86R22845 JG-D

By:  Watson, et al. S.B. No. 607

(Flynn)

Substitute the following for S.B. No. 607:

By:  Flynn C.S.S.B. No. 607

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the operations and functions of the Veterans' Land Board and the sunset review date for and programs administered by the board.

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

SECTION 1.  Section 161.0111, Natural Resources Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 161.0111.  SUNSET PROVISION. The Veterans' Land Board is subject to review under Chapter 325, Government Code (Texas Sunset Act), but is not abolished under that chapter. The board shall be reviewed during the period in which state agencies abolished in 2031 are reviewed [~~2019~~] and every 12th year after that [~~2019 are reviewed~~].

SECTION 2.  Subchapter B, Chapter 161, Natural Resources Code, is amended by adding Section 161.0141 to read as follows:

Sec. 161.0141.  SEPARATION OF RESPONSIBILITIES. The board shall develop and implement policies that clearly separate the policy-making responsibilities of the board and the management responsibilities of the executive secretary, assistant executive secretary, and staff of the board.

SECTION 3.  Section 161.023, Natural Resources Code, is amended by amending Subsection (b) and adding Subsection (d) to read as follows:

(b)  The training program must provide the person with information regarding:

(1)  the law governing board operations [~~the legislation that created the board~~];

(2)  the programs, functions, rules, and budget of the board;

(3)  the scope of and limitations on the rulemaking authority of the board;

(4)  the results of the most recent formal audit of the board;

(5) [~~(4)~~]  the requirements of:

(A)  laws relating to open meetings, public information, administrative procedure, and disclosure of conflicts of interest; and

(B)  other laws applicable to members of a state policy-making body in performing their duties; and

(6) [~~(5)~~]  any applicable ethics policies adopted by the board or the Texas Ethics Commission.

(d)  The commissioner shall create a training manual that includes the information required by Subsection (b). The commissioner shall distribute a copy of the training manual annually to each member of the board. Each member of the board shall sign and submit to the commissioner a statement acknowledging that the member has received and reviewed the training manual.

SECTION 4.  Section 161.031(a), Natural Resources Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a)  The executive secretary or his or her designee shall prepare and maintain a written plan to assure implementation of a program of equal employment opportunity whereby all personnel transactions are made without regard to race, color, disability [~~handicap~~], sex, religion, age, or national origin. The plan shall include:

(1)  a comprehensive analysis which meets federal and state guidelines of all the agency's work force by race, sex, ethnic origin, class of position, and salary or wages;

(2)  plans for recruitment, evaluation, selection, appointment, training, promotion, and other personnel policies;

(3)  procedures by which a determination can be made of significant underutilization in the agency work force of all persons for whom federal and state guidelines encourage a more equitable balance and steps reasonably designed to overcome any identified underutilization; and

(4)  objectives and goals, with appropriate timetables for the achievement of the objectives and goals, assignments of responsibility for their achievement, and an appropriate program for reviewing and maintaining these goals and objectives once achieved.

SECTION 5.  Section 161.501, Natural Resources Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 161.501.  PURPOSE OF SUBCHAPTER; CONSTRUCTION. The purpose of this subchapter is to authorize the board to provide loans to veterans and certain members of the Texas State Guard for the purchase of land that are secured by a mortgage, deed of trust, or other lien on the land. This subchapter shall be liberally construed to effect that purpose.

SECTION 6.  Section 161.502(2), Natural Resources Code, is amended to read as follows:

(2)  "Loan" means a [~~veterans'~~] land loan made or acquired by the board under this subchapter secured by a mortgage, deed of trust, or other lien on the land purchased with the proceeds of the loan.

SECTION 7.  Section 161.504, Natural Resources Code, is amended by amending Subsection (a) and adding Subsection (a-1) to read as follows:

(a)  To qualify for a loan under this subchapter, a person must be:

(1)  a veteran at the time the person applies for the loan; or

(2)  a member of the Texas State Guard who, at the time the person applies for the loan:

(A)  has completed at least 10 years of service as a member of the Texas State Guard; and

(B)  is not considered to have been dishonorably discharged from the Texas State Guard.

(a-1)  If an eligible veteran dies after filing an application for a loan, the veteran's surviving spouse may complete the transaction.

SECTION 8.  (a) Except as provided by Subsection (b) of this section, Section 161.023, Natural Resources Code, as amended by this Act, applies to a member of the Veterans' Land Board appointed before, on, or after the effective date of this Act.

(b)  A member of the Veterans' Land Board who, before the effective date of this Act, completed the training program required by Section 161.023, Natural Resources Code, as that law existed before the effective date of this Act, is required to complete additional training only on subjects added by this Act to the training program as required by Section 161.023, Natural Resources Code, as amended by this Act. A board member described by this subsection may not vote, deliberate, or be counted as a member in attendance at a meeting of the board held on or after December 1, 2019, until the member completes the additional training.

SECTION 9.  This Act takes effect September 1, 2019.