

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 1796
By: Van de Putte et al.
Veteran Affairs & Military Installations
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Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

S.B. 1796 creates the Texas Coordinating Council for Veterans Services (council) in Chapter 434 (Texas Veterans Commission), Government Code.

S.B. 1796 establishes the council to coordinate the activities of state agencies that assist veterans, servicemembers, and their families; to coordinate outreach efforts which ensure that veterans, servicemembers, and their families are made aware of services; and to coordinate the work of state, federal, and local agencies, and of advisory councils in addressing issues affecting veterans, servicemembers, and their families.

S.B. 1796 provides that the council is comprised of five state agencies—the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC), the Veterans Land Board, the Adjutant General's Department, the Health and Human Services Commission and the State Bar of Texas. The bill allows the council to establish coordinating workgroups to focus on specific issues and expands the membership of the council based on the focus of the coordinating workgroup.

S.B. 1796 authorizes the council to invite an organization or entity that is not a member to participate in coordinating workgroups and to establish other coordinating workgroups as necessary; provides for the executive director of TVC to serve as chair of the council; requires the council to meet at least annually and to have its initial meeting not later than November 1, 2011; administratively attaches the council to TVC, but requires all state agencies serving on the council to support the work of the council and any representative they designate to work with the council; and requires the council to submit a report not later than October 1 of each even numbered year.

S.B. 1796 amends current law relating to the creation of the Texas Coordinating Council for Veterans Services.

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 COORDINATING COUNCIL FOR VETERANS SERVICES

Sec. 434.151. DEFINITIONS. Defines, in this subchapter, "council" and "servicemember."

Sec. 434.152. TEXAS COORDINATING COUNCIL FOR VETERANS SERVICES. Provides that the Texas Coordinating Council for Veterans Services (council) is established to:

- (1) coordinate the activities of state agencies that assist veterans, servicemembers, and their families;

(2) coordinate outreach efforts that ensure that veterans, servicemembers, and their families are made aware of services; and

(3) facilitate collaborative relationships among state, federal, and local agencies and private organizations to identify and address issues affecting veterans, servicemembers, and their families.

Sec. 434.153. COMPOSITION OF COUNCIL. Provides that the council is composed of the executive head of the following agencies, or that person's designated representative:

- (1) the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC);
- (2) the Veterans' Land Board;
- (3) the adjutant general's department;
- (4) the Health and Human Services Commission; and
- (5) the State Bar of Texas.

Sec. 434.154. COORDINATING WORKGROUPS; ADDITIONAL COUNCIL MEMBERS. (a) Authorizes the council to, by majority vote, establish the following coordinating workgroups to focus on specific issues affecting veterans, servicemembers, and their families: health or mental health, employment, higher education, criminal justice, housing, and any other coordinating workgroup considered necessary.

(b) Provides that if the council votes to establish a health or mental health coordinating workgroup, the membership of the council also includes the executive head, or that person's designated representative, of the Department of State Health Services, the Department of Aging and Disability Services, and the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services.

(c) Provides that if the council votes to establish an employment coordinating workgroup, the membership of the council also includes the executive head, or that person's designated representative, of the Texas Workforce Commission, and the Texas Workforce Investment Council.

(d) Provides that if the council votes to establish a higher education coordinating workgroup, the membership of the council also includes the commissioner of higher education, or the commissioner's designated representative.

(e) Provides that if the council votes to establish a criminal justice coordinating workgroup, the membership of the council also includes the executive head, or that person's designated representative, of the Texas Correctional Office of Offenders with Medical or Mental Impairments, and the Commission on Jail Standards.

(f) Provides that if the council votes to establish a housing coordinating workgroup, the membership of the council also includes the executive head, or that person's designated representative, of the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs, and the Texas Department of Rural Affairs.

(g) Authorizes each member of the council to invite one organization or agency that provides services to veterans, servicemembers, and their families, but that is not otherwise a member of the council, to designate a representative to participate in a coordinating workgroup through procedures established by the council.

Sec. 434.155. PRESIDING OFFICER. Requires the executive director of TVC to serve as the presiding officer.

Sec. 434.156. MEETINGS. Requires the council to meet at least annually and at the call of the presiding officer.

Sec. 434.157. ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT. (a) Provides that the council is administratively attached to TVC. Authorizes TVC to provide administrative support and resources to the council as necessary to enable the council to perform its duties.

(b) Requires a state agency represented on the council to support the agency's involvement with the council and provide staff support as needed to the council.

(c) Provides that the designated representative of any organization or agency that accepts an invitation to serve on a coordinating workgroup of the council under Section 434.154(g) is not entitled to compensation, but is entitled to reimbursement of the representative's travel expenses as provided by Chapter 660 (Travel Expenses) and the General Appropriation Act.

Sec. 434.158. REPORT BY COUNCIL. Requires the council, not later than October 1 of each even-numbered year, to submit a report to the governor, lieutenant governor, speaker of the house of representatives, and chairs of the appropriate committees of the legislature detailing the work of the council and any recommendations.

SECTION 2. Requires the presiding officer of the council to call the initial meeting of the council not later than November 1, 2011.

SECTION 3. Provides that this Act does not make an appropriation or require a specific appropriation. Provides that any new duty imposed on a state agency as a result of the Act can be performed through the appropriations provided by the legislature as part of the existing responsibilities of the state agency.

SECTION 4. Effective date: September 1, 2011.