

By: Canales

H.B. No. 1958

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to eligibility for participation in veterans court programs.

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

SECTION 1. Section 124.002(a), Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a) The commissioners court of a county may establish a veterans court program for persons arrested for or charged with any misdemeanor or felony offense. A defendant is eligible to participate in a veterans court program established under this chapter only if the attorney representing the state consents to the defendant's participation in the program and if the court in which the criminal case is pending finds that the defendant:

(1) is a veteran or current member of the United States armed forces, including a member of the reserves, national guard, or state guard; and

(2) suffers from a brain injury, mental illness, or mental disorder, including post-traumatic stress disorder, that:

(A) occurred during or resulted from the defendant's military service [~~in a combat zone or other similar hazardous duty area~~]; and

(B) materially affected the defendant's criminal conduct at issue in the case.

SECTION 2. The change in law made by this Act applies to a

H.B. No. 1958

1 person who, on or after the effective date of this Act, enters a
2 veterans court program under Chapter 124, Government Code,
3 regardless of whether the person committed the offense for which
4 the person enters the program before, on, or after the effective
5 date of this Act.

6 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2015.