

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 781
By: Farias
Defense & Veterans' Affairs
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The fund for veterans' assistance helps local governments and nonprofit organizations improve programs that address the needs of veterans and their families. The Texas Veterans Commission awards grants from the fund on a competitive basis to such entities based on an evaluation of applications and advisory committee recommendations. There is concern, however, that the commission isn't required to perform a needs assessment before awarding grants. Interested parties contend that a needs assessment would result in more efficient grant allocations and would assist the commission in better directing its resources toward addressing the high-priority needs of veterans.

C.S.H.B. 781 seeks to implement a recommendation in the Legislative Budget Board's *Texas State Government Effectiveness and Efficiency Report* relating to improving the grant process.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 781 amends the Government Code to require the Texas Veterans Commission, not later than May 1 of each even-numbered year, to conduct a needs assessment to identify the specific high-priority needs of veterans and the services available to address those needs, to determine the grant categories that correspond to those high-priority needs, and to identify any gaps between those needs and the available services. The bill requires the commission to incorporate the results of the needs assessment and other determinations in its process for awarding grants, including the prioritization of grant awards, from the fund for veterans' assistance. The bill requires the commission to conduct the needs assessment and make determinations required by the bill's provisions not later than May 1, 2014.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2013.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 781 may differ from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following comparison is organized and highlighted in a manner that indicates the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

INTRODUCED

SECTION 1. Section 434.017, Government

HOUSE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

SECTION 1. Section 434.017, Government

83R 18425

13.85.919

Substitute Document Number: 83R 11045

Code, is amended by adding Subsections (c-1) and (c-2) to read as follows:

(c-1) Not later than May 1 of each even-numbered year, the commission shall:

(1) conduct a needs assessment to identify the specific high-priority needs of veterans and the services available to address those needs;

(2) determine the grant categories that correspond to the high-priority needs identified under Subdivision (1); and

(3) identify any gaps between the needs identified under Subdivision (1) and the services available to address those needs.

(c-2) The commission shall incorporate the results of the needs assessment and other determinations under Subsection (c-1) in its process for awarding grants, including the prioritization of grant awards by geographic region, from the fund for veterans' assistance.

SECTION 2. Not later than May 1, 2014, the Texas Veterans Commission shall conduct a needs assessment and make other determinations required by Section 434.017(c-1), Government Code, as added by this Act.

SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2013.

Code, is amended by adding Subsections (c-1) and (c-2) to read as follows:

(c-1) Not later than May 1 of each even-numbered year, the commission shall:

(1) conduct a needs assessment to identify the specific high-priority needs of veterans and the services available to address those needs;

(2) determine the grant categories that correspond to the high-priority needs identified under Subdivision (1); and

(3) identify any gaps between the needs identified under Subdivision (1) and the services available to address those needs.

(c-2) The commission shall incorporate the results of the needs assessment and other determinations under Subsection (c-1) in its process for awarding grants, including the prioritization of grant awards, from the fund for veterans' assistance.

SECTION 2. Same as introduced version.

SECTION 3. Same as introduced version.