

- SUBJECT:** Requiring a report and outreach campaign on women veterans
- 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, April 27 — 31-0
- WITNESSES:** None
- BACKGROUND:** Observers note that Texas has the largest population of women veterans in the country, which continues to increase. Some believe that the state should build upon the currently offered services for women veterans.
- DIGEST:** SB 1698 would require the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) to submit to the governor, lieutenant governor, and the Legislature a report on women veterans in the state. The report would:
- provide an estimate on the number of women veterans in this state, including those who contact TVC for assistance and those who receive assistance from TVC, the Texas Workforce Commission, the Department of State Health Services, and other state agencies;
 - identify the unique problems faced by women veterans; and
 - recommend policy proposals, initiatives, and funding levels to address the problems faced by women veterans.

The report would be due November 1 of each even-numbered year, and could be delivered electronically.

The bill also would require TVC's women veterans coordinator, in consultation with the Governor's Commission for Women, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and other appropriate agencies, to conduct a community outreach campaign to:

- provide information relating to and increase awareness of benefits and services available to women veterans;
- improve access to benefits and services for women veterans;
- increase participation of women veterans in programs that provide benefits and services;
- provide information on the significant contributions of women veterans in this state; and
- provide information relating to and increase awareness of support groups and other organizations relating to family services, including services for women veterans who are single parents.

The bill would require the women veterans coordinator to establish the women veterans community outreach campaign by November 1, 2018. TVC would be required to adopt rules to implement the campaign.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2017.