

1-1 By: Zaffirini, et al. S.B. No. 34
1-2 (In the Senate - Filed November 8, 2010; January 31, 2011,
1-3 read first time and referred to Committee on Veteran Affairs and
1-4 Military Installations; May 2, 2011, reported favorably by the
1-5 following vote: Yeas 4, Nays 0; May 2, 2011, sent to printer.)

1-6 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
1-7 AN ACT

1-8 relating to the establishment and operation of the Texas Women
1-9 Veterans Program.

1-10 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:
1-11 SECTION 1. Chapter 434, Government Code, is amended by
1-12 adding Subchapter D to read as follows:

1-13 SUBCHAPTER D. TEXAS WOMEN VETERANS PROGRAM

1-14 Sec. 434.151. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

1-15 (1) "Commission" means the Texas Veterans Commission.

1-16 (2) "Executive director" means the executive director
1-17 of the commission.

1-18 (3) "Program" means the Texas Women Veterans Program.

1-19 (4) "Woman veteran" means a woman who:

1-20 (A) served on active duty in the armed forces of
1-21 the United States or in the Texas National Guard on federal active
1-22 duty under Title 10, United States Code; and

1-23 (B) was discharged or released from that service
1-24 under conditions other than dishonorable.

1-25 Sec. 434.152. ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM; PROGRAM MISSION.

1-26 (a) The Texas Women Veterans Program is established in the
1-27 commission. The program is attached to the office of the executive
1-28 director for administrative purposes.

1-29 (b) The mission of the program is to ensure that the women
1-30 veterans of this state have equitable access to federal and state
1-31 veterans benefits and services.

1-32 Sec. 434.153. COORDINATOR. The executive director shall
1-33 designate a women veterans coordinator for this state.

1-34 Sec. 434.154. GENERAL PROGRAM DUTIES. The program shall:

1-35 (1) provide assistance to the women veterans of this
1-36 state as provided by this subchapter;

1-37 (2) perform outreach functions to improve the
1-38 awareness of women veterans of their eligibility for federal and
1-39 state veterans benefits and services;

1-40 (3) assess the needs of women veterans with respect to
1-41 benefits and services;

1-42 (4) review programs, research projects, and other
1-43 initiatives designed to address the needs of the women veterans of
1-44 this state;

1-45 (5) make recommendations to the executive director
1-46 regarding the improvement of benefits and services to women
1-47 veterans; and

1-48 (6) incorporate issues concerning women veterans in
1-49 commission planning regarding veterans benefits and services.

1-50 Sec. 434.155. ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC AWARENESS. (a) The
1-51 program shall advocate for women veterans and work to increase
1-52 public awareness about the gender-specific needs of women veterans.

1-53 (b) The program shall recommend legislative initiatives and
1-54 the development of policies on the local, state, and national
1-55 levels to address the issues affecting women veterans.

1-56 Sec. 434.156. COLLABORATION. The program shall collaborate
1-57 with federal, state, and private agencies that provide services to
1-58 women veterans.

1-59 Sec. 434.157. RESEARCH; DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION.

1-60 (a) The program shall monitor and research issues relating to
1-61 women veterans.

1-62 (b) The program shall disseminate information regarding
1-63 opportunities for women veterans throughout the network of entities
1-64 with which the program collaborates.

2-1 Sec. 434.158. EDUCATION. Through conferences, seminars,
2-2 and training workshops with federal, state, and private agencies,
2-3 the program shall provide guidance and direction to a woman veteran
2-4 who is applying for grants, benefits, or services.

2-5 Sec. 434.159. HONOR AND RECOGNITION. The program shall
2-6 promote events and activities that recognize and honor the women
2-7 veterans of this state and women who serve in the military.

2-8 Sec. 434.160. FACILITIES. To the extent funding is
2-9 available for that purpose, the program shall provide facilities as
2-10 appropriate in support of the program.

2-11 Sec. 434.161. FUNDING. On behalf of the program, the
2-12 executive director may accept and spend funds:

2-13 (1) appropriated to the commission for the operation
2-14 of the program; and

2-15 (2) received from other sources, including donations
2-16 and grants.

2-17 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
2-18 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
2-19 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
2-20 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
2-21 Act takes effect September 1, 2011.

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