

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 18
By: Corte
Defense Affairs & State-Federal Relations
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Upon separation from the military, veterans are given discharge paperwork that sometimes contains sensitive information. This paperwork, often in the form of a DD Form 214, is generally filed with the County Clerk's office so the veteran can access a certified copy quickly. Before the 78th Legislative session, these documents were subject to the Open Records Act and available to anyone requesting it. 78R HB545 allowed for these records to be confidential, except to a few people who were listed in the bill.

When a veteran dies, many families rely on the staff at a funeral home to coordinate details of the funeral, including any veteran benefits. In the past, the funeral home staff was able to access the veteran's records and use it to coordinate benefits with the authorized veteran service officer. Because of 78RHB545, funeral home staff is now prohibited from accessing this information and must rely on the family to provide them with this information.

HB 18 allows an authorized representative of the funeral home assisting with the burial of a veteran to have access to the veteran's discharge records.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

HB 18 adds an authorized representative of a funeral home assisting with the burial of a veteran, to the list of people allowed to access discharge records from certain governmental bodies.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Unless the bill receives the necessary two-thirds vote in both houses for immediate effect, the bill will take effect on the 91st day after the last day of the legislative session.