

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

H.J.R. 7
By: Flores et al. (Hinojosa)
Veteran Affairs & Military Installations
5/18/2009
Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

In February 2009, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) finalized contracts with the Valley Baptist Health System in Harlingen and the South Texas Health System in Hidalgo County to provide inpatient, surgical, emergency, and mental health services to veterans enrolled in VA benefit programs. While this is positive news for Rio Grande Valley veterans, there is still a vital need for a full-fledged veterans hospital. The nearest VA hospital is in San Antonio, and rising travel costs make the 300-mile trip too costly for many patients.

H.J.R. 7 proposes an amendment to the Texas Constitution to require the Texas Veterans Commission and the Department of State Health Services to work with the VA and any other appropriate federal agency to propose that the federal government establish a veterans hospital in the Rio Grande Valley region of the state.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Article XVI, Texas Constitution, by adding Section 73, as follows:

Sec. 73. (a) Requires the Texas Veterans Commission and the Department of State Health Services to work with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and any other appropriate federal agency to propose that the federal government establish a veterans hospital in the Rio Grande Valley region of the state.

(b) Authorizes the state to contribute money, property, and other resources to the establishment, maintenance, and operation of a veterans hospital described by this section.

SECTION 2. Requires the proposed constitutional amendment to be submitted to the voters at an election to be held November 3, 2009. Sets forth the required language of the ballot.