reintegration plan as required by this section.

14 SECTION 3. Chapter 509, Government Code, is amended by
15 adding Section 509.0042 to read as follows:

16 Sec. 509.0042. VETERANS BENEFITS PLAN. The division shall
17 require each department to develop and implement a comprehensive
18 plan to:

19 (1) determine if a defendant placed on community
20 supervision is a veteran; and

21 (2) assist the defendant in obtaining any federal or
22 state veterans benefits for which the defendant is eligible to
23 provide for the following, as applicable, during the defendant's
24 term of community supervision:

25 (A) housing;

26 (B) employment;

27 (C) education;

1 (D) financial support for the defendant's
2 family; and

3 (E) medical or mental health care.

4 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2021.