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H.B. No. 867

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT

2 relating to the establishment and operation of the Texas Women
3 Veterans Program.

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

5 SECTION 1. Chapter 434, Government Code, is amended by
6 adding Subchapter E to read as follows:

7 SUBCHAPTER E. TEXAS WOMEN VETERANS PROGRAM

8 Sec. 434.201. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

9 (1) "Commission" means the Texas Veterans Commission.

10 (2) "Executive director" means the executive director
11 of the commission.

12 (3) "Program" means the Texas Women Veterans Program.

13 (4) "Woman veteran" means a woman who:

14 (A) served on active duty in the armed forces of
15 the United States or in the Texas National Guard on federal active
16 duty under Title 10, United States Code; and

17 (B) was discharged or released from that service
18 under conditions other than dishonorable.

19 Sec. 434.202. ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM; PROGRAM MISSION.

20 (a) The Texas Women Veterans Program is established in the
21 commission. The program is attached to the office of the executive
22 director for administrative purposes.

23 (b) The mission of the program is to ensure that the women
24 veterans of this state have equitable access to federal and state

1 veterans' benefits and services.

2 Sec. 434.203. COORDINATOR. The executive director shall
3 designate a women veterans coordinator for this state.

4 Sec. 434.204. GENERAL PROGRAM DUTIES. The program shall:

5 (1) provide assistance to the women veterans of this
6 state as provided by this subchapter;

7 (2) perform outreach functions to improve the
8 awareness of women veterans of their eligibility for federal and
9 state veterans' benefits and services;

10 (3) assess the needs of women veterans with respect to
11 benefits and services;

12 (4) review programs, research projects, and other
13 initiatives designed to address the needs of the women veterans of
14 this state;

15 (5) make recommendations to the executive director
16 regarding the improvement of benefits and services to women
17 veterans; and

18 (6) incorporate issues concerning women veterans in
19 commission planning regarding veterans' benefits and services.

20 Sec. 434.205. ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC AWARENESS. (a) The
21 program shall advocate for women veterans and work to increase
22 public awareness about the gender-specific needs of women veterans.

23 (b) The program shall recommend legislative initiatives and
24 the development of policies on the local, state, and national
25 levels to address the issues affecting women veterans.

26 Sec. 434.206. COLLABORATION. The program shall collaborate
27 with federal, state, county, municipal, and private agencies that

1 provide services to women veterans.

2 Sec. 434.207. RESEARCH; DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION. (a)
3 The program shall monitor and research issues relating to women
4 veterans.

5 (b) The program shall disseminate information regarding
6 opportunities for women veterans throughout the network of entities
7 with which the program collaborates.

8 Sec. 434.208. EDUCATION. Through conferences, seminars,
9 and training workshops with federal, state, county, municipal, and
10 private agencies, the program shall provide guidance and direction
11 to a woman veteran who is applying for grants, benefits, or
12 services.

13 Sec. 434.209. HONOR AND RECOGNITION. The program shall
14 promote events and activities that recognize and honor the women
15 veterans of this state and women who serve in the military.

16 Sec. 434.210. FACILITIES. To the extent funding is
17 available for that purpose, the program shall provide facilities as
18 appropriate in support of the program.

19 Sec. 434.211. FUNDING; GRANTS. On behalf of the program,
20 the commission may:

21 (1) accept and spend funds:

22 (A) appropriated to the commission for the
23 operation of the program; and

24 (B) received from other sources, including
25 donations and grants; and

26 (2) provide matching grants to assist in the
27 implementation of the program's goals and objectives.

1 SECTION 2. Section 434.017(e), Government Code, is amended
2 to read as follows:

3 (e) To carry out any purpose of this chapter, the commission
4 may solicit, accept, or refuse a gift, grant, devise, bequest of
5 money, security, service, or property, including money raised or a
6 service provided by a volunteer or volunteer group, to promote the
7 work of the commission for any purpose related to the fund for
8 veterans' assistance. The commission may participate in the
9 establishment and operation of an affiliated nonprofit
10 organization that is established for the purpose of raising money
11 for or providing services or other benefits to the commission or a
12 program established in the commission, including the Texas Women
13 Veterans Program. A gift, grant, devise, or bequest to the fund may
14 be appropriated in the same manner as other money in the fund,
15 subject to the purposes provided by Subsection (c) and any
16 limitation or requirement placed on the gift, grant, devise, or
17 bequest by the donor or granting entity.

18 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
19 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
20 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
21 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
22 Act takes effect September 1, 2015.