

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 63
By: Zaffirini
Defense & Veterans' Affairs
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Many veterans in Texas face mental health consequences as a result of their service. Caring for someone with a mental illness can take a physical, mental, and emotional toll; consequently, loved ones of these veterans may feel ill-equipped or overwhelmed as they attempt to provide support. S.B. 63 seeks to address this issue by requiring the Health and Human Services Commission and the Texas Veterans Commission to jointly produce and make publicly available an instruction guide for family members and caregivers of veterans who have mental health disorders.

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

S.B. 63 amends the Government Code to require the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) and the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) to jointly produce and make publicly available an instruction guide for family members and caregivers of veterans who have mental health disorders. The bill requires the instruction guide to include the following:

- general education about different mental health disorders, including instruction intended to improve understanding about the experience of persons suffering from those mental health disorders;
- techniques for handling crisis situations and administering mental health first aid to persons suffering from mental health disorders;
- techniques for coping with the stress of living with a person with a mental health disorder; and
- information about related services available for family members and caregivers of veterans who have mental health disorders that are provided by HHSC, TVC, other state agencies, community organizations, and mental health services providers.

The bill requires HHSC and TVC each to publish the information guide on the respective agency's website.

EFFECTIVE DATE

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