

By: Lucio

S.B. No. 1986

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the creation of an advisory committee on mental health issues affecting veterans within the Texas Veterans Commission.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 434, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 434.0102 to read as follows:

Sec. 434.0102. ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON MENTAL HEALTH. (a)
The commission shall establish an advisory committee on mental health issues affecting veterans to:

(1) advise the commission on mental health issues affecting veterans;

(2) identify and study mental health issues affecting veterans, including suicide;

(3) assess existing mental health services for veterans, including services aimed at suicide prevention; and

(4) develop recommendations to improve and increase mental health services for veterans, including services aimed at suicide prevention.

(b) The advisory committee is composed of members appointed by the executive director. The committee must include at least:

(1) one member who is a mental health professional;

(2) one member who is a mental health advocate;

(3) one member who is a member of the Texas Medical Association; and

1 (4) one member who is a representative of the United
2 States Department of Veterans Affairs.

3 (c) The executive director may appoint as many members to
4 the advisory committee as the executive director considers
5 appropriate to achieve the purposes of the committee.

6 (d) The executive director shall appoint one member of the
7 advisory committee to serve as presiding officer.

8 (e) A member of the advisory committee may not receive
9 compensation for service on the committee, but is entitled to
10 reimbursement for actual and necessary expenses incurred in
11 performing committee duties. The committee may accept gifts,
12 grants, and donations to pay for those expenses.

13 (f) The advisory committee shall meet at least quarterly at
14 the call of the presiding officer and at other times as determined
15 by the presiding officer. The committee may hold a meeting by
16 telephone conference call or videoconference.

17 (g) Not later than December 1 of each even-numbered year,
18 the advisory committee shall submit a written or electronic report
19 to the commission, the governor, the lieutenant governor, the
20 speaker of the house of representatives, and each member of the
21 legislature with its findings and recommendations described under
22 Subsection (a).

23 (h) The commission shall adopt any rules necessary to
24 implement this section, including rules governing the terms of and
25 any additional qualifications for members of the advisory
26 committee.

27 (i) Chapter [2110](#) does not apply to the advisory committee.

1 SECTION 2. Not later than December 1, 2017, the executive
2 director of the Texas Veterans Commission shall appoint members to
3 the advisory committee established under Section 434.0102,
4 Government Code, as added by this Act.

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