

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

C.S.H.B. 620  
By: Neave  
Defense & Veterans' Affairs  
Committee Report (Substituted)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

It has been noted that the national suicide rate among veterans has increased in recent years and that this trend is significant for Texas because of the state's high veteran population. C.S.H.B. 620 seeks to address this issue by establishing a public awareness campaign to prevent suicide in veterans and requiring the campaign to include elements specific to women veterans.

### **CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

### **ANALYSIS**

C.S.H.B. 620 amends the Government Code to require the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC), in collaboration with the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), to develop and implement a public awareness campaign to increase public awareness of suicide risk factors for veterans, including risk factors specific to women veterans, and provide information relating to, and increase awareness of, suicide prevention services and organizations available to veterans, including services and organizations that address the needs of women veterans. The bill authorizes the TVC, in implementing the campaign, to engage in online advocacy, issue public service announcements, and distribute materials that cover the topics associated with the purpose of the campaign.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2019.

### **COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE**

While C.S.H.B. 620 may differ from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

The substitute changes the entity responsible for developing and implementing the public awareness campaign from the Texas Women Veterans Program to the TVC, in collaboration with HHSC.

The substitute expands the content and objectives of the campaign by including issues relating to

suicide in all veterans but retains requirements that the campaign include certain elements specifically applicable to women veterans.