

SUBJECT: Requiring a study on care for veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder

COMMITTEE: Defense and Veterans' Affairs — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 5 ayes — S. King, Frank, Aycock, Blanco, Farias

2 nays — Schaefer, Shaheen

WITNESSES: For — Greg Hansch, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Texas; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Katharine Ligon, Center for Public Policy Priorities; Todd Latiolais, Children at Risk; Eric Woomer, Federation of Texas Psychiatry; Monique Rodriguez, Grace After Fire; Grace Davis, Hays Caldwell Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse; Bill Kelly, Mental Health America of Greater Houston; Josette Saxton, Texans Care for Children; Jim Brennan, Texas Coalition of Veterans Organizations; James Cunningham, Texas Coalition of Veterans Organizations, Texas Council of Chapters of the Military Officers Association of America; Lee Johnson, Texas Council of Community Centers; LaShondra Jones, Texas Criminal Justice Coalition; Stacy Wilson, Texas Hospital Association; Randall Chapman, Texas Legal Services Center; Michelle Romero, Texas Medical Association; Conrad John, Travis County Commissioners Court; Casey Smith, United Ways of Texas; Olie Pope, Veterans County Service Officers Association of Texas; Adrienne Evans-Quickley, Women's Army Corps Veterans' Association; and seven individuals)

Against — None

On — Sean Hanna, Texas Veterans Commission; Jair Soares, UT Health; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Sonja Gaines, HHSC)

BACKGROUND: More than 2 million veterans nationwide recently served in Iraq and Afghanistan. A substantial number have suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder and other co-occurring disorders, for which the estimated cost for treatment is believed to be significant. As of 2012, there were more than 1.6 million total veterans in Texas, according to the Legislative Budget Board.

DIGEST: CSHB 3404 would require the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to conduct a study on the benefits of providing integrated care to veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The study would evaluate the benefits of using a standardized comprehensive trauma and PTSD assessment to identify and target evidence-based treatment services to provide integrated care for veterans diagnosed with PTSD. It also would evaluate benefits of involving family members in the treatment of a veteran diagnosed with PTSD.

The bill would allow HHSC to conduct the study in coordination with a university with expertise in behavioral health or PTSD. HHSC would be required to submit a report containing the results of the study to the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker of the House by December 1, 2016. The report would have to include the number of people served and the type of integrated care provided through the study.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2015.