

SUBJECT: Veterans' assistance fund donation on hunting, fishing license application

COMMITTEE: Culture, Recreation and Tourism — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 6 ayes — Guillen, Frullo, Larson, Márquez, Murr, Smith

0 nays

1 absent — Dukes

WITNESSES: For — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Jim Brennan, Texas Coalition of Veterans Organizations; Chris Frandsen)

Against — None

On — Michael Hobson, Texas Parks and Wildlife; Sarah Tillman, Texas Veterans Commission

BACKGROUND: Government Code, sec. 434.017 establishes the Fund for Veterans' Assistance in the state treasury outside the general revenue fund. Money in the fund may be appropriated only to the Texas Veterans Commission for grants to address veteran's needs and other purposes specified in statute.

DIGEST: HB 1584 would amend Parks and Wildlife Code, ch. 12 to allow a person applying for a hunting or fishing license, either online or in person, to voluntarily contribute a donation of \$1, \$5, \$10, or \$20 to the Fund for Veterans' Assistance. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department would be allowed to deduct the amount of money from the contributions necessary to develop and administer the program. The department would be required to send all remaining contributions to the comptroller for deposit in the state treasury no later than the 14th day of each month.

The Parks and Wildlife Commission would be required to adopt rules as needed and the Parks and Wildlife Department would be required to develop procedures to implement the voluntary contribution provisions by

August 1, 2016. The Parks and Wildlife Department would be authorized to consult with the Department of Public Safety for assistance developing procedures to implement the provisions.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2015, and would apply only to a license purchased on or after September 1, 2016.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

With so many competing state interests it is not always easy to find additional funds in the budget to help veterans. HB 1584 would raise money for a deserving group by asking hunting and fishing license applicants to donate voluntarily. The bill would raise money for the veterans' fund at no additional cost to the state because the cost of running the program would be taken from the voluntary donations.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

No apparent opposition.