

By: Blanco

H.B. No. 696

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to employment and referral services for veterans and military service members.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 302, Labor Code, is amended by adding Sections 302.0033 and 302.00335 to read as follows:

Sec. 302.0033. OPERATION WELCOME HOME PROGRAM. (a) The commission shall establish and administer the Operation Welcome Home program to expedite the entry of veterans and military service members into the workforce through the use of enhanced employment services. In establishing the program, the commission shall build partnerships between military transition centers and local workforce development boards to ensure the availability of employment services, including services related to:

(1) education;

(2) career technical training; and

(3) entrepreneurship.

(b) The commission may award grants to state, local, or private entities that perform activities related to the purposes of this section.

(c) The commission shall administer the program using money previously appropriated to the commission or received from federal or other sources.

1 (d) The commission may adopt rules as necessary for the
2 administration of this section.

3 Sec. 302.00335. TEXAS VETERANS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM. (a)
4 The commission, in consultation with the Texas Veterans Commission,
5 shall establish a Texas Veterans Leadership Program.

6 (b) The mission of the program is to serve as a resource and
7 referral network connecting veterans with the resources and tools
8 they need to lead productive lives and enjoy the full benefits of
9 the society they have willingly served.

10 (c) The program shall collaborate with local workforce
11 development boards to provide services to veterans under this
12 section. The program may collaborate with other federal, state,
13 county, municipal, and private agencies to provide services to
14 veterans under this section.

15 (d) The program shall employ veterans to serve as veteran
16 resource and referral specialists. A veteran resource and referral
17 specialist shall:

18 (1) seek out veterans in need of services;

19 (2) serve as a resource and referral agent, directing
20 veterans to resources tailored to veterans' needs;

21 (3) make referrals and coordinate with other programs
22 of the commission, the Texas Veterans Commission, and other
23 federal, state, county, municipal, and private agencies that
24 provide services for veterans relating to:

25 (A) employment;

26 (B) education and training;

27 (C) medical care;

- 1 (D) mental health and counseling; and
2 (E) veterans benefits; and
3 (4) coordinate the services of volunteer veterans
4 familiar with the obstacles faced by veterans to assist in
5 mentoring and serving veterans.

6 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
7 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
8 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
9 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
10 Act takes effect September 1, 2019.