

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

C.S.H.B. 1973  
By: Blanco  
Economic & Small Business Development  
Committee Report (Substituted)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Interested parties note that recently separated service members who are experiencing challenges in finding employment, completing college programs, or obtaining the appropriate licensure or certification to compete in the job market benefit from programs such as the operation welcome home program and the Texas veterans leadership program. C.S.H.B. 1973 seeks to ensure that these programs continue to assist veterans by codifying the programs.

### **CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Workforce Commission in SECTION 1 of this bill.

### **ANALYSIS**

C.S.H.B. 1973 amends the Labor Code to require the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to establish and administer the operation welcome home program to expedite the entry of veterans and military service members into the workforce through the use of enhanced employment services. The bill requires the TWC, in establishing the program, to build partnerships between military transition centers and local workforce development boards to ensure the availability of employment services, including services related to education, career technical training, and entrepreneurship. The bill authorizes the TWC to award grants to state, local, or private entities that perform activities related to the program and requires the TWC to administer the program using money previously appropriated to the TWC or received from federal or other sources. The bill authorizes the TWC to adopt rules as necessary for the administration of the program.

C.S.H.B. 1973 requires the TWC, in consultation with the Texas Veterans Commission, to establish a Texas veterans leadership program to serve as a resource and referral network connecting veterans with certain resources and tools. The bill requires the program to collaborate with local workforce development boards to provide services to veterans and authorizes the program to collaborate with other federal, state, county, municipal, and private agencies to provide services to veterans. The bill requires the program to employ veterans to serve as veteran resource and referral specialists and requires such a specialist to seek out veterans in need of services; to serve as a resource and referral agent, directing veterans to resources tailored to veterans' needs; to make referrals and coordinate with other programs of the TWC, the Texas Veterans Commission, and other federal, state, county, municipal, and private agencies that provide services for veterans relating to employment, education and training, medical care, mental health and counseling, and veterans benefits; and to coordinate the services of volunteer veterans familiar with the obstacles faced by veterans to assist in mentoring and serving veterans.

## EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2017.

## COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 1973 may differ from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following comparison is organized and formatted in a manner that indicates the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

### INTRODUCED

SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 302, Labor Code, is amended by adding Section 302.0033 to read as follows:

Sec. 302.0033. OPERATION WELCOME HOME PROGRAM. (a) The commission shall establish and administer the Operation Welcome Home program to expedite the entry of veterans and military servicemembers into the workforce through the use of enhanced employment services. In establishing the program, the commission shall build partnerships between military transition centers and local workforce development boards to ensure the availability of employment services, including services related to:

(1) education;

(2) career technical training; and

(3) entrepreneurship.

(b) The commission may award grants to state, local, or private entities that perform activities related to the purposes of this section.

(c) The commission shall administer the program using money previously appropriated to the commission or received from federal or other sources.

(d) The commission may adopt rules as necessary for the administration of this section.

### HOUSE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 302, Labor Code, is amended by adding Sections 302.0033 and 302.00335 to read as follows:

Sec. 302.0033. OPERATION WELCOME HOME PROGRAM. (a) The commission shall establish and administer the Operation Welcome Home program to expedite the entry of veterans and military service members into the workforce through the use of enhanced employment services. In establishing the program, the commission shall build partnerships between military transition centers and local workforce development boards to ensure the availability of employment services, including services related to:

(1) education;

(2) career technical training; and

(3) entrepreneurship.

(b) The commission may award grants to state, local, or private entities that perform activities related to the purposes of this section.

(c) The commission shall administer the program using money previously appropriated to the commission or received from federal or other sources.

(d) The commission may adopt rules as necessary for the administration of this section.

Sec. 302.00335. TEXAS VETERANS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM. (a) The commission, in consultation with the Texas Veterans Commission, shall establish a Texas Veterans Leadership Program.

(b) The mission of the program is to serve as a resource and referral network connecting veterans with the resources and tools they need to lead productive lives and enjoy the full benefits of the society they have willingly served.

(c) The program shall collaborate with local

workforce development boards to provide services to veterans under this section. The program may collaborate with other federal, state, county, municipal, and private agencies to provide services to veterans under this section.

(d) The program shall employ veterans to serve as veteran resource and referral specialists. A veteran resource and referral specialist shall:

(1) seek out veterans in need of services;

(2) serve as a resource and referral agent, directing veterans to resources tailored to veterans' needs;

(3) make referrals and coordinate with other programs of the commission, the Texas Veterans Commission, and other federal, state, county, municipal, and private agencies that provide services for veterans relating to:

(A) employment;

(B) education and training;

(C) medical care;

(D) mental health and counseling; and

(E) veterans benefits; and

(4) coordinate the services of volunteer veterans familiar with the obstacles faced by veterans to assist in mentoring and serving veterans.

SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2017.

SECTION 2. Same as introduced version.