

By: Miller

H.B. No. 3359

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1  
2 relating to pro bono legal services for veterans and service  
3 members and an exemption from the state bar membership fee for  
4 attorneys providing those services.

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

6 SECTION 1. Section 81.054, Government Code, is amended by  
7 adding Subsection (b-1) to read as follows:

8 (b-1) A member of the state bar who is in good standing is  
9 not required to pay an annual membership fee if in the preceding  
10 year the member provided the required number of qualifying pro bono  
11 legal services to veterans in accordance with rules adopted by the  
12 supreme court under this chapter. The rules must include standards  
13 governing this membership fee exemption, including:

14 (1) the number of pro bono hours required for the  
15 exemption;

16 (2) the types of pro bono legal services that qualify  
17 for the exemption; and

18 (3) the pro bono legal services programs through which  
19 the hours may qualify for the exemption.

20 SECTION 2. Section 434.017(c), Government Code, is amended  
21 to read as follows:

22 (c) Money in the fund may only be appropriated to the Texas  
23 Veterans Commission. Money appropriated under this subsection  
24 shall be used to:

1 (1) make grants to address veterans' needs;

2 (2) make grants to provide pro bono legal services to  
3 veterans, active duty members of the United States armed forces,  
4 and members of the state military forces;

5 (3) administer the fund; and

6 (4) ~~(3)~~ analyze and investigate data received from  
7 the federal Public Assistance Reporting Information System (PARIS)  
8 that is administered by the Administration for Children and  
9 Families of the United States Department of Health and Human  
10 Services.

11 SECTION 3. Section 434.0171, Government Code, is amended to  
12 read as follows:

13 Sec. 434.0171. STATE EMPLOYEE CONTRIBUTIONS TO FUND FOR  
14 VETERANS' ASSISTANCE. For purposes of Subchapter I, Chapter 659:

15 (1) the Texas Veterans Commission, for the sole  
16 purpose of managing the fund for veterans' assistance, is  
17 considered an eligible charitable organization entitled to  
18 participate in the state employee charitable campaign; and

19 (2) a state employee is entitled to authorize a  
20 deduction for contributions to the Texas Veterans Commission for  
21 the purposes of managing the fund for veterans' assistance as a  
22 charitable contribution under Section 659.132, and the Texas  
23 Veterans Commission may use the contributions for the purposes  
24 listed in Section 434.017(c) [~~as redesignated and amended by~~  
25 ~~Chapter 1418 (H.B. 3107), Acts of the 80th Legislature, Regular~~  
26 ~~Session, 2007~~].

27 SECTION 4. (a) As soon as practicable after the effective

1 date of this Act, the Texas Supreme Court shall adopt the rules  
2 necessary to implement Section 81.054(b-1), Government Code, as  
3 added by this Act.

4 (b) Section 81.054(b-1), Government Code, as added by this  
5 Act, applies to a fee for membership or renewal of membership in the  
6 State Bar of Texas that is due on or after January 1, 2020. A fee  
7 for membership or renewal of membership that is due before that date  
8 is governed by the law in effect immediately before the effective  
9 date of this Act, and the former law is continued in effect for that  
10 purpose.

11 SECTION 5. This Act takes effect September 1, 2019.