

By: Lucio, et al.

S.B. No. 578

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the creation by the Health and Human Services Commission of a veteran suicide prevention action plan.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter B, Chapter 531, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 531.0999 to read as follows:

Sec. 531.0999. VETERAN SUICIDE PREVENTION ACTION PLAN.

(a) The commission, in collaboration with the Texas Coordinating Council for Veterans Services, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, the Service Members, Veterans, and Their Families Technical Assistance Center Implementation Academy of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, veteran advocacy groups, medical providers, and any other organization or interested party the commission considers appropriate, shall develop a comprehensive action plan to increase access to and availability of professional veteran health services to prevent veteran suicides.

(b) The action plan must:

(1) identify opportunities for raising awareness of and providing resources for veteran suicide prevention;

(2) identify opportunities to increase access to veteran mental health services;

(3) identify funding resources to provide accessible,

1 affordable veteran mental health services;

2 (4) provide measures to expand public-private
3 partnerships to ensure access to quality, timely mental health
4 services;

5 (5) provide for proactive outreach measures to reach
6 veterans needing care;

7 (6) provide for peer-to-peer service coordination,
8 including training, certification, recertification, and continuing
9 education for peer coordinators; and

10 (7) address suicide prevention awareness, measures,
11 and training regarding veterans involved in the justice system.

12 (c) The commission shall make specific short-term and
13 long-term statutory, administrative, and budget-related
14 recommendations to the legislature and the governor regarding the
15 policy initiatives and reforms necessary to implement the action
16 plan developed under this section. The short-term recommendations
17 must include a plan for state implementation beginning not later
18 than September 1, 2019. The initiatives and reforms in the
19 short-term plan must be fully implemented by September 1, 2021. The
20 long-term recommendations must include a plan for state
21 implementation beginning not later than September 1, 2021. The
22 initiatives and reforms in the long-term plan must be fully
23 implemented by September 1, 2027.

24 (d) The commission shall include in its strategic plan under
25 Chapter 2056 the plans for implementation of the short-term and
26 long-term recommendations under Subsection (c).

27 (e) This section expires September 1, 2027.

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