

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 3721
By: Ortiz, Jr.
Defense & Veterans' Affairs
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Texas is currently facing a shortage of correctional officers and it is in the best interest of the state to ensure that its existing correctional facilities are properly staffed. The Troops to Teachers program provides a sound model of a streamlined certification process for military personnel interested in teaching. That program assists eligible military personnel in beginning new careers as public school teachers where their skills, knowledge, and experience are most needed.

H.B. 3721 requires the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) to establish and implement a streamlined program to train and certify a former member of the armed forces or a member or former member of the armed forces reserves or the state's military forces as a correctional officer. The bill requires TDCJ to model the program after the Troops to Teachers program operated by the U.S. Department of Defense to the extent practicable. This legislation assists in alleviating the correctional officer shortage and hastens the integration of returning troops into the workforce.

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. 3721 amends the Government Code to require the Texas Department of Criminal Justice to establish and implement a streamlined program to train and certify as a correctional officer an individual who is a former member of the United States armed forces, a member or former member of a reserve component of the United States armed forces, or a member or former member of the Texas state military forces. The bill requires the department, to the extent practicable, to model the program after the Troops to Teachers program operated by the United States Department of Education and Department of Defense.

H.B. 3721 requires the department to establish and implement the program as soon as practicable after the effective date of the bill.

EFFECTIVE DATE

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