

By: West, et al.

S.B. No. 1058

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to reintegration counseling services and related resources for military servicemembers.

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

SECTION 1. Section 431.001, Government Code, is amended by adding Subdivision (1-a) to read as follows:

(1-a) "Servicemember" has the meaning assigned by Section 161.551, Health and Safety Code.

SECTION 2. Subchapter B, Chapter 431, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 431.0291 to read as follows:

Sec. 431.0291. SERVICE REFERRAL PROGRAM. (a) The department shall develop a program to provide referrals to servicemembers for reintegration services.

(b) The program shall:

(1) identify and make referrals to community-based organizations that have existing programs that provide reintegration services to servicemembers and their families;

(2) focus on early intervention and appropriate referral to promote the health of servicemembers and the children and other family members of the servicemembers;

(3) promote family cohesion and sustainability;

(4) be based on evidence-based best practices related to meeting the needs of servicemembers and the children and other family members of the servicemembers;

1           (5) be carried out, when appropriate, in a community  
2 setting through peer counseling and other means effective for  
3 community outreach;

4           (6) use existing service delivery facilities,  
5 including churches, National Guard Bureau family education  
6 facilities, and veterans centers and support facilities;

7           (7) use community-based and faith-based  
8 organizations;

9           (8) be developed and administered in a manner that  
10 promotes collaboration of service providers and results in the  
11 referral of servicemembers, their children, and other family  
12 members to the appropriate federal, state, and community services  
13 for which they are eligible; and

14           (9) provide information and referral services  
15 regarding the risks and consequences of trauma, including  
16 post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, and other  
17 conditions for which servicemembers are at risk.

18           (c) The department shall ensure that:

19           (1) each person who provides referrals to  
20 servicemembers under the referral program has received sufficient  
21 training to ensure that servicemembers receive accurate  
22 information; and

23           (2) servicemembers are notified in a timely manner  
24 about the service referral program.

25           (d) In developing the referral program, the department  
26 shall consult with the state military forces, the National Guard  
27 Bureau, the United States Veterans Health Administration, the Texas

1 A&M Health Science Center College of Medicine, and The University  
2 of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio.

3 SECTION 3. Section 434.007, Government Code, is amended to  
4 read as follows:

5 Sec. 434.007. DUTIES. The commission shall:

6 (1) compile federal, state, and local laws enacted to  
7 benefit members of the armed forces, veterans, and their families  
8 and dependents;

9 (2) collect information relating to services and  
10 facilities available to veterans;

11 (3) cooperate with veterans service agencies in the  
12 state;

13 (4) inform members and veterans of the armed forces,  
14 their families and dependents, and military and civilian  
15 authorities about the existence or availability of:

16 (A) educational training and retraining  
17 facilities;

18 (B) health, medical, rehabilitation, and housing  
19 services and facilities;

20 (C) employment and reemployment services;

21 (D) provisions of federal, state, and local law  
22 affording rights, privileges, and benefits to members and veterans  
23 of the armed forces and their families and dependents; and

24 (E) other similar, related, or appropriate  
25 matters;

26 (5) assist veterans and their families and dependents  
27 in presenting, proving, and establishing claims, privileges,

1 rights, and benefits they may have under federal, state, or local  
2 law;

3 (6) cooperate with all government and private agencies  
4 securing services or benefits to veterans and their families and  
5 dependents;

6 (7) investigate, and if possible correct, abuses or  
7 exploitation of veterans or their families or dependents, and  
8 recommend necessary legislation for full correction;

9 (8) coordinate the services and activities of state  
10 departments and divisions having services and resources affecting  
11 veterans or their families or dependents; ~~and~~

12 (9) provide training and certification of veterans  
13 county service officers and assistant veterans county service  
14 officers in accordance with Section 434.038; and

15 (10) through surveys or other reasonable and accurate  
16 methods of estimation, collect and maintain for each county in the  
17 state the number of servicemembers and veterans residing in the  
18 county and annually update and publish the information on the  
19 commission's website.

20 SECTION 4. Subchapter C, Chapter 434, Government Code, is  
21 amended by adding Section 434.107 to read as follows:

22 Sec. 434.107. DIRECTORY OF SERVICES. (a) The commission  
23 shall collaborate with and assist the Department of State Health  
24 Services and the Health and Human Services Commission in compiling  
25 and maintaining the directory of services established under Section  
26 161.552, Health and Safety Code.

27 (b) The commission shall provide the directory of services

1 established under Section 161.552, Health and Safety Code, on the  
2 commission's website or through links appearing on the commission's  
3 website.

4 SECTION 5. Subchapter B, Chapter 531, Government Code, is  
5 amended by adding Section 531.093 to read as follows:

6 Sec. 531.093. SERVICES FOR MILITARY PERSONNEL. (a) In  
7 this section, "servicemember" has the meaning assigned by Section  
8 161.551, Health and Safety Code.

9 (b) The executive commissioner shall ensure that each  
10 health and human services agency adopts policies and procedures  
11 that require the agency to:

12 (1) identify servicemembers who are seeking services  
13 from the agency during the agency's intake and eligibility  
14 determination process; and

15 (2) direct servicemembers seeking services to  
16 appropriate service providers, including the United States  
17 Veterans Health Administration, National Guard Bureau facilities,  
18 and other federal, state, and local service providers.

19 (c) The executive commissioner shall make the directory of  
20 resources established under Section 161.552, Health and Safety  
21 Code, accessible to each health and human services agency.

22 SECTION 6. Chapter 161, Health and Safety Code, is amended  
23 by adding Subchapter U to read as follows:

24 SUBCHAPTER U. INFORMATION REGARDING PROGRAMS FOR MILITARY  
25 PERSONNEL AND THEIR FAMILIES

26 Sec. 161.551. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

27 (1) "Commission" means the Health and Human Services

1 Commission.

2 (2) "Department" means the Department of State Health  
3 Services.

4 (3) "Servicemember" means a resident of this state who  
5 is a member or former member of the state military forces or a  
6 component of the United States armed forces, including a reserve  
7 component. In this section, "state military forces" has the  
8 meaning assigned by Section 431.001, Government Code.

9 Sec. 161.552. DIRECTORY OF SERVICES. (a) The department  
10 and commission shall compile, maintain, and disseminate through the  
11 Texas Information and Referral Network and through other  
12 appropriate media, a directory of services and other resources,  
13 tools, and counseling programs available to servicemembers and  
14 their immediate family.

15 (b) The directory must include:

16 (1) information regarding counseling services that:

17 (A) facilitate the reintegration of the  
18 servicemember into civilian and family life;

19 (B) identify and treat stress disorders, trauma,  
20 and traumatic brain injury;

21 (C) address parenting and family well-being,  
22 employment, and substance abuse issues; and

23 (D) provide crisis intervention services;

24 (2) to the greatest degree possible in the judgment of  
25 the department, all private and public community, state, and  
26 national resources that protect and promote the health and  
27 well-being of servicemembers and their immediate family and that

1 are accessible in the state directly or through electronic media,  
2 print media, or the Internet; and

3 (3) other resources that support the health of  
4 servicemembers and their families.

5 (c) The department and commission shall organize the  
6 directory in a manner that allows a person to locate services in a  
7 specific community in the state.

8 (d) The department and commission shall develop and  
9 maintain the directory in collaboration with local, state, and  
10 national private and government organizations, including:

11 (1) the United States Veterans Health Administration;

12 (2) the United States Department of Defense;

13 (3) the adjutant general's department;

14 (4) the Texas Veterans Commission; and

15 (5) other public and private national and  
16 community-based organizations that provide support to  
17 servicemembers and their families.

18 (e) The department shall provide the directory to the Texas  
19 Information and Referral Network of the commission in the time  
20 periods and in the manner and format specified by the Texas  
21 Information and Referral Network.

22 (f) The department shall provide the directory on the  
23 department's website or through links appearing on the department's  
24 website.

25 SECTION 7. This Act takes effect September 1, 2007.