

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 1002
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Intergovernmental Relations
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

S.B. 1430 (Van de Putte), 80th Legislature, Regular Session, 2007, established a low-income bill payment assistance program for a municipality with a population of more than one million whose municipality owned utility's revenue held a first lien that secured the payment of public securities issued, and also funded a bill payment assistance program as a necessary operating expense. San Antonio's CPS Energy is the only municipally owned utility that meets the one million or more population bracket.

San Antonio is home to an unusually high number of burned veterans who have significantly decreased abilities to regulate their bodies' core temperatures because of severe burns received in combat. In an effort to assist them with the high utility bills that result in the summer months from being forced to maintain a 62-68 degree temperature in their homes, this proposed legislation amends Section 1502.056, Government Code, to add a second category of utility customers to the one group (low-income customers) that is currently eligible for a bill payment assistance program: burned military veterans.

The presence of the Brooke Army Medical Center and the Center for Intrepid in San Antonio—both of which house highly-specialized burn treatment centers—mean that many burned military veterans settle in the San Antonio in order to be close to these treatment centers. The large population of burned veterans in the San Antonio community merits a bill payment assistance program in recognition of the extraordinary utility situation resulting from their service to our nation. This bill payment assistance program for burned military veterans would apply only to CPS Energy in San Antonio.

As proposed, S.B. 1002 amends current law relating to the designation of program costs for providing bill payment assistance to certain military veterans as a necessary operating expense that is a first lien against revenue of certain electric and gas utilities' revenue securing certain public securities or obligations.

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 Section 1502.056(a), Government Code, as follows:

(a) Provides that for a municipality with a population of more than one million, the first lien against the revenue of a municipally owned electric or gas utility system that secures the payment of public securities issued or obligations incurred under this chapter also applies to funding, as necessary operations expense, for a bill payment assistance program for utility customers who:

(1) have been threatened with disconnection from service for nonpayment of bills and who have been determined by the municipality to be low-income customers;
or

(2) are military veterans who have significantly decreased abilities to regulate their bodies' core temperatures because of severe burns received in combat.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2011.