88R13441 MCF-D

By:  Garcia H.B. No. 4962

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the eligibility of a defendant to participate in a veterans treatment court program.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1.  Section 124.002, Government Code, is amended by amending Subsection (a) and adding Subsection (a-1) to read as follows:

(a)  The commissioners court of a county may establish a veterans treatment court program for persons arrested for, charged with, convicted of, or placed on deferred adjudication community supervision for any misdemeanor or felony offense. A defendant is eligible to participate in a veterans treatment court program established under this chapter only if:

(1)  the attorney representing the state consents to the defendant's participation in the program, subject to Subsection (a-1); and

(2)  [~~if~~] the court in which the criminal case is pending or in which the defendant was convicted or placed on deferred adjudication community supervision, as applicable, finds that the defendant is a veteran or current member of the United States armed forces, including a member of the reserves, national guard, or state guard, who:

(A) [~~(1)~~]  suffers from a brain injury, mental illness, or mental disorder, including post-traumatic stress disorder, or was a victim of military sexual trauma if the injury, illness, disorder, or trauma:

(i) [~~(A)~~]  occurred during or resulted from the defendant's military service; and

(ii) [~~(B)~~]  affected the defendant's criminal conduct at issue in the case; or

(B) [~~(2)~~]  is a defendant whose participation in a veterans treatment court program, considering the circumstances of the defendant's conduct, personal and social background, and criminal history, is likely to achieve the objective of ensuring public safety through rehabilitation of the veteran in the manner provided by Section 1.02(1), Penal Code.

(a-1)  If an attorney representing the state does not consent to a defendant's participation in a veterans treatment court program under Subsection (a)(1), the defendant may file a motion requesting the court in which the criminal case is pending or in which the defendant was convicted or placed on deferred adjudication community supervision, as applicable, to review the decision of the attorney representing the state. If the court finds that the defendant otherwise meets the eligibility requirements described by Subsection (a)(2), the court may allow the defendant to participate in the program.

SECTION 2.  The change in law made by this Act applies only to a criminal case that is pending on or commences on or after the effective date of this Act.

SECTION 3.  This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2023.