

1-1 By: Hernandez, et al. (Senate Sponsor - Garcia) H.B. No. 867
 1-2 (In the Senate - Received from the House May 14, 2015;
 1-3 May 15, 2015, read first time and referred to Committee on Veteran
 1-4 Affairs and Military Installations; May 21, 2015, reported
 1-5 favorably by the following vote: Yeas 7, Nays 0; May 21, 2015,
 1-6 sent to printer.)

1-7 COMMITTEE VOTE

	Yea	Nay	Absent	PNV
1-8				
1-9	X			
1-10	X			
1-11	X			
1-12	X			
1-13	X			
1-14	X			
1-15	X			

1-16 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
 1-17 AN ACT

1-18 relating to the establishment and operation of the Texas Women
 1-19 Veterans Program.

1-20 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

1-21 SECTION 1. Chapter 434, Government Code, is amended by
 1-22 adding Subchapter E to read as follows:

1-23 SUBCHAPTER E. TEXAS WOMEN VETERANS PROGRAM

1-24 Sec. 434.201. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

1-25 (1) "Commission" means the Texas Veterans Commission.

1-26 (2) "Executive director" means the executive director
 1-27 of the commission.

1-28 (3) "Program" means the Texas Women Veterans Program.

1-29 (4) "Woman veteran" means a woman who:

1-30 (A) served on active duty in the armed forces of
 1-31 the United States or in the Texas National Guard on federal active
 1-32 duty under Title 10, United States Code; and

1-33 (B) was discharged or released from that service
 1-34 under conditions other than dishonorable.

1-35 Sec. 434.202. ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM; PROGRAM MISSION.

1-36 (a) The Texas Women Veterans Program is established in the
 1-37 commission. The program is attached to the office of the executive
 1-38 director for administrative purposes.

1-39 (b) The mission of the program is to ensure that the women
 1-40 veterans of this state have equitable access to federal and state
 1-41 veterans' benefits and services.

1-42 Sec. 434.203. COORDINATOR. The executive director shall
 1-43 designate a women veterans coordinator for this state.

1-44 Sec. 434.204. GENERAL PROGRAM DUTIES. The program shall:

1-45 (1) provide assistance to the women veterans of this
 1-46 state as provided by this subchapter;

1-47 (2) perform outreach functions to improve the
 1-48 awareness of women veterans of their eligibility for federal and
 1-49 state veterans' benefits and services;

1-50 (3) assess the needs of women veterans with respect to
 1-51 benefits and services;

1-52 (4) review programs, research projects, and other
 1-53 initiatives designed to address the needs of the women veterans of
 1-54 this state;

1-55 (5) make recommendations to the executive director
 1-56 regarding the improvement of benefits and services to women
 1-57 veterans; and

1-58 (6) incorporate issues concerning women veterans in
 1-59 commission planning regarding veterans' benefits and services.

1-60 Sec. 434.205. ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC AWARENESS. (a) The
 1-61 program shall advocate for women veterans and work to increase

2-1 public awareness about the gender-specific needs of women veterans.
2-2 (b) The program shall recommend legislative initiatives and
2-3 the development of policies on the local, state, and national
2-4 levels to address the issues affecting women veterans.

2-5 Sec. 434.206. COLLABORATION. The program shall collaborate
2-6 with federal, state, county, municipal, and private agencies that
2-7 provide services to women veterans.

2-8 Sec. 434.207. RESEARCH; DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION. (a)
2-9 The program shall monitor and research issues relating to women
2-10 veterans.

2-11 (b) The program shall disseminate information regarding
2-12 opportunities for women veterans throughout the network of entities
2-13 with which the program collaborates.

2-14 Sec. 434.208. EDUCATION. Through conferences, seminars,
2-15 and training workshops with federal, state, county, municipal, and
2-16 private agencies, the program shall provide guidance and direction
2-17 to a woman veteran who is applying for grants, benefits, or
2-18 services.

2-19 Sec. 434.209. HONOR AND RECOGNITION. The program shall
2-20 promote events and activities that recognize and honor the women
2-21 veterans of this state and women who serve in the military.

2-22 Sec. 434.210. FACILITIES. To the extent funding is
2-23 available for that purpose, the program shall provide facilities as
2-24 appropriate in support of the program.

2-25 Sec. 434.211. FUNDING; GRANTS. On behalf of the program,
2-26 the commission may:

- 2-27 (1) accept and spend funds:
 - 2-28 (A) appropriated to the commission for the
 - 2-29 operation of the program; and
 - 2-30 (B) received from other sources, including
 - 2-31 donations and grants; and

2-32 (2) provide matching grants to assist in the
2-33 implementation of the program's goals and objectives.

2-34 SECTION 2. Section 434.017(e), Government Code, is amended
2-35 to read as follows:

2-36 (e) To carry out any purpose of this chapter, the commission
2-37 may solicit, accept, or refuse a gift, grant, devise, bequest of
2-38 money, security, service, or property, including money raised or a
2-39 service provided by a volunteer or volunteer group, to promote the
2-40 work of the commission for any purpose related to the fund for
2-41 veterans' assistance. The commission may participate in the
2-42 establishment and operation of an affiliated nonprofit
2-43 organization that is established for the purpose of raising money
2-44 for or providing services or other benefits to the commission or a
2-45 program established in the commission, including the Texas Women
2-46 Veterans Program. A gift, grant, devise, or bequest to the fund may
2-47 be appropriated in the same manner as other money in the fund,
2-48 subject to the purposes provided by Subsection (c) and any
2-49 limitation or requirement placed on the gift, grant, devise, or
2-50 bequest by the donor or granting entity.

2-51 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
2-52 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
2-53 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
2-54 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
2-55 Act takes effect September 1, 2015.

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