

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD
Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 83RD LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

March 22, 2013

TO: Honorable John Carona, Chair, Senate Committee on Business & Commerce

FROM: Ursula Parks, Director, Legislative Budget Board

IN RE: SB981 by Van de Putte (Relating to electric utility bill payment assistance programs for certain veterans burned in combat.), **As Introduced**

No significant fiscal implication to the State is anticipated.

The bill would amend the Government Code and the Utilities Code to authorize a retail electric provider, an electric cooperative, or a municipal electric utility to establish a bill payment assistance program for military veterans who have a significantly decreased ability to regulate body temperature as a result of severe burns received in combat. The bill would authorize retail electric providers, electric cooperatives, or municipal electric utilities to recover the costs associated with the program.

The bill would require the Public Utility Commission (PUC) to compile a list of bill payment assistance programs for burned veterans available from retail electric providers and publish the list on the PUC's website. The bill would also require the PUC to develop rules establishing the form, manner, and frequency by which retail electric providers would provide the necessary information related to bill payment assistance programs for burned veterans to the PUC. Based on information provided by the PUC, it is assumed that duties and responsibilities associated with implementing the provisions of the bill could be accomplished by utilizing existing resources.

Local Government Impact

There would be costs to a retail electric provider that chose to establish a bill payment assistance program for burned veterans; however, the amounts would vary depending on the amount of funding necessary to establish a program and the number of applicable veterans that would receive services. It is anticipated that a provider would establish a program only if sufficient funds were available, or it would not result in a negative fiscal impact.

Source Agencies: 473 Public Utility Commission of Texas

LBB Staff: UP, RB, SD, ED, TP, AG