

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;
- 7 (4) the Health and Human Services Commission; and
- 8 (5) the State Bar of Texas.

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

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

19 necessary.

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

- 24 (1) the Department of State Health Services;
- 25 (2) the Department of Aging and Disability Services;
- 26 and
- 27 (3) the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative

1 Services.

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

6 (1) the Texas Workforce Commission; and

7 (2) the Texas Workforce Investment Council.

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

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

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

18 (2) the Commission on Jail Standards.

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

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

25 (2) the Texas Department of Rural Affairs.

26 (g) Each member of the council may invite one organization
27 or agency that provides services to veterans, servicemembers, and

1 their families, but that is not otherwise a member of the council,
2 to designate a representative to participate in a coordinating
3 workgroup through procedures established by the council.

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 SECTION 2. The presiding officer of the Texas Coordinating
2 Council for Veterans Services shall call the initial meeting of the
3 council not later than November 1, 2011.

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

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

President of the Senate

Speaker of the House

I hereby certify that S.B. No. 1796 passed the Senate on April 28, 2011, by the following vote: Yeas 31, Nays 0; and that the Senate concurred in House amendment on May 27, 2011, by the following vote: Yeas 31, Nays 0.

Secretary of the Senate

I hereby certify that S.B. No. 1796 passed the House, with amendment, on May 25, 2011, by the following vote: Yeas 147, Nays 0, one present not voting.

Chief Clerk of the House

Approved:

Date

Governor