

By: Garcia

H.B. No. 4945

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to establishing a grant program for junior reserve officer training programs to provide military funeral honors for veterans.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 434, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 434.0073 to read as follows:

Sec. 434.0073. GRANT PROGRAM FOR VETERAN FUNERAL SERVICES IN CIVILIAN CEMETERY. (a) In this section:

(1) "JROTC program" means a junior reserve officer training corps program for students in grades 6 through 12 established under 10 U.S.C. Section 2031.

(2) "Military funeral honors" means the services described by 10 U.S.C. Sections 1491(b) and (c).

(3) "ROTC program" means a reserve officer training corps program established under 10 U.S.C. Section 2101.

(4) "Veteran" means a person who has served in:

(A) the army, navy, air force, coast guard, or marine corps of the United States; or

(B) the Texas national guard as defined by Section 437.001.

(b) The commission shall establish a grant program for JROTC programs to provide military funeral honors at funeral services for veterans being buried in a cemetery other than a national military cemetery or other military cemetery in this state.

1 (c) A JROTC program may receive training on the requirements
2 and performance of military funeral honors at funerals of veterans
3 from a local organization that has the necessary training to
4 perform military funeral honors, including:

5 (1) an ROTC program;

6 (2) a military honor guard;

7 (3) a Veterans of Foreign Wars post;

8 (4) a law enforcement agency;

9 (5) a fire department; or

10 (6) another nonprofit organization that is composed of
11 or serves veterans and is qualified to provide training on the
12 requirements and performance of military funeral honors.

13 (d) To be eligible for a grant under this section, a JROTC
14 program must submit an application on the form prescribed by the
15 commission. The commission shall make the application form
16 available on the commission's publicly available Internet website.
17 An application for a grant under this section must include:

18 (1) the name of the local organization that trained
19 the JROTC program in the performance of military honors at veteran
20 funerals or, if the JROTC program was not able to obtain training
21 from a local organization, the names of the organizations the JROTC
22 program contacted to obtain training; and

23 (2) a detailed plan for how the JROTC program will
24 spend grant money awarded under this section, including, if the
25 program intends to purchase air rifles, details on whether the
26 JROTC program is authorized to make the purchase and a plan for the
27 safe use and storage of the air rifles.

1 (e) A JROTC program awarded a grant under this section shall
2 work with local organizations in the community to spread awareness
3 among veterans and the families of veterans of the program's
4 availability to perform military funeral honors in the community.

5 (f) Grant money awarded under this section may be used for:

6 (1) uniforms;

7 (2) air rifles, if:

8 (A) the purchase and use of air rifles is
9 approved by the school district in which the JROTC program is
10 located; and

11 (B) the JROTC program includes in the grant
12 application a safe storage and use plan that is approved by the
13 school district;

14 (3) American flags in a size approved for the purpose
15 of providing military honors, if one has not been provided to a
16 veteran's family free of charge;

17 (4) bugles;

18 (5) audio recordings of and equipment to play TAPS; or

19 (6) tuition and fees for a JROTC program instructor to
20 enroll in a training course offered by an honor guard academy, if
21 the program is unable to receive training from a local
22 organization.

23 (g) A grant awarded under this section may not exceed
24 \$3,500.

25 (h) The commission and the Veterans' Land Board may
26 publicize a JROTC program that received a grant under this section
27 as a resource to perform military funeral honors at the funeral of a

1 veteran in the community in which the JROTC program is located and
2 the JROTC program shall make its best effort to perform military
3 funeral honors when requested.

4 (i) The commission may accept gifts, grants, and donations
5 from any source to administer the grant program established under
6 this section.

7 SECTION 2. As soon as practicable after the effective date
8 of this Act, the commission shall adopt rules to implement the grant
9 program established under Section 434.0073, Government Code, as
10 added by this Act.

11 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2023.