

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center

S.B. 886  
By: Blanco  
Veteran Affairs & Border Security  
5/24/2021  
Enrolled

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

Texas is home to a large population of veterans and immigrants, with overlap between the two demographics. Current federal law allows a noncitizen to serve in the military if they are living as a legal resident, have permission to work through a permanent resident card, have a high school diploma, and are English proficient. Due to higher deportation rates, there has been growing concern of deportation from noncitizen veterans. Deportations threaten noncitizen veterans' ability to access federal Veterans Affairs health care benefits which are critical to treating the mental health illnesses, substance abuse, and physical disabilities which often occur as a result of military service. Recent federal policies have forced veterans to go through lengthier, more complex processes to receive citizenship and have increased the number of veterans who have been denied expedited paths to citizenship.

S.B. 886 seeks to provide additional assistance to Texas veterans by tasking the Texas Veterans Commission with determining the citizenship status of veterans living in Texas and facilitating the naturalization process for noncitizen veterans. S.B. 886 will help ensure that noncitizen veterans are provided with all of the information, resources, and assistance they need to successfully navigate the naturalization process.

S.B. 886 amends current law relating to the provision of citizenship assistance to veterans by the Texas Veterans Commission.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

### **SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter A, Chapter 434, Government Code, by adding Section 434.027, as follows:

Sec. 434.027. CITIZENSHIP ASSISTANCE FOR VETERANS. Requires the Texas Veterans Commission, on request of a veteran, to evaluate the veteran's citizenship status in order to educate and direct the veteran in becoming a United States citizen and facilitate the veteran's naturalization process.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2021.