

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

C.S.H.B. 4972  
By: Garcia  
Defense & Veterans' Affairs  
Committee Report (Substituted)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Recent reports on Texas veterans have included recommendations from the mental health workgroup regarding the need to increase access to mental health services for service members, veterans, and their families. C.S.H.B. 4972 seeks to address this issue by requiring the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) to conduct a study on improving and expanding mental health services through TVC's Military Veteran Peer Network.

### **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**

C.S.H.B. 4972 requires the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC), in collaboration with the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), to conduct a study to evaluate strategies to improve and expand mental health services provided through TVC's Military Veteran Peer Network. The bill requires the study to include recommendations on expanding the number of certified peer service coordinators who provide mental health services to service members, veterans, and their family members, and to focus on the provision of such coordinators to rural communities in Texas.

C.S.H.B. 4972 requires TVC, not later than December 1, 2024, to prepare and submit a report to the legislature containing the findings of the study and any recommendations for legislative or other action. The bill's provisions expire September 1, 2025.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2023.

### **COMPARISON OF INTRODUCED AND SUBSTITUTE**

While C.S.H.B. 4972 may differ from the introduced in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

The substitute includes a specification absent from the introduced that TVC is to conduct the required study in collaboration with HHSC.