

By: Schatzline

H.B. No. 5283

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the operations of the Texas Military Department.

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

SECTION 1. This Act may be cited as the Texas Military Forces Modernization and Readiness Act.

SECTION 2. (a) The Legislature finds that:

(1) The modernization of training infrastructure and equipment for the Texas military forces is a critical strategic imperative for maintaining combat effectiveness and ensuring rapid response capabilities.

(2) The Texas Military Department faces a significant infrastructure crisis, with 96 percent of readiness centers rated as deficient or failing, and a two-million-square-foot space shortfall that compromises operational readiness.

(3) The Texas military forces require dedicated training centers to prepare forces for evolving multi-domain threats while ensuring parity with active-duty forces.

(4) Expanding training infrastructure, increasing joint training opportunities, and developing a state-controlled Training Aids, Devices, Simulators, and Simulations (TADSS) program will enhance readiness, reduce costs, and ensure access to mission-critical resources.

(5) Strategic equipment modernization is necessary to maintain technological parity with active-duty forces and enhance

1 state-specific operational capabilities.

2 (6) A dedicated Texas military readiness fund must be
3 established to provide sustained financial support for facility
4 upgrades, equipment procurement, and training infrastructure
5 expansion.

6 (b) The purpose of this Act is to:

7 (1) modernize and expand Texas Military Department
8 facilities to meet current and future operational requirements;

9 (2) establish a combat training center for the Texas
10 military forces to ensure modern warfare readiness;

11 (3) expand training facilities, including training
12 facilities designed to train the Texas military forces for urban
13 warfare, cyber warfare, air defense, operating unmanned aircraft,
14 and aviation gunnery;

15 (4) develop a program that permits service members in
16 the Texas military forces to train in realistic environments that
17 simulate scenarios likely to occur while deployed and provides
18 visual and interactive aids to reinforce key training points;

19 (5) implement a state-funded equipment modernization
20 program to enhance Texas military forces' operational
21 effectiveness;

22 (6) mandate semiannual joint exercises between Texas
23 National Guard forces and law enforcement agencies to improve
24 domestic security coordination; and

25 (7) expand equipment acquisition priorities to
26 include disaster response, counter-drone (CUAS) capabilities, and
27 mobile surveillance assets for homeland defense.

SECTION 3. Subchapter C, Chapter 437, Government Code, is amended by adding Sections 437.120 and 437.121 to read as follows:

Sec. 437.120. TEXAS MILITARY READINESS FUND. (a) The Texas military readiness fund is an account established in the general revenue fund.

(b) The Texas military readiness fund consists of:

(1) money appropriated or transferred to the credit of the fund; and

(2) interest and other earnings on the investment of money in the fund.

(c) Money in the fund may be appropriated only to pay for the facilities, programs, and equipment described by Sections 437.164, 437.165, 437.166, 437.233, and 437.234.

(d) The department shall establish an oversight board to monitor expenditures from the fund and the effectiveness of facilities, programs, and equipment acquired or implemented with money from the fund.

Sec. 437.121. REPORTING ON EXPENDITURES FROM TEXAS MILITARY READINESS FUND. (a) Not later than January 31 and July 31 of each year, the department shall report to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the members of the legislature on:

(1) the expenditures of money from the Texas military readiness fund established under Section 437.120; and

(2) the progress the department has made in:
(A) constructing and renovating the facilities required by Sections 437.164, 437.165, and 437.166;

1 (B) developing the programs required by Section
2 437.233; and

3 (C) purchasing the equipment required by Section
4 437.234.

5 (b) The report must also include utilization rates by the
6 Texas military forces of the facilities, programs, and equipment
7 described by Subsection (a) and the increase in military readiness
8 resulting from using the facilities and equipment and implementing
9 the programs described by Subsection (a).

10 SECTION 4. Subchapter D, Chapter 437, Government Code, is
11 amended by adding Sections 437.164, 437.165, and 437.166 to read as
12 follows:

13 Sec. 437.164. MILITARY READINESS: CONSTRUCTION AND
14 RENOVATION. (a) Based on findings and reports of the real property
15 advisory council established under Section 437.151, the department
16 shall construct new facilities and renovate existing facilities to
17 meet readiness standards set by the department for department
18 facilities, including the construction and renovation of:

19 (1) readiness centers;

20 (2) training facilities; and

21 (3) other support infrastructure.

22 (b) The department shall determine the amount of facility
23 space necessary to ensure military readiness and construct
24 facilities or renovate existing facilities to ensure military
25 readiness.

26 (c) As provided by Sections 437.155 and 437.156, the
27 department may purchase, lease, or otherwise acquire real property

for purposes of this section.

Sec. 437.165. CONSTRUCTION OF COMBAT TRAINING CENTER. (a)
The department shall construct and maintain a combat training
center for use by the Texas military forces and any military force
engaged in joint operations with the Texas military forces.

(b) The combat training center shall:

(1) provide training on air, land, sea, space,
electromagnetic, and cyber warfare;

(2) facilitate joint exercises among forces on state
active duty, the Texas State Guard, and allied military forces;

(3) establish a force dedicated to role-playing enemy
forces to enhance the realism of training exercises; and

(4) develop training environments to mimic
environments and scenarios likely to occur during military
operations.

Sec. 437.166. ADDITIONAL TRAINING FACILITIES. In addition
to the facilities required by Sections 437.164 and 437.165, the
department shall construct training facilities to provide training
on:

(1) urban warfare;

(2) cyber warfare;

(3) operating unmanned aircraft for military
purposes;

(4) helicopter gunnery; and

(5) joint operations with allied military forces.

SECTION 5. Subchapter E, Chapter 437, Government Code, is
amended by adding Sections 437.233 and 437.234 to read as follows:

1 Sec. 437.233. STATE TRAINING AIDS AND SIMULATION PROGRAM;
2 PROGRAM MANAGER. (a) The department shall establish a program
3 that:

4 (1) develops and distributes visual and interactive
5 aids to reinforce key training points; and

6 (2) develops realistic training environments that
7 simulate scenarios service members will likely encounter while
8 deployed, including:

9 (A) border security and counter-cartel
10 operations; and

11 (B) disaster response scenarios.

12 (b) The department shall appoint an officer to manage the
13 program required by this section.

14 (c) The officer under Subsection (b) may employ staff as
15 necessary to develop, update, and maintain the aids described by
16 Subsection (a)(1) and the training environments and scenarios
17 described by Subsection (a)(2).

18 Sec. 437.234. EQUIPMENT MODERNIZATION. The department
19 shall purchase:

20 (1) advanced protective gear, including
21 next-generation body armor and ballistic helmets;

22 (2) communication systems that allow for encrypted
23 radio and satellite-based communications;

24 (3) unmanned aircraft for use in reconnaissance,
25 surveillance, and other missions;

26 (4) electronic warfare assets for countering the use
27 of unmanned aircraft against the Texas military forces; and

1 (5) mobile command and surveillance systems.

2 SECTION 6. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
3 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
4 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
5 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
6 Act takes effect September 1, 2025.