

By: Romero, Jr.

H.B. No. 3632

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the creation of a continuity of care and service program for veteran offenders; creating a criminal offense.

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

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

SUBCHAPTER J. CONTINUITY OF CARE FOR VETERAN OFFENDERS

Sec. 434.421. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Commission" means the Texas Veterans Commission.

(2) "Veteran offender" includes a veteran of or a person serving on active duty in the armed forces of the United States for whom criminal charges are pending or who after conviction or adjudication is in custody or under any form of criminal justice supervision.

Sec. 434.422. CONTINUITY OF CARE AND SERVICE PROGRAM FOR VETERAN OFFENDERS. (a) The commission, the criminal justice division of the governor's office, the Texas Workforce Commission, the Veterans' Land Board, the Commission on Jail Standards, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, the Health and Human Services Commission, the bureau of identification and records of the Department of Public Safety, representatives of local mental health authorities appointed by the commissioner of the Department of State Health Services, the directors of community supervision and corrections departments, and representatives of veterans treatment

1 court programs established under Chapter 124 shall adopt a
2 memorandum of understanding that establishes their respective
3 responsibilities to institute a continuity of care and service
4 program for veteran offenders in the criminal justice system. The
5 criminal justice division of the governor's office shall coordinate
6 and monitor the development and implementation of the memorandum of
7 understanding.

8 (b) The memorandum of understanding must establish methods
9 for:

10 (1) identifying veteran offenders in the criminal
11 justice system using data made available from the Veterans Reentry
12 Search Service operated by the United States Department of Veterans
13 Affairs or a similar service;

14 (2) developing interagency rules, policies, and
15 procedures for the coordination of care of and exchange of
16 information on veteran offenders by the entities listed in
17 Subsection (a); and

18 (3) connecting veteran offenders to services needed to
19 reenter the community successfully using a coordinated online
20 network of public, private, and nonprofit organizations serving
21 veterans, service members, and their families across service
22 regions in this state that is funded by the Texas Workforce
23 Commission.

24 (c) The entities listed in Subsection (a) shall:

25 (1) operate the continuity of care and service program
26 for veteran offenders in the criminal justice system with any funds
27 appropriated for that purpose; and

1 (2) actively seek federal grants or funds to operate
2 and expand the program.

3 Sec. 434.423. EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION. (a) The entities
4 listed in Section 434.422(a) shall:

5 (1) accept information relating to a veteran offender
6 that is sent to the entity to serve the purposes of continuity of
7 care and services; and

8 (2) disclose information relating to a veteran
9 offender, including information about the offender's identity,
10 needs, treatment, social, criminal, and vocational history,
11 supervision status and compliance with conditions of supervision,
12 and medical and mental health history, if the disclosure serves the
13 purposes of continuity of care and services.

14 (b) Information obtained under this section may not be used
15 as evidence in any criminal proceeding, unless obtained and
16 introduced by other lawful evidentiary means.

17 (c) An entity listed in Section 434.422(a) shall manage
18 confidential information accepted or disclosed under this section
19 prudently so as to maintain the confidentiality of that
20 information.

21 (d) A person commits an offense if the person releases or
22 discloses confidential information obtained under this section for
23 purposes other than continuity of care and services. An offense
24 under this subsection is a Class B misdemeanor.

25 (e) It is an exception to the application of Subsection (d)
26 that the person's release or disclosure of information was
27 authorized by other law or with the consent of the person to whom

1 the information relates.

2 SECTION 2. Section [411.042](#), Government Code, is amended by
3 adding Subsection (k) to read as follows:

4 (k) The bureau of identification and records shall collect
5 and disseminate information regarding veteran offenders in
6 compliance with Subchapter J, Chapter [434](#).

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