

**LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD**  
**Austin, Texas**

**FISCAL NOTE, 84TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION**

**May 8, 2015**

**TO:** Honorable John Whitmire, Chair, Senate Committee on Criminal Justice

**FROM:** Ursula Parks, Director, Legislative Budget Board

**IN RE:** **HB875** by Farias (Relating to the verification of the veteran status of inmates and prisoners.), **As Engrossed**

**No significant fiscal implication to the State is anticipated.**

The bill would amend the Government Code as it relates to requirements for verification of the veteran status of Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) inmates and county jail prisoners. In addition to verification provisions, the bill would have the Texas Commission on Jail Standards (TCJS) require county sheriffs to assist county jail prisoners who are veterans in applying for federal benefits or compensation as specified in the bill. The Veterans Commission, TDCJ, and TCJS indicate that any state costs associated with the bill could be absorbed within the agencies' existing resources. The bill would take effect September 1, 2015.

**Local Government Impact**

The bill would require county jails to verify an inmate's veteran status utilizing data made available from the Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Reentry Search Service (VRSS) or similar service. According to the Commission on Jail Standards, the cost is dependent upon each county's jail management system compatibility with VRSS. While VRSS is free to use, there may be costs to upgrade software or convert data.

The cost to assist identified veterans in applying for federal benefits will vary by county, depending on personnel resources and size of veteran population for the county.

**Source Agencies:** 403 Veterans Commission, 409 Commission on Jail Standards, 696 Department of Criminal Justice

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