

By: Neave

H.B. No. 2356

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a veteran suicide tracking system and required reporting of veteran suicides by certain persons.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 434, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 434.027 to read as follows:

Sec. 434.027. VETERAN SUICIDE TRACKING SYSTEM; REQUIRED REPORTING OF CERTAIN SUICIDES. (a) The Texas Veterans Commission, in collaboration with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, shall develop and maintain a system for tracking the number of veteran suicides in this state and determining the number of those veterans who received services from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. The tracking system must include data:

(1) available from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs; and

(2) reported to the commission under Subsection (b).

(b) A person who knows that the cause of death for a veteran is suicide shall report the suicide to the Texas Veterans Commission and provide any information the person has that may assist the commission in determining whether the veteran received services from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

(c) The following persons shall provide to the Texas Veterans Commission in accordance with Subsection (b) any relevant

1 information the person obtains related to the suicide of a veteran:

2 (1) a medical examiner or a justice of the peace who is  
3 acting as a coroner;

4 (2) a health care facility licensed under Subtitle B,  
5 Title 4, Health and Safety Code; or

6 (3) a mental health facility, as defined by Section  
7 571.003, Health and Safety Code.

8 (d) Information about the suicide of a veteran obtained  
9 under this chapter is confidential and is not subject to disclosure  
10 under Chapter 552, Government Code, is not subject to subpoena, and  
11 may not otherwise be released or made public.

12 (e) Not later than December 31 of each year, the Texas  
13 Veterans Commission shall submit to the legislature a report that  
14 includes:

15 (1) the number of veteran suicides that were reported  
16 to the commission under this section during the preceding year;

17 (2) the number of veterans described by Subdivision  
18 (1) who received services from the United States Department of  
19 Veterans Affairs;

20 (3) information on whether the rate of veteran  
21 suicides in this state is decreasing or increasing;

22 (4) an evaluation of the effectiveness of statewide  
23 prevention and awareness campaigns in decreasing the number of  
24 veteran suicides in this state; and

25 (5) recommendations for improving the effectiveness  
26 of statewide prevention and awareness campaigns.

27 SECTION 2. Not later than December 31, 2021, the Texas

1 Veterans Commission shall develop the tracking system required by  
2 Section 434.027, Government Code, as added by this Act.

3 SECTION 3. Notwithstanding Section 434.027, Government  
4 Code, as added by this Act:

5 (1) a person is not required to comply with Section  
6 434.027(c) until January 1, 2022; and

7 (2) the Texas Veterans Commission is not required to  
8 submit a report required by Section 434.027(e) to the legislature  
9 until December 31, 2022.

10 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2021.