

AN ACT

relating to certain advocacy and legal services for Texas Veterans and to tuition and fees for certain military spouses and dependents.

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

SECTION 1. Section 434.017(c), Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

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

(1) make grants to address veterans' needs;

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

(3) administer the fund; and

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

SECTION 2. Section 434.0171, Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

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

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

5 (2) a state employee is entitled to authorize a
6 deduction for contributions to the Texas Veterans Commission for
7 the purposes of managing the fund for veterans' assistance as a
8 charitable contribution under Section 659.132, and the Texas
9 Veterans Commission may use the contributions for the purposes
10 listed in Section 434.017(c) [~~, as redesignated and amended by~~
11 ~~Chapter 1418 (H.B. 3107), Acts of the 80th Legislature, Regular~~
12 ~~Session, 2007]~~.

13 SECTION 3. Subchapter B, Chapter 434, Government Code, is
14 amended by adding Section 434.040 to read as follows:

15 Sec. 434.040. TEXAS VETERANS COUNTY SERVICE OFFICER TASK
16 FORCE. (a) In this section:

17 (1) "Rural county" means a county with a population of
18 less than 200,000.

19 (2) "Task force" means the Texas Veterans County
20 Service Officer Task Force.

21 (3) "Urban county" means a county with a population of
22 200,000 or more.

23 (b) The Texas Veterans County Service Officer Task Force is
24 established to study the impact and efficacy of officers in this
25 state.

26 (c) The task force is composed of the following nine
27 members:

1 (1) the chair of the House Committee on Defense and
2 Veterans' Affairs;

3 (2) the chair of the Senate Committee on Veteran
4 Affairs and Border Security;

5 (3) a representative of the commission;

6 (4) the chair of the Veterans County Service Officer
7 Advisory Committee;

8 (5) a representative of the Texas Coalition of
9 Veterans Organizations;

10 (6) an officer representing a rural county selected by
11 the chair of the House Committee on Defense and Veterans' Affairs;

12 (7) an officer representing an urban county selected
13 by the chair of the House Committee on Defense and Veterans'
14 Affairs;

15 (8) an officer representing a rural county selected by
16 the chair of the Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs and Border
17 Security; and

18 (9) an officer representing an urban county selected
19 by the chair of the Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs and Border
20 Security.

21 (d) The chairs of the House Committee on Defense and
22 Veterans' Affairs and Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs and
23 Border Security serve as co-chairs of the task force.

24 (e) A recommendation of the task force must be approved by a
25 majority vote of the members of the task force.

26 (f) Each member of the task force has one vote.

27 (g) The task force shall:

1 (1) examine the role and duties of officers in each
2 county;

3 (2) identify the regions of this state that are in need
4 of officers; and

5 (3) determine types and levels of support needed from
6 this state in order for officers to appropriately advocate for the
7 veterans served by the officers.

8 (h) Not later than December 1, 2020, the commission shall
9 prepare and submit a report based on recommendations of the task
10 force regarding the issues described in Subsection (g) to the
11 Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs and Border Security and House
12 Committee on Defense and Veterans' Affairs. The report must be
13 approved by a majority vote of the members of the task force.

14 (i) This section expires January 1, 2021.

15 SECTION 4. Section 434.154(a), Government Code, is amended
16 to read as follows:

17 (a) The council may, by majority vote, establish the
18 following coordinating workgroups to focus on specific issues
19 affecting veterans, servicemembers, and their families:

- 20 (1) health;
- 21 (2) mental health;
- 22 (3) employment;
- 23 (4) higher education;
- 24 (5) criminal justice;
- 25 (6) housing;
- 26 (7) transportation;
- 27 (8) women veterans;

1 (9) pro bono legal services for veterans, including
2 opportunities and obstacles for providing those services; and

3 (10) [~~9~~] any other coordinating workgroup
4 considered necessary.

5 SECTION 5. Section 54.241(g), Education Code, is amended to
6 read as follows:

7 (g) If a member of the Armed Forces of the United States is
8 stationed outside Texas, an [~~and the member's spouse or child~~
9 ~~establishes residence in Texas by residing in Texas and by filing~~
10 ~~with the Texas institution of higher education at which the spouse~~
11 ~~or child plans to register a letter of intent to establish residence~~
12 ~~in Texas, the]~~ institution of higher education shall:

13 (1) permit the member's spouse or child to pay the
14 tuition, fees, and other charges provided for Texas residents
15 without regard to the length of time that the spouse or child has
16 resided in Texas if the spouse or child establishes residence in
17 Texas by residing in Texas and by filing with the Texas institution
18 of higher education at which the spouse or child plans to register a
19 letter of intent to establish residence in Texas; and

20 (2) permit the member's spouse to pay the tuition,
21 fees, and other charges provided for Texas residents if the spouse:

22 (A) graduated from a public or private high
23 school in this state or received the equivalent of a high school
24 diploma in this state; and

25 (B) maintained a domicile in this state
26 continuously for at least one year before the member was assigned to
27 duty outside Texas.

1 SECTION 6. Section 54.241, Education Code, as amended by
2 this Act, applies beginning with tuition and fees charged for the
3 2019 fall semester.

4 SECTION 7. (a) Except as provided by Subsection (b) of
5 this section, this Act takes effect September 1, 2019.

6 (b) Section 54.241, Education Code, as amended by this Act,
7 takes effect immediately if this Act receives a vote of two-thirds
8 of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39,
9 Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the
10 vote necessary for immediate effect, Section 54.241, Education
11 Code, as amended by this Act, takes effect September 1, 2019.

President of the Senate

Speaker of the House

I hereby certify that S.B. No. 2104 passed the Senate on April 17, 2019, by the following vote: Yeas 31, Nays 0; and that the Senate concurred in House amendments on May 25, 2019, by the following vote: Yeas 30, Nays 0.

Secretary of the Senate

I hereby certify that S.B. No. 2104 passed the House, with amendments, on May 22, 2019, by the following vote: Yeas 142, Nays 1, one present not voting.

Chief Clerk of the House

Approved:

Date

Governor