

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 2256
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Veteran Affairs & Military Installations
4/28/2009
Committee Report (Amended)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Currently, the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) assists women in accessing Veteran Affairs benefit programs and healthcare services. This program functions as a service of TVC, but there is no statute in place that provides for or protects the Texas women veterans program.

S.B. 2256 establishes the Texas Women Veterans Program in TVC to ensure that Texas women veterans have equitable access to federal and state veterans' services and benefits.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 434, Government Code, by adding Subchapter D, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER D. TEXAS WOMEN VETERANS PROGRAM

Sec. 434.151. DEFINITIONS. Defines "commission," "executive director," "program," and "woman veteran."

Sec. 434.152. ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM; PROGRAM MISSION. (a) Establishes the Texas Women Veterans Program (program) in the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC). Provides that the program is attached to the office of the executive director of TVC (executive director) for administrative purposes.

(b) Provides that the mission of the program is to ensure that the women veterans of this state have equitable access to federal and state veterans' benefits and services.

Sec. 434.153. COORDINATOR. Requires the executive director to designate a women veterans coordinator for this state.

Sec. 434.154. GENERAL PROGRAM DUTIES. Requires that the program provide assistance to the women veterans of this state as provided by this subchapter; perform outreach functions to improve the awareness of women veterans of their eligibility for federal and state veteran's benefits and services; assess the needs of women veterans with respect to benefits and services; review programs, research projects, and other initiatives designed to address the needs of the women veterans of this state; make recommendations to the executive director regarding the improvement of benefits and services to women veterans; and incorporate issues concerning women veterans in TVC planning regarding veterans' benefits and services.

Sec. 434.155. ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC AWARENESS. (a) Requires that the program advocate for women veterans and work to increase public awareness about the gender-specific needs of women veterans.

(b) Requires that the program recommend legislative initiatives and the development of policies on the local, state, and national levels to address the issues affecting women veterans.

Sec. 434.156. COLLABORATION. Requires that the program collaborate with federal, state, and private agencies that provide services to women veterans.

Sec. 434.157. RESEARCH; DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION. (a) Requires that the program monitor and research issues relating to women veterans.

(b) Requires that the program disseminate information regarding opportunities for women veterans throughout the network of entities with which the program collaborates.

Sec. 434.158. EDUCATION. Requires that the program, through conferences, seminars, and training workshops with federal, state, and private agencies, provide guidance and direction to a woman veteran who is applying for grants, benefits, or services.

Sec. 434.159. HONOR AND RECOGNITION. Requires that the program promote events and activities that recognize and honor the women veterans of this state and women who serve in the military.

Sec. 434.160. FACILITIES. Requires that the program, to the extent funding is available for that purpose, provide facilities as appropriate in support of the program.

Sec. 434.161. FUNDING. Authorizes the executive director, on behalf of the program, to accept and spend funds appropriated to TVC for the operation of the program and funds received from other sources, including donations and grants.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2009.

SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE CHANGES

Amends S.B. 2256 by adding the following appropriately numbered section to the bill and renumbering subsequent sections of the bill accordingly: "SECTION _____. This Act does not make an appropriation. A provision in this Act that creates a new governmental program, creates a new entitlement, or imposes a new duty on a governmental entity is not mandatory during a fiscal period for which the legislature has not made a specific appropriation to implement the provision."