



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FLOOR AMENDMENT NO. _____

BY: Robert R. Doney

1 Amend C.S.S.B. No. 1 (house committee printing), in Article I
2 of the bill, following the appropriations to the Veterans
3 Commission (page I-81), by adding the following appropriately
4 numbered rider:

5 _____. Veterans Resource Centers. (a) Subject to the
6 availability of funds, the Veterans Commission shall administer a
7 veterans resource center in at least one institution of higher
8 education in each region specified in Subsection (b) to:

9 (1) provide a centralized place for veterans to find
10 assistance and information while enrolled at an institution of
11 higher education;

12 (2) deliver innovative, cost-effective programs to
13 attract veterans and family members of veterans to attend public
14 institutions of higher education;

15 (3) enable institutions of higher education to create
16 veteran-friendly environments;

17 (4) encourage veterans to take advantage of government
18 educational programs; and

19 (5) assist veterans in applying to public institutions
20 of higher education.

21 (b) Subject to the availability of funds, the commission
22 shall operate 15 veterans resource centers throughout this state
23 with at least one veterans resource center located in each of the
24 following higher education regions:

25 (1) High Plains Region;

26 (2) Northwest Texas Region;

27 (3) Metroplex Region;

28 (4) Upper East Texas Region;

29 (5) Southeast Texas Region;

- 1 (6) Gulf Coast Region;
- 2 (7) Central Texas Region;
- 3 (8) South Texas Region;
- 4 (9) West Texas Region; and
- 5 (10) Upper Rio Grande Region.

6 (c) Each institution of higher education that has a veterans
7 resource center shall enter into a memorandum of understanding with
8 the commission. The memorandum of understanding must require the
9 institution of higher education to provide and bear the cost of the
10 following:

11 (1) office space on the campus of the institution of
12 higher education that is accessible to persons with disabilities
13 and complies with any applicable federal and state law; and

14 (2) office equipment, telephone equipment and
15 service, computer equipment, and Internet access.

16 (d) Each institution of higher education that has a veterans
17 resource center shall enter into a memorandum of understanding with
18 the area information center of the Texas Information and Referral
19 Network for the region in which the institution is located to
20 coordinate the objectives of the veterans resource center with the
21 operations of the Texas Information and Referral Network, including
22 2-1-1 services provided by the network.

23 (e) Subject to the availability of funds, the commission
24 shall employ a program manager to administer the veterans resource
25 center program. The program manager shall:

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

28 (2) evaluate the effectiveness of veterans resource
29 centers in identifying the services required by veterans to
30 optimize the success of veterans and their families in obtaining a
31 college education and in providing those services;

1 (3) supervise the regional veterans resource
2 counselors;

3 (4) prepare an annual budget;

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

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

9 (7) in partnership with the Texas Information and
10 Referral Network, apply to private organizations and foundations
11 for grant funding or other support that complements the objectives
12 of the program; and

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

14 (f) Subject to the availability of funds, the commission
15 shall employ a regional veterans resource counselor for each higher
16 education region to oversee the veterans resource center or centers
17 located in the region.

18 (g) A regional veterans resource counselor shall maintain
19 an office at a veterans resource center at an institution of higher
20 education located in the higher education region served by the
21 veterans resource counselor.

22 (h) Each regional veterans resource counselor shall:

23 (1) visit the institutions of higher education located
24 in the higher education region served by the veterans resource
25 counselor;

26 (2) work with those institutions of higher education
27 to:

28 (A) create a hospitable and supportive
29 environment for veterans;

30 (B) enhance awareness of and encourage
31 participation in veterans educational programs and in commission

1 programs providing other services to veterans, including
2 employment and claims assistance services;

3 (C) develop programs providing ancillary
4 assistance to veterans based on the unique needs of veterans and
5 their families;

6 (D) ensure that veterans successfully complete
7 their education; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

24 (6) create and manage publicity campaigns in concert
25 with the commission and institutions of higher education in the
26 higher education region to promote the use of education benefits
27 under the federal Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of
28 2008 (38 U.S.C. Section 3301 et seq.), the tuition exemption
29 program for veterans and their dependents under Section 54.341,
30 Education Code, and any other education benefit for veterans or
31 their dependents under federal or state law;

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

3 (8) maintain statistical information regarding
4 demographics of veterans assisted, application success, program
5 completion rates, dropout rates, and reasons for success or
6 failure, as appropriate; and

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

11 (i) The commission shall apply for and use any available
12 federal money to fund the duties of the commission under this
13 section.

14 (j) The commission may accept gifts and grants of money,
15 property, and services from any source to fund the duties of the
16 commission under this section.

17 (k) The commission may adopt rules to implement this
18 section.

