

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 3220
By: Garcia
Defense & Veterans' Affairs
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

According to population data from the U.S. Census Bureau, veterans make up roughly five percent of the population in Texas. However, the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness finds that veterans account for roughly seven percent of the state's homeless population. Given that the Texas Coordinating Council for Veterans Services reports the average earning of a homeless veteran to be at or below \$1,000 per month in federal benefits, affordable housing options remain extremely limited. At the same time, Texas is fortunate to have various government buildings and properties which could be utilized to provide housing and wraparound services to these veterans. H.B. 3220 seeks to address the supply of housing available to homeless veterans by instructing the Texas Coordinating Council for Veterans Services to conduct a study on the use of surplus government property for the development of such housing.

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. 3220 requires the Texas Coordinating Council for Veterans Services to establish and oversee a workgroup to assess the feasibility of using surplus government property to provide housing to homeless veterans. The bill defines "surplus government property" as unused or underused federal, state, or local property, including real property, historic buildings, residential buildings, and commercial buildings. The workgroup is composed of the executive head of each of the following state agencies or that person's designee:

- the Texas Veterans Commission;
- the General Land Office;
- the Veterans' Land Board; and
- the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs.

The bill authorizes the council to include in the workgroup the executive head of any other state agency, or that person's designee, by majority vote.

H.B. 3220 requires the workgroup to do the following in conducting the feasibility assessment:

- evaluate the availability of surplus government property in Texas and the feasibility of developing housing units on that property to provide housing to homeless veterans;
- identify veteran subpopulations that will most benefit from a program that facilitates the use or development of that property for such housing; and

- identify potential funding sources to develop housing units on surplus government property, including:
 - federal historic tax credits or federal housing tax credits;
 - corporate and private donations;
 - other existing state and federal funding sources; and
 - proposed tenant rent payments.

H.B. 3220 authorizes the workgroup, in conducting the assessment, to consult with local housing authorities, affordable housing developers, and organizations and persons with appropriate and relevant expertise on the housing needs of veterans. The bill requires the workgroup, not later than November 1, 2024, to prepare and submit a written report to the legislature summarizing the results of the assessment. The bill's provisions expire September 1, 2025.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2023.