

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 544
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Defense & Veterans' Affairs
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Reports suggest that many states allow outside groups to produce the training materials for officers acting as veterans liaisons who provide information about benefits to veterans to help veterans adjust to civilian life. It has been noted that the Texas Veterans Commission is currently responsible for providing the training for Texas veterans county service officers who act as veterans liaisons in Texas and that commission representatives are open to certain third parties providing that training. S.B. 544 seeks to provide the commission the flexibility to approve an outside entity to provide such services.

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 this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

S.B. 544 amends the Government Code to replace the requirement for the Texas Veterans Commission to provide, at commission expense, the initial and continuing training for veterans county service officers at least once each year with the authorization to do so and to require the commission to approve training provided by public or private entities to fulfill the initial and continuing training requirements for such officers. The bill gives an officer the option to complete training that is provided by a public or private entity and approved by the commission as an alternative to completing training provided by the commission. The bill removes the requirement for the commissioners court of an officer's county to reimburse the officer's travel and lodging expenses incurred in attending commission training unless state funds are appropriated for that purpose but retains the requirement for the commission to reimburse an officer's travel and lodging expenses incurred in attending training provided by the commission in the manner prescribed for the reimbursement of such expenses to state employees if state funds are appropriated for that purpose. The bill requires the commissioners court of an officer's county to reimburse an officer's travel and lodging expenses incurred in attending required training that is provided by a public or private entity and approved by the commission.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2017.