

MINUTES

SENATE COMMITTEE ON VETERAN AFFAIRS & BORDER SECURITY

Tuesday, May 22, 2018

10:00 AM

Betty King Committee Room

Pursuant to a notice posted in accordance with Senate Rule 11.10 and 11.18, a public hearing of the Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs & Border Security was held on Tuesday, May 22, 2018, in the Betty King Committee Room at Austin, Texas.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Donna Campbell, Chair
Senator Don Huffines, Vice Chair
Senator Dawn Buckingham
Senator Bob Hall
Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr.
Senator José Rodríguez

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

The chair called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM. There being a quorum present, the following business was transacted:

The following members arrived after the roll was called: Senator Dawn Buckingham.

The chair recognized Col. Sam Wilder, U.S. Army (ret) to lead the pledges to the U.S. and Texas flags.

The chair called the following individuals to provide invited and public testimony on the following interim committee charges (see attached witness list):

Veterans Health: Study the effectiveness of veterans' health and mental health initiatives in Texas and recommend ways to improve access and delivery. Explore the state of the federal VA Choice Program, including potential expiration, continuation, or expansion of the program. Consider the impact of the VA Choice Program on improving the delivery of health care, and

Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs & Border Security

Minutes

Tuesday, May 22, 2018

Page 2

determine ways to raise awareness and increase participation among Texas veterans. Consider the potential connection between chronic pain and mental health and identify strategies to improve the prevention of veteran suicide.

State-Delivered Federal Services: Review the veteran services offered by the United States Department of Veteran Affairs and Veteran Benefits Administration. Study those services which are being delivered by the Texas Veterans Commission, including but not limited to the state strike force teams and health care advocacy program. Consider ways to increase utilization of automated services, such as the Texas Veterans App, to reduce the need for additional staff time and to create a resource for veterans to access services at all times of the day.

Senator Huffines assumed the chair.

Senator Campbell resumed the chair.

The chair moved that the invited and public testimony be closed; without objection, it was so ordered.

There being no further business, at 2:46 PM Senator Campbell moved that the Committee stand recessed subject to the call of the chair. Without objection, it was so ordered.

Senator Donna Campbell, Chair

James Crabtree, Clerk