

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD
Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 84TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

May 21, 2015

TO: Honorable Joan Huffman, Chair, Senate Committee on State Affairs

FROM: Ursula Parks, Director, Legislative Budget Board

IN RE: HB2123 by King, Phil (Relating to participation of the state military forces in the state group benefits program.), **As Engrossed**

The fiscal implications of the bill cannot be determined at this time due to the unavailability of data regarding the number of members of active military forces that would be called to state active duty for longer than 60 days and the length of time service members would remain on state active duty, which would determine eligibility to receive the healthcare insurance stipend each month. Furthermore, data for the number of service members that would seek the stipend is not available.

The bill would amend the Government Code to require the Texas Military Department (TMD) to provide a stipend for healthcare insurance for Texas military forces service members who have served on active duty for longer than 60 consecutive days, after verification that the member has paid the full cost of the member's health or dental insurance coverage and submitted a release of healthcare information authorization form. The stipend for National Guard members would be not greater than the member's military affiliated healthcare insurance premium or an amount equal to that premium to be applied toward the member's private or nongovernmental insurance plan, and the stipend for State Guard members would not be greater than the premium of the state group benefits program or an amount equal to that premium to be applied toward the member's private or nongovernmental insurance plan.

The bill would pertain only to long term missions. Currently, the only military mission longer than 60 days is the current Operation Strong Safety II mission, for which the National Guard has been deployed since July 2014. TMD estimated 725 service members as the average number of service members on mission longer than 60 days but this is based on only one mission. TMD has no information on the number of service members who would likely pay for health insurance coverage and seek the stipend. The impact to TMD cannot be determined as future mission length, number of service members deployed, and number of service members who would seek the health insurance stipend cannot be determined.

Local Government Impact

No fiscal implication to units of local government is anticipated.

Source Agencies: 304 Comptroller of Public Accounts, 327 Employees Retirement System, 401 Military Department

LBB Staff: UP, AG, AI, RCa, FR, EMo