

SUBJECT: Information on services for women veterans in certain agency applications

COMMITTEE: Defense and Veterans' Affairs — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 6 ayes — Gutierrez, Blanco, Arévalo, Flynn, Lambert, Wilson

1 nay — Cain

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, May 1 — 29-2 (Burton, V. Taylor)

WITNESSES: No public hearing

BACKGROUND: Government Code, sec. 434.102 requires the Department of Information Resources to establish and maintain a veterans website that allows veterans to access information on and electronically file for state and federal veterans benefits.

Observers contend the state should improve the manner by which it identifies women veterans and informs them about the services and benefits for which they may be eligible.

DIGEST: SB 1677 would require an agency in the executive branch of state government that served or assisted adult women to include in each application for a program, a service, or assistance a space to indicate whether an applicant was a veteran and model language informing the applicant that she could be entitled to additional services because of her veteran status. An agency would include a health and human services agency that provided programs and assistance such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, the women's health program, Medicaid, and housing assistance.

Each applicable agency would have to modify its application as necessary to implement the bill by March 1, 2018. By December 1, 2017, the Texas Veterans Commission would be required to develop the model language required in an application and include in the language a link to the veterans website established under Government Code, sec. 434.102. The

model language would be posted on the commission's website.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2017.