

1-1 By: Menéndez S.B. No. 2938  
1-2 (In the Senate - Filed March 14, 2025; April 7, 2025, read  
1-3 first time and referred to Committee on Veteran Affairs;  
1-4 April 24, 2025, reported favorably by the following vote: Yeas 7,  
1-5 Nays 0; April 24, 2025, sent to printer.)

1-6	COMMITTEE VOTE				
1-7		Yea	Nay	Absent	PNV
1-8	Hancock	X			
1-9	Parker	X			
1-10	Eckhardt	X			
1-11	Gutierrez	X			
1-12	Hagenbuch	X			
1-13	Hall	X			
1-14	Menéndez	X			

1-15 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
1-16 AN ACT

1-17 relating to the verification of the veteran status of inmates and  
1-18 prisoners.  
1-19 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:  
1-20 SECTION 1. Section 8(a), Article 42.09, Code of Criminal  
1-21 Procedure, is amended to read as follows:  
1-22 (a) A county that transfers a defendant to the Texas  
1-23 Department of Criminal Justice under this article shall deliver to  
1-24 an officer designated by the department:  
1-25 (1) a copy of the judgment entered pursuant to Article  
1-26 42.01, completed on a standardized felony judgment form described  
1-27 by Section 4 of that article;  
1-28 (2) a copy of any order revoking community supervision  
1-29 and imposing sentence pursuant to Article 42A.755, including:  
1-30 (A) any amounts owed for restitution, fines, and  
1-31 court costs, completed on a standardized felony judgment form  
1-32 described by Section 4, Article 42.01; and  
1-33 (B) a copy of the client supervision plan  
1-34 prepared for the defendant by the community supervision and  
1-35 corrections department supervising the defendant, if such a plan  
1-36 was prepared;  
1-37 (3) a written report that states the nature and the  
1-38 seriousness of each offense and that states the citation to the  
1-39 provision or provisions of the Penal Code or other law under which  
1-40 the defendant was convicted;  
1-41 (4) a copy of the victim impact statement, if one has  
1-42 been prepared in the case under Subchapter D, Chapter 56A;  
1-43 (5) a statement as to whether there was a change in  
1-44 venue in the case and, if so, the names of the county prosecuting  
1-45 the offense and the county in which the case was tried;  
1-46 (6) if requested, information regarding the criminal  
1-47 history of the defendant, including the defendant's state  
1-48 identification number if the number has been issued;  
1-49 (7) a copy of the indictment or information for each  
1-50 offense;  
1-51 (8) a checklist sent by the department to the county  
1-52 and completed by the county in a manner indicating that the  
1-53 documents required by this subsection and Subsection (c) accompany  
1-54 the defendant;  
1-55 (9) if prepared, a copy of a presentence or  
1-56 postsentence report prepared under Subchapter F, Chapter 42A;  
1-57 (10) a copy of any detainer, issued by an agency of the  
1-58 federal government, that is in the possession of the county and that  
1-59 has been placed on the defendant;  
1-60 (11) if prepared, a copy of the defendant's Texas  
1-61 Uniform Health Status Update Form;

(12) a written description of a hold or warrant, issued by any other jurisdiction, that the county is aware of and that has been placed on or issued for the defendant; ~~and~~

(13) a copy of any mental health records, mental health screening reports, or similar information regarding the mental health of the defendant; and

(14) the veteran status of the defendant as determined by an investigation conducted in accordance with Section 511.009(a)(17)(A), Government Code.

SECTION 2. Section 501.024(b), Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

(b) The department shall:

(1) in consultation with the Texas Veterans Commission, investigate and verify the veteran status of each inmate by using the best available federal data; and

(2) use the data described by Subdivision (1) to assist inmates who are veterans in applying for federal benefits or compensation for which the inmates may be eligible under a program administered by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, including mailing any related paperwork, application, or other correspondence on behalf of and at no charge to the inmate.

SECTION 3. Section 511.009(a), Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a) The commission shall:

(1) adopt reasonable rules and procedures establishing minimum standards for the construction, equipment, maintenance, and operation of county jails;

(2) adopt reasonable rules and procedures establishing minimum standards for the custody, care, and treatment of prisoners;

(3) adopt reasonable rules establishing minimum standards for the number of jail supervisory personnel and for programs and services to meet the needs of prisoners;

(4) adopt reasonable rules and procedures establishing minimum requirements for programs of rehabilitation, education, and recreation in county jails;

(5) regularly review the commission's rules and procedures and revise, amend, or change the rules and procedures if necessary;

(6) provide to local government officials consultation on and technical assistance for county jails;

(7) review and comment on plans for the construction and major modification or renovation of county jails;

(8) require that the sheriff and commissioners of each county submit to the commission, on a form prescribed by the commission, an annual report on the conditions in each county jail within their jurisdiction, including all information necessary to determine compliance with state law, commission orders, and the rules adopted under this chapter;

(9) review the reports submitted under Subdivision (8) and require commission employees to inspect county jails regularly to ensure compliance with state law, commission orders, and rules and procedures adopted under this chapter;

(10) adopt a classification system to assist sheriffs and judges in determining which defendants are low-risk and consequently suitable participants in a county jail work release program under Article 42.034, Code of Criminal Procedure;

(11) adopt rules relating to requirements for segregation of classes of inmates and to capacities for county jails;

(12) adopt a policy for gathering and distributing to jails under the commission's jurisdiction information regarding:

(A) common issues concerning jail administration;

(B) examples of successful strategies for maintaining compliance with state law and the rules, standards, and procedures of the commission; and

(C) solutions to operational challenges for jails;

(13) report to the Texas Correctional Office on Offenders with Medical or Mental Impairments on a jail's compliance with Article 16.22, Code of Criminal Procedure;

(14) adopt reasonable rules and procedures establishing minimum requirements for a county jail to:

(A) determine if a prisoner is pregnant;

(B) ensure that the jail's health services plan addresses medical care, including obstetrical and gynecological care, mental health care, nutritional requirements, and any special housing or work assignment needs for prisoners who are known or determined to be pregnant; and

(C) identify when a pregnant prisoner is in labor and provide appropriate care to the prisoner, including promptly transporting the prisoner to a local hospital;

(15) provide guidelines to sheriffs regarding contracts between a sheriff and another entity for the provision of food services to or the operation of a commissary in a jail under the commission's jurisdiction, including specific provisions regarding conflicts of interest and avoiding the appearance of impropriety;

(16) adopt reasonable rules and procedures establishing minimum standards for prisoner visitation that provide each prisoner at a county jail with a minimum of two in-person, noncontact visitation periods per week of at least 20 minutes duration each;

(17) require the sheriff of each county to:

(A) investigate and verify the veteran status of each prisoner during the intake process by using data made available from the Veterans Reentry Search Service (VRSS) operated by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs or a similar service; ~~and~~

(B) use the data described by Paragraph (A) to assist prisoners who are veterans in applying for federal benefits or compensation for which the prisoners may be eligible under a program administered by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, including providing the prisoner on verification of the prisoner's veteran status with a prepaid postcard that is supplied by the Texas Veterans Commission for purposes of requesting assistance in applying for veterans benefits;

(C) submit a daily report identifying each prisoner whose veteran status was verified under Paragraph (A) during the previous day to the Texas Veterans Commission and, as applicable, the veterans county service officer for the county and each court in which charges against a prisoner identified in the report are pending; and

(D) allow for a prisoner whose veteran status has been verified under Paragraph (A) to have in-person or video visitation with the veterans county service officer for the county or a peer service coordinator at no cost to the prisoner;

(18) adopt reasonable rules and procedures regarding visitation of a prisoner at a county jail by a guardian, as defined by Section 1002.012, Estates Code, that:

(A) allow visitation by a guardian to the same extent as the prisoner's next of kin, including placing the guardian on the prisoner's approved visitors list on the guardian's request and providing the guardian access to the prisoner during a facility's standard visitation hours if the prisoner is otherwise eligible to receive visitors; and

(B) require the guardian to provide the sheriff with letters of guardianship issued as provided by Section 1106.001, Estates Code, before being allowed to visit the prisoner;

(19) adopt reasonable rules and procedures to ensure the safety of prisoners, including rules and procedures that require a county jail to:

(A) give prisoners the ability to access a mental health professional at the jail or through a telemental health service 24 hours a day or, if a mental health professional is not at the county jail at the time, then require the jail to use all reasonable efforts to arrange for the inmate to have access to a

4-1 mental health professional within a reasonable time;

4-2 (B) give prisoners the ability to access a health  
4-3 professional at the jail or through a telehealth service 24 hours a  
4-4 day or, if a health professional is unavailable at the jail or  
4-5 through a telehealth service, provide for a prisoner to be  
4-6 transported to access a health professional; and

4-7 (C) if funding is available under Section  
4-8 511.019, install automated electronic sensors or cameras to ensure  
4-9 accurate and timely in-person checks of cells or groups of cells  
4-10 confining at-risk individuals; and

4-11 (20) adopt reasonable rules and procedures  
4-12 establishing minimum standards for the quantity and quality of  
4-13 feminine hygiene products, including tampons in regular and large  
4-14 sizes and menstrual pads with wings in regular and large sizes,  
4-15 provided to a female prisoner.

4-16 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2025.

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