

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 2603

By: Escobar

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

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Many disabled veterans receive frequent medical care from facilities operated by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. These facilities are often located a considerable distance from the veteran's residence.

CSHB 2603 provides free or discounted tolls for disabled veterans.

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

CSHB 2603 amends the Transportation Code by adding Chapter 371 to define "Toll project" and "Toll project entity" and to allow a toll project entity to establish a discount program for electronic toll collection customers. The program must include free or discounted use of the entity's toll project by an electronic toll collection customer whose account relates to a vehicle registered with a disabled veteran license plate or a purple heart recipient license plate or is registered by a person who has received the Medal of Honor.

CSHB 2603 allows the legislature to appropriate funds from the general revenue fund to a toll project entity to defray the cost of providing free or discounted use of the entity's toll project under this section.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2007.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL TO SUBSTITUTE

The committee substitute is a legislative council draft and strikes the language after the enacting clause of the original bill. The original bill amended Chapter 366, Transportation Code, to allow a regional tollway authority to issue vehicle tags to disabled veterans for free or discounted tolls. It also allowed the Commissioner of the Texas Department of Transportation to formulate by rule guidelines to allow disabled veterans entitled to toll road discounts in one locality to enjoy those discounts in another locality.

CSHB 2603 amends the Transportation Code by adding Chapter 371 to allow a toll project entity to establish a discount program for electronic toll collection customers. The program must include free or discounted use of the toll entity's toll project by an electronic toll collection customer whose account relates to a vehicle with a disabled veteran license plate or a purple heart recipient license plate or is registered by a person who has received the Medal of Honor. Further, it allows the legislature to appropriate funds from the general revenue fund to a toll project entity to defray the cost of providing free or discounted use of the entity's toll project under this section.

The effective date on the original bill was upon passage, or, if the Act did not receive the necessary vote, the effective date would have been September 1, 2007; the effective date on the substitute is September 1, 2007.

C.S.H.B. 2603 80(R)