

By: Van de Putte, et al.
(Guillen)

S.B. No. 1199

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to development of a pilot program of the Texas Veterans Commission to designate municipalities as Veteran and Military Friendly Cities.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 434, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 434.022 to read as follows:

Sec. 434.022. PILOT PROGRAM TO DESIGNATE VETERAN AND MILITARY FRIENDLY CITIES. (a) The commission may develop a pilot program to designate qualifying municipalities as Veteran and Military Friendly Cities. The commission may establish the criteria to qualify for a designation under the pilot program developed under this section.

(b) The criteria established under Subsection (a) must include an evaluation of a municipality's ability to provide services for veterans and members of the military, taking into consideration the availability in the municipality of:

- (1) a local or county veterans service office;
- (2) suitable housing for veterans and members of the military;
- (3) financial support for veterans and members of the military;
- (4) employment resources for veterans and members of the military;

1 (5) education and training programs for veterans and
2 members of the military;

3 (6) a veterans court; and

4 (7) access to health care for veterans, including
5 mental health services and mental health services peer-to-peer
6 networks.

7 (c) The commission may accept and review applications for
8 the designation and issue tiered designations, as appropriate.

9 (d) The commission may by rule establish a procedure for
10 discouraging and preventing the misappropriation of the phrase
11 "Veteran and Military Friendly City."

12 (e) The commission shall report the results of the pilot
13 program under this section to the governor, the lieutenant
14 governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the
15 committees in both houses of the legislature having jurisdiction
16 over veterans and military issues not later than December 31, 2014.

17 (f) This section expires September 1, 2015.

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