

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 2562
By: Farias
Defense & Veterans' Affairs
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The federal Public Assistance Reporting Information System (PARIS) can identify Medicaid beneficiaries who are also low income veterans, active duty service members, and families of such veterans and members who may qualify for U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and military health coverage benefits, including long-term care and prescription drugs. Interested parties assert that state funds could be saved by assisting Medicaid-eligible veterans in applying for such benefits because the cost and responsibility of the veterans' health care is transferred to the federal government. C.S.H.B. 2562 seeks to achieve such savings while assisting Texas veterans by revising requirements relating to a report on the use of the PARIS system.

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. 2562 amends the Government Code to require the Health and Human Services Commission, the Texas Veterans Commission, the Veterans' Land Board, and the Department of Aging and Disability Services to collectively submit an annual report regarding the Public Assistance Reporting Information System (PARIS) not later than October 1 of each year, rather than a single report on October 1, 2012. The bill adds the legislature as a recipient of the report and removes requirements that the report describe the frequency and success with which state agencies have used PARIS and make recommendations for future use of PARIS by state agencies. The bill adds requirements that the report describe the following: interagency progress in identifying and obtaining U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs benefits for veterans receiving Medicaid and other public benefit programs; the number of veterans benefits claims awarded and the total dollar amount of veterans benefits claims awarded, as well as the costs to the state that were involved as a result of state agencies' use of the system; efforts to expand the use of PARIS and improve the effectiveness of shifting veterans from Medicaid and other public benefits to U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs benefits, including any barriers and how state agencies have addressed those barriers; and the extent to which the veterans commission has targeted specific populations of veterans, including populations in rural counties and in specific age and service-connected disability categories, in order to maximize benefits for veterans and savings to the state. The bill repeals the statutory provision establishing an expiration date of September 1, 2013, for the statutory provisions relating to this report.

C.S.H.B. 2562 repeals Section 531.0998(f), Government Code.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2013.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 2562 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. Subchapter A, Chapter 434, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 434.022 to read as follows:

Sec. 434.022. REPORT ON VETERANS.

(a) Not later than January 1 of each year, the commission shall submit a report on expanding the use of the Public Assistance Reporting Information System (PARIS) operated by the Administration for Children and Families of the United States Department of Health and Human Services to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, each member of the legislature, the Health and Human Services Commission, the Veterans' Land Board, and the Department of Aging and Disability Services.

(b) A report under this section must include information identifying:

(1) veterans in this state with a service-connected disability with a disability rating of 70 percent or more;

(2) counties with the most veterans and rural counties with a large population of veterans 45 years of age or older who, based on disability ratings, may be eligible to receive Aid and Attendance or Housebound benefits from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs; and

(3) counties with veterans who are at least 45 years of age but younger than 66 years of age who receive enhanced monthly benefits related to a service-connected disability.

No equivalent provision.

HOUSE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

No equivalent provision.

SECTION 1. Section 531.0998(e), Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

(e) Not later than October 1 of each year [~~;~~ ~~2012~~], the commission, the Texas Veterans Commission, the Veterans' Land Board, and the Department of Aging and Disability Services collectively shall submit to the legislature, the governor, and the Legislative Budget Board a report describing:

(1) interagency progress in identifying [~~the~~

~~frequency] and obtaining Department of Veterans Affairs benefits for veterans receiving Medicaid and other public benefit programs [success with which state agencies have used the system];~~

~~(2) the number of veterans benefits claims awarded, the total dollar amount of veterans benefits claims awarded, and the costs to the state that were avoided as a result of state agencies' use of the system; [and]~~

~~(3) efforts to expand the use of the system and improve the effectiveness of shifting veterans from Medicaid and other public benefits to Department of Veterans Affairs benefits, including any barriers and how state agencies have addressed those barriers; and~~

~~(4) the extent to which the Texas Veterans Commission has targeted specific populations of veterans, including populations in rural counties and in specific age and service-connected disability categories, in order to maximize benefits for veterans and savings to the state [recommendations for future use of the system by state agencies].~~

No equivalent provision.

SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2013.

SECTION 2. Section 531.0998(f), Government Code, is repealed.

SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2013.