

SUBJECT: Brevet promotions for non-commissioned officers

COMMITTEE: State Affairs: favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 10 ayes--Laney, Guerrero, Cain, Harrison, Hilbert,  
Hury, Jones, Oakley, Saunders, T. Smith

0 nays

3 absent--Tallas, Gibson, Perez

WITNESSES: For--E. L. Boehm Jr., Lewis O. King, Texas National  
Guard

Against--None

BACKGROUND: Chapter 431 of the Government Code concerns the state militia, including the Adjutant General's Department, Texas National Guard, Texas State Guard and Reserve Militia. Sec. 431.008(b) allows the governor, upon the recommendation of the commanding officer, to reward gallant conduct or meritorious service of 25 years or more by conferring on officers a brevet -- a nominal rank -- one grade higher than the paid rank or commission held by the officer.

DIGEST: HB 425 would allow the award of a brevet to non-commissioned, as well as commissioned, officers for gallant conduct or meritorious state military service of at least 25 years.

SUPPORTERS SAY: Only commissioned officers are currently eligible for brevets for gallantry or years of meritorious service, creating an unfair situation. The number of top-ranking, non-commissioned positions in the state military forces is quite limited. For example, only 44 positions as command sergeant major and 72 positions as sergeant major are available to around 29,000 enlisted men in the Texas Army and Air National Guards and the Texas State Guard. Non-commissioned guardsmen should be rewarded for outstanding service to their state and their country, regardless of their rank; HB 425 would allow that recognition.

Other states, including Kentucky and California, have similar 'merit awards' for honorable and faithful service.

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No more than 100 brevets would likely be awarded per year. The pride and gratitude felt by these worthy recipients in being granted this recognition by their state would more than justify any small amount of paperwork involved.

OPPONENTS  
SAY:

Non-commissioned officers earn their top ranks through hard work and dedication. Gratuitous bestowal of a higher non-commissioned rank only for the quantity of time served, and not the quality of work, would be demeaning to those who earned these leadership positions.

NOTES:

A related bill, SB 559 by Carriker, was reported by the Senate State Affairs Committee by 10-0 on March 14.