

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
88R6018 MCK-D

S.B. 493
By: Hughes
Veteran Affairs
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Over the past two-and-a-half years, members of the United States armed forces have been dishonorably discharged based solely on refusing to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

Because of this discharge, such veterans may be denied certain benefits and services from the state. S.B. 493 will rectify this by allowing recognizing dishonorably discharged veterans to be honorably discharged if the former member of the United States armed forces proves to the Texas Veterans Commission that their refusal to receive a vaccination against COVID-19 was the sole reason for their less than honorable discharge.

As proposed, S.B. 493 amends current law relating to qualifications for certain individuals for veterans benefits.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter A, Chapter 434, Government Code, by adding Section 434.029, as follows:

Sec. 434.029. CERTAIN VETERANS QUALIFIED FOR BENEFITS. (a) Defines "COVID-19."

(b) Requires a former member of the United States armed forces who received a less than honorable discharge due to the individual's refusal to receive a vaccination against COVID-19, for purposes of determining qualifications for any veterans benefits or services from the state, to be considered to have received an honorable discharge.

(c) Requires a former member of the United States armed forces, for a discharge of the former member of the United States armed forces to be considered honorable under Subsection (b), to prove to the Texas Veterans Commission that the individual's refusal to receive a vaccination against COVID-19 was the sole reason for the individual's less than honorable discharge.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2023.