

By: Van de Putte, et al.

S.B. No. 1796

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the creation of the Texas Coordinating Council for Veterans Services.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Chapter 434, Government Code, is amended by adding Subchapter D to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER D. TEXAS COORDINATING COUNCIL FOR VETERANS SERVICES

Sec. 434.151. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Council" means the Texas Coordinating Council for Veterans Services.

(2) "Servicemember" has the meaning assigned by Section 161.551, Health and Safety Code.

Sec. 434.152. TEXAS COORDINATING COUNCIL FOR VETERANS SERVICES. The Texas Coordinating Council for Veterans Services 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.

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

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

8       Sec. 434.154. COORDINATING WORKGROUPS; ADDITIONAL COUNCIL  
9 MEMBERS. (a) The council may, by majority vote, establish the  
10 following coordinating workgroups to focus on specific issues  
11 affecting veterans, servicemembers, and their families:

- 12           (1) health or mental health;
- 13           (2) employment;
- 14           (3) higher education;
- 15           (4) criminal justice;
- 16           (5) housing; and
- 17           (6) any other coordinating workgroup considered

18 necessary.

19       (b) If the council votes to establish a health or mental  
20 health coordinating workgroup, the membership of the council also  
21 includes the executive head of the following agencies, or that  
22 person's designated representative:

- 23           (1) the Department of State Health Services;
- 24           (2) the Department of Aging and Disability Services;

25 and

- 26           (3) the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative  
27 Services.

1 (c) If the council votes to establish an employment  
2 coordinating workgroup, the membership of the council also includes  
3 the executive head of the following agencies, or that person's  
4 designated representative:

5 (1) the Texas Workforce Commission; and

6 (2) the Texas Workforce Investment Council.

7 (d) If the council votes to establish a higher education  
8 coordinating workgroup, the membership of the council also includes  
9 the commissioner of higher education, or the commissioner's  
10 designated representative.

11 (e) If the council votes to establish a criminal justice  
12 coordinating workgroup, the membership of the council also includes  
13 the executive head of the following entities, or that person's  
14 designated representative:

15 (1) the Texas Correctional Office on Offenders with  
16 Medical or Mental Impairments; and

17 (2) the Commission on Jail Standards.

18 (f) If the council votes to establish a housing coordinating  
19 workgroup, the membership of the council also includes the  
20 executive head of the following agencies, or that person's  
21 designated representative:

22 (1) the Texas Department of Housing and Community  
23 Affairs; and

24 (2) the Texas Department of Rural Affairs.

25 (g) Each member of the council may invite one organization  
26 or agency that provides services to veterans, servicemembers, and  
27 their families, but that is not otherwise a member of the council,

1 to designate a representative to participate in a coordinating  
2 workgroup through procedures established by the council.

3 Sec. 434.155. PRESIDING OFFICER. The executive director of  
4 the Texas Veterans Commission shall serve as the presiding officer.

5 Sec. 434.156. MEETINGS. The council shall meet at least  
6 annually and at the call of the presiding officer.

7 Sec. 434.157. ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT. (a) The council is  
8 administratively attached to the Texas Veterans Commission. The  
9 Texas Veterans Commission may provide administrative support and  
10 resources to the council as necessary to enable the council to  
11 perform its duties.

12 (b) A state agency represented on the council shall support  
13 the agency's involvement with the council and provide staff support  
14 as needed to the council.

15 (c) The designated representative of any organization or  
16 agency that accepts an invitation to serve on a coordinating  
17 workgroup of the council under Section 434.154(g) is not entitled  
18 to compensation, but is entitled to reimbursement of the  
19 representative's travel expenses as provided by Chapter 660 and the  
20 General Appropriations Act.

21 Sec. 434.158. REPORT BY COUNCIL. Not later than October 1  
22 of each even-numbered year, the council shall submit a report to the  
23 governor, lieutenant governor, speaker of the house of  
24 representatives, and chairs of the appropriate committees of the  
25 legislature detailing the work of the council and any  
26 recommendations.

27 SECTION 2. The presiding officer of the Texas Coordinating

1 Council for Veterans Services shall call the initial meeting of the  
2 council not later than November 1, 2011.

3 SECTION 3. This Act does not make an appropriation or  
4 require a specific appropriation. Any new duty imposed on a state  
5 agency as a result of the Act can be performed through the  
6 appropriations provided by the legislature as part of the existing  
7 responsibilities of the state agency.

8 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2011.