

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1299
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Licensing & Administrative Procedures
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Currently, the fund for veterans' assistance, administered by the Texas Veterans Commission, is an unfunded mandate and is in need of additional funding through a reliable revenue source.

Assistance provided by the fund includes grants to organizations that can provide direct support to individual veterans and their families on a case by case basis; supplements for veterans and their families who cannot meet the financial burden of nursing care; assistance to counties for veterans programs, such as providing transportation to VA hospitals and clinics; support to veteran peer groups that help with issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury; and grants for counseling for family members of veterans, including child and marital counseling. Providing additional revenue to this fund will greatly improve the ability of the Texas Veterans Commission to serve Texas veterans.

H.B. 1299 requires the Texas Lottery Commission to operate an instant-ticket lottery game to benefit the fund for veterans' assistance. The bill requires that the tickets clearly state that the proceeds benefit veterans in Texas and authorizes the Texas Veterans Commission to make recommendations to the Texas Lottery Commission regarding marketing and advertising of the program.

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

H.B. 1299 amends the Government Code to require the Texas Lottery Commission to operate an instant-ticket lottery game to benefit the fund for veterans' assistance. The bill requires the commission to determine the ticket price, payout amounts, and manner in which the game is conducted; make tickets to the game available for sale continuously to the extent practicable; and change the design or theme of the game regularly to ensure that the game remains competitive with other instant-ticket lottery games offered by the commission. The bill requires the commission to market and advertise the lottery game in a manner intended to inform the public that the game tickets are available for purchase and that the game proceeds are used to fund veterans programs in Texas. The bill requires the game tickets to clearly state that the game proceeds are used to benefit the veterans in Texas. The bill authorizes the Texas Veterans Commission to make recommendations to the Texas Lottery Commission relating to the marketing and advertising of the game. The bill requires the Texas Lottery Commission to encourage each sales agent that sells tickets to instant-ticket games or similar types of lottery games to sell tickets to the lottery game operated to benefit the fund for veterans' assistance.

H.B. 1299 requires the balance of the money in the state lottery account, after creation of a reserve sufficient to pay the amounts needed or estimated to be needed under the priority distribution provisions, to be transferred on or before the 15th day of each month as follows: the

portion of the balance attributable to the lottery game operated to benefit the fund for veterans' assistance to the fund for veterans' assistance and the remainder to the foundation school fund.

H.B. 1299 includes money transferred to the fund for veterans' assistance from proceeds of the lottery game to the sources of funding of which the fund for veterans' assistance is composed. The bill authorizes the commission, rather than the comptroller of public accounts, to solicit, accept, or refuse a gift or grant of money, services, or property for any purpose related to the fund for veterans' assistance.

H.B. 1299 requires the commission to establish and begin selling tickets to the lottery game not later than March 2, 2010.

H.B. 1299 establishes that the bill's provisions take effect, except for the statutory citations, regardless of whether or not the Act of the 81st Legislature, Regular Session, 2009, relating to the nonsubstantive additions to and corrections in existing codes becomes law.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the act does not receive the necessary vote, the act takes effect September 1, 2009.