

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 80

By: Wise

Defense Affairs and State-Federal Relations
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Many veterans in Texas are combat veterans from WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Panama, Somalia, and the Persian Gulf. Texas has the second largest veterans population in the nation who bring into the Texas economy over \$3 Billion dollars from the Veterans Administration alone. Within Hidalgo County alone there are over 65,000 veterans, 59,000 of these veterans in the area are not provided medical treatment as veterans. Many others suffer from lack of employment training and even hunger. Hidalgo County is only one out of 254 counties in Texas, which has over 1.6 million veterans. HB 80 proposes to set up a fund for veteran's health care for financing of certain veterans programs, including veteran's care, veterans homes and veterans' health care programs. This fund would be set up outside the General Revenue Fund and would be composed of two sub-accounts administered by both the Veterans' Land Board (VLB) and the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC). The fund would be funded from any gifts or grants given, and the interest accumulated.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the Committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly delegated to the Texas Veteran's Commission in SECTION 1 (Section 434.016 (h), Government Code) of this bill.

ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. HB 80 sets up the fund for veterans' care. The Fund is a special fund in the State Treasury, outside of General Revenue and is composed of any money given as a gift or grant, and any earnings of the fund.

The fund is composed of the Veterans' Land Board Account and the Texas Veterans Commission Account. The bill sets forth provisions on how the money in the account may be spent by each Agency. The VLB may spend any monies on programs relating to veterans homes or cemeteries and the TVC may spend monies for programs relating to health care or to make grants to local communities to address veterans' health care needs.

SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2003.

COMPARISON OF SUBSTITUTE TO THE ORIGINAL

The Substitute modifies the original version of the bill in that the substitute is a Legislative Council draft.

In SECTION 1, the fund has been changed from a "Permanent fund for Veterans' care" as a special fund in the state treasury outside the general revenue fund to a "Fund for Veterans' care" outside the state treasury held by the Texas Treasury Safekeeping Trust Company to be jointly administered by the commission and the Veterans' Land Board.

In SECTION 1, the words "The fund is composed" on line 9 were deleted. Lines 10 through 24 on page

1 and lines 1 through 15 on page 2 of the ORIGINAL BILL were DELETED in the committee substitute. In place of the aforementioned deleted lines, lines 10 through 14 on page 1 of the COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE state that the fund will be composed of an account for the Veterans' Land Board and a separate account for the Texas Veterans Commission. In addition, the COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE adds Section 1 (c) allowing the Veterans' Land Board and the Texas Veterans Commission to solicit and accept gifts and grants to the general fund, specifying that the solicited money may only be spent in accordance with any limitations or requirements placed on the gift or grant by the donor or granting entity.

The COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE also adds SECTION 1 (d) which states that the gifts and grants that are contributed to the fund will be distributed equally to individual accounts for the Veterans' Land Board and Texas Land Commission. SECTION 1 (e) of the COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE states that the interest earned by each individual account shall be retained by those accounts.

SECTION 1 (f) of the COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE states that the Veteran's Land Board is authorized to spend 50% of the interest and 25% of the corpus from their account for programs relating to veterans cemeteries and may spend the remaining 50% of the interest and 25% of the corpus from their account for programs relating to veterans' homes.

SECTION 1 (g) of the COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE states that the Texas Veterans Commission is authorized to spend 50% of its corpus on veterans' health care and to make grants to local communities to address veterans' health care.

SECTION 1 (h) of the COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE states that the Texas Veterans Commission may adopt rules to govern the awarding of grants by the commission.

SECTION 2 and SECTION 3 of the ORIGINAL BILL are DELETED in the committee substitute.

SECTION 4 in the ORIGINAL BILL is renumbered accordingly as SECTION 2 in the committee substitute (page 2, line 18) to correspond with the deleted section.