

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 2556
By: Neave
Defense & Veterans' Affairs
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

In April of last year, 20-year-old U.S. Army soldier Vanessa Guillén was murdered by a fellow soldier in Fort Hood, Texas. Prior to her disappearance, she had indicated to her family that she was being sexually harassed by a sergeant, but had not reported the issue due to fear of retaliation. Her case started a national conversation about women's experiences in the military, making it clear that issues impacting women in the military, including sexual violence, have largely been under-recognized. H.B. 2556 seeks to honor the memory of Vanessa Guillén and continue that conversation by designating September 30 in Texas as Vanessa Guillén Day in honor of Vanessa Guillén's birthday.

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

H.B. 2556 amends the Government Code to designate September 30 as Vanessa Guillén Day in memory of the life and tragic death of Vanessa Guillén and to increase awareness of and the military's response to missing persons, sexual assault, and sexual harassment cases for service members. The bill requires Vanessa Guillén Day to be regularly observed by appropriate programs and activities.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2021.