

By: White

H.B. No. 1553

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to evaluating the effectiveness of veterans treatment court programs in this state.

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

SECTION 1. Section 71.037, Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 71.037. SPECIALTY COURT BEST PRACTICES. The council shall:

(1) review and as appropriate approve recommendations made by the Specialty Courts Advisory Council under Section 772.0061(b)(2); and

(2) conduct an ongoing evaluation to determine the effectiveness of veterans treatment court programs established under Chapter 124 using the guidelines and objective performance measures developed by the Office of Court Administration of the Texas Judicial System under Section 72.0305.

SECTION 2. Subchapter C, Chapter 72, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 72.0305 to read as follows:

Sec. 72.0305. VETERANS TREATMENT COURT PROGRAM EVALUATION.

(a) The office shall establish guidelines for and define the scope of an ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of veterans treatment court programs established under Chapter 124.

(b) The guidelines described by Subsection (a) must contain objective performance measures, including a standard definition of

1 recidivism to evaluate each veterans treatment court program's
2 effectiveness in preventing participants from reentering the
3 criminal justice system.

4 (c) The office shall collect and analyze data regarding:

5 (1) the rate of recidivism among defendants who
6 successfully completed a veterans treatment court program; and

7 (2) the statewide rate of recidivism among defendants
8 who have committed offenses for which a veteran may be eligible to
9 participate in a veterans treatment court program.

10 (d) Subsection (c) and this subsection expire September 1,
11 2031.

12 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2021.