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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FLOOR AMENDMENT NO. _____

BY: Robert R. Dames

1 Amend C.S.H.B. No. 5 (House Committee Report) by adding the
2 following appropriately numbered SECTION to the bill and
3 renumbering subsequent SECTIONS of the bill accordingly:

4 SECTION _____. Chapter 434, Government Code, is amended by
5 adding Subchapter E to read as follows:

6 SUBCHAPTER E. VETERANS RESOURCE CENTERS

7 Sec. 434.201. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

8 (1) "Commission" means the Texas Veterans Commission.

9 (2) "Higher education region" means one of the higher
10 education regions in this state established by the Texas Higher
11 Education Coordinating Board.

12 (3) "Institution of higher education" has the meaning
13 assigned by Section 61.003, Education Code.

14 Sec. 434.202. VETERANS RESOURCE CENTERS. Subject to the
15 availability of funds, the commission shall administer a veterans
16 resource center in at least one institution of higher education in
17 each region specified in Section 434.203 to:

18 (1) provide a centralized place for veterans to find
19 assistance and information while enrolled at an institution of
20 higher education;

21 (2) deliver innovative, cost-effective programs to
22 attract veterans and family members of veterans to attend public
23 institutions of higher education;

24 (3) enable institutions of higher education to create
25 veteran-friendly environments;

26 (4) encourage veterans to take advantage of government
27 educational programs; and

28 (5) assist veterans in applying to public institutions
29 of higher education.

1 Sec. 434.203. LOCATIONS OF CENTERS. Subject to the
2 availability of funds, the commission shall operate 15 veterans
3 resource centers throughout this state with at least one veterans
4 resource center located in each of the following higher education
5 regions:

- 6 (1) High Plains Region;
- 7 (2) Northwest Texas Region;
- 8 (3) Metroplex Region;
- 9 (4) Upper East Texas Region;
- 10 (5) Southeast Texas Region;
- 11 (6) Gulf Coast Region;
- 12 (7) Central Texas Region;
- 13 (8) South Texas Region;
- 14 (9) West Texas Region; and
- 15 (10) Upper Rio Grande Region.

16 Sec. 434.204. DUTIES OF INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.
17 Each institution of higher education that has a veterans resource
18 center shall enter into a memorandum of understanding with the
19 commission. The memorandum of understanding must require the
20 institution of higher education to provide and bear the cost of the
21 following:

- 22 (1) office space on the campus of the institution of
23 higher education that is accessible to persons with disabilities
24 and complies with any applicable federal and state law; and
- 25 (2) office equipment, telephone equipment and
26 service, computer equipment, and Internet access.

27 Sec. 434.205. 2-1-1 TEXAS COORDINATION. Each institution
28 of higher education that has a veterans resource center shall enter
29 into a memorandum of understanding with the area information center
30 of the Texas Information and Referral Network for the region in
31 which the institution is located to coordinate the objectives of

1 the veterans resource center with the operations of the Texas
2 Information and Referral Network, including 2-1-1 services
3 provided by the network.

4 Sec. 434.206. PROGRAM MANAGER. Subject to the availability
5 of funds, the commission shall employ a program manager to
6 administer the veterans resource center program. The program
7 manager shall:

8 (1) provide leadership, training, support, and
9 overall management of the veterans resource center program;

10 (2) evaluate the effectiveness of veterans resource
11 centers in identifying the services required by veterans to
12 optimize the success of veterans and their families in obtaining a
13 college education and in providing those services;

14 (3) supervise the regional veterans resource
15 counselors;

16 (4) prepare an annual budget;

17 (5) monitor the outcomes of the veterans resource
18 center program;

19 (6) using data provided by the Texas Higher Education
20 Coordinating Board, produce an annual report on veterans'
21 attendance at public institutions of higher education;

22 (7) in partnership with the Texas Information and
23 Referral Network, apply to private organizations and foundations
24 for grant funding or other support that complements the objectives
25 of the program; and

26 (8) perform any other task required by the commission.

27 Sec. 434.207. REGIONAL VETERANS RESOURCE COUNSELORS. (a)
28 Subject to the availability of funds, the commission shall employ a
29 regional veterans resource counselor for each higher education
30 region to oversee the veterans resource center or centers located
31 in the region.

1 (b) A regional veterans resource counselor shall maintain
2 an office at a veterans resource center at an institution of higher
3 education located in the higher education region served by the
4 veterans resource counselor.

5 (c) Each regional veterans resource counselor shall:

6 (1) visit the institutions of higher education located
7 in the higher education region served by the veterans resource
8 counselor;

9 (2) work with those institutions of higher education
10 to:

11 (A) create a hospitable and supportive
12 environment for veterans;

13 (B) enhance awareness of and encourage
14 participation in veterans educational programs and in commission
15 programs providing other services to veterans, including
16 employment and claims assistance services;

17 (C) develop programs providing ancillary
18 assistance to veterans based on the unique needs of veterans and
19 their families;

20 (D) ensure that veterans successfully complete
21 their education; and

22 (E) promote the establishment of a student
23 veterans group on each campus in the region;

24 (3) work with local, state, and national veterans
25 groups, including the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American
26 Legion, to promote educational opportunities and benefits to the
27 veteran population in the higher education region;

28 (4) work with local workforce development boards to:

29 (A) ensure that veterans counselors are aware of
30 available nontraditional educational opportunities, including
31 on-the-job training programs and apprenticeships; and

1 (B) advise employers in the region of potential
2 opportunities to create on-the-job training programs for veterans;

3 (5) work with education services officers at military
4 installations to encourage active duty members of the armed forces
5 of the United States and veterans to use federal and state
6 educational benefits;

7 (6) create and manage publicity campaigns in concert
8 with the commission and institutions of higher education in the
9 higher education region to promote the use of education benefits
10 under the federal Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of
11 2008 (38 U.S.C. Section 3301 et seq.), the tuition exemption
12 program for veterans and their dependents under Section 54.341,
13 Education Code, and any other education benefit for veterans or
14 their dependents under federal or state law;

15 (7) support programs to assist combat veteran students
16 in readjusting and reintegrating into a noncombat environment;

17 (8) maintain statistical information regarding
18 demographics of veterans assisted, application success, program
19 completion rates, drop-out rates, and reasons for success or
20 failure, as appropriate; and

21 (9) perform other activities, as assigned by the
22 commission, to enhance the educational opportunities of veterans
23 and their family members in the higher education region and
24 throughout this state.

25 Sec. 434.208. FUNDING. (a) The commission shall apply for
26 and use any available federal money to fund the duties of the
27 commission under this subchapter.

28 (b) The commission may accept gifts and grants of money,
29 property, and services from any source to fund the duties of the
30 commission under this subchapter.

31 Sec. 434.209. RULEMAKING AUTHORITY. The commission may

1 adopt rules to implement this subchapter.