

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 2057
By: Hinojosa; LaMantia
Natural Resources & Economic Development
6/8/2023
Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The U.S. Marines raising our nation's flag at the top of Mount Suribachi on the island of Iwo Jima is one of the most famous acts of heroism in World War II. In addition to the iconic photograph by Joe Rosenthal of the Associated Press, the heroic act is memorialized in the United States Marine Corps War Memorial located in Washington, DC. The image inspired the sculptor Felix W. de Weldon to construct an initial scale model and then a life-size model depicting the Marines' action. The bronze monument with thirty-two-foot-high figures raising a 60-foot bronze flagpole has become a source of national pride located in our nation's capital.

In 1981, a life-sized plaster model was gifted to the Marine Military Academy in Harlingen, Texas. South Texas offered a fairly constant temperature and humidity ideal for the preservation of the molding-plaster figures. Most appropriately, the Marine placing the flagpole into the ground was a South Texas native, Corporal Harlon H. Block of Weslaco, Texas. Corporal Block's grave site resides directly behind the monument.

The Marine Military Academy and the Texas Historical Commission have been in discussions about expanding the museum associated with the monument, enhancing the visitor experience, preserving and displaying military documents, relics, and other historical items, and protecting the monument itself. A preliminary conceptual study has been prepared.

S.B. 2057 would allow the Texas Historical Commission to enter into an agreement with the Marine Military Academy for operation and management of the Iwo Jima Monument and Museum.

(Original Author's/Sponsor's Statement of Intent)

S.B. 2057 amends current law relating to the operation and management of the Iwo Jima monument and museum by the Texas Historical Commission.

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 Chapter 442, Government Code, by adding Subchapter B-2, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER B-2. IWO JIMA MONUMENT AND MUSEUM

Sec. 442.065. DEFINITION. Defines "monument and museum."

Sec. 442.066. IWO JIMA MONUMENT AND MUSEUM; FUND. (a) Authorizes the Texas Historical Commission (THC), to the extent authorized by law, to enter into a contract with the nonprofit entity that owns the Iwo Jima monument and museum at the Marine Military Academy (monument and museum) to transfer to THC the operation and management of the monument and museum.

(b) Requires that the contract authorized by this section include provisions for:

(1) expanding, renovating, managing, maintaining, operating, or providing financial support for the monument and museum, including administration, construction and operation of a visitor center and related activities;

(2) preserving military documents, relics, and other items of historical interest;

(3) employing a museum director and other employees THC considers necessary to fulfill its duties and responsibilities under the contract;

(4) accepting donations of money, property, and historical relics; and

(5) acquiring property and historical relics with funds available for that purpose.

(c) Provides that the Iwo Jiwa monument and museum fund (fund) is created as a fund outside the state treasury. Provides that THC is required to administer the fund but is authorized to contract with the nonprofit entity that owns the monument and museum for administration of the fund. Provides that the fund consists of:

(1) admissions revenue from the operation of the monument and museum;

(2) sales revenue from the operation of the monument and museum gift shop; and

(3) donations made to THC for the monument and museum.

(d) Authorizes money in the fund to be spent without legislative appropriation and only to administer, operate, preserve, repair, expand or otherwise maintain the monument and museum.

(e) Requires that interest and income from the assets of the fund be credited to and deposited in the fund.

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