

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

H.B. 2159  
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Defense & Veterans' Affairs  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

It has been suggested that more efforts could be made across the state to help facilitate health and wellness for veterans, with an important focus on curbing suicide rates for this population. Many veterans in Texas have difficulty readjusting to life as a civilian, often finding themselves struggling to cope with the effects of having served. There have been calls to utilize state land, including parks, for the purpose of facilitating increased health and wellness for veterans. H.B. 2159 seeks to address this issue by requiring the Texas Veterans Commission to conduct a study regarding the use of state lands for purposes of providing outdoor recreation for veterans in Texas.

### **CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

### **ANALYSIS**

H.B. 2159 requires the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC), in collaboration with the General Land Office, the Texas Historical Commission, and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, to conduct a study to identify and assess the use of state land, including state parks, for the purpose of facilitating health and wellness for veterans. The bill requires the TVC in conducting the study to do the following:

- identify barriers that limit opportunities to supplement the delivery to veterans of services for health and wellness through the use of outdoor recreation on state land; and
- develop recommendations to better facilitate the use of state land for promoting wellness and facilitating the delivery of health care and therapeutic interventions for veterans.

The bill requires the TVC, not later than November 1, 2022, to submit to the governor, lieutenant governor, speaker of the house of representatives, and appropriate standing committees of the legislature with jurisdiction over veterans' issues a report on the results of the study and any recommendations of the TVC related to the study, including any statutory changes necessary to authorize the use of state land for the health and wellness of veterans. The bill's provisions expire September 1, 2023.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2021.