

By: Van de Putte, et al.
(Miller of Erath)

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.