

By: Garcia

H.B. No. 5045

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the creation of a task force to study access to telephone and Internet service among homeless veterans.

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

SECTION 1. DEFINITION. In this Act, "task force" means the task force established under Section 2 of this Act.

SECTION 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF TASK FORCE. (a) The Texas Veterans Commission, in collaboration with the Public Utility Commission of Texas, shall establish a task force to:

(1) evaluate the ability of homeless veterans to access telephone and Internet service;

(2) determine the effect that increasing a homeless veteran's access to telephone and Internet service would have on the homeless veteran's ability to obtain available services and benefits;

(3) consider the potential for partnerships between public and private entities to provide access to telephone and Internet service to homeless veterans at a low or reduced cost; and

(4) assess federal, state, and private funding sources available to increase access to telephone and Internet service by homeless veterans.

(b) The task force may seek assistance from any organization that serves veterans, including homeless veterans.

SECTION 3. COMPOSITION OF TASK FORCE. The task force is

1 composed of four members as follows:

2 (1) one representative of the Texas Veterans  
3 Commission;

4 (2) one representative of the Public Utility  
5 Commission of Texas; and

6 (3) two members appointed by the governor, including:

7 (A) one member representing telephone service  
8 providers; and

9 (B) one member representing Internet service  
10 providers.

11 SECTION 4. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS. (a) The executive  
12 director of each state agency represented on the task force shall  
13 appoint an employee of the agency to serve as the agency's  
14 representative on the task force not later than November 1, 2023.

15 (b) Not later than November 1, 2023, the governor shall  
16 appoint two members to the task force as provided by Section 3 of  
17 this Act.

18 SECTION 5. REPORT. Not later than November 1, 2024, the  
19 task force shall prepare and submit to the Texas Veterans  
20 Commission, the Public Utility Commission of Texas, the governor,  
21 the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of  
22 representatives, and the members of the legislature a written  
23 report on its findings.

24 SECTION 6. ABOLISHMENT AND EXPIRATION. The task force is  
25 abolished and this Act expires January 1, 2025.

26 SECTION 7. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Act takes effect September  
27 1, 2023.