

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
84R2702 LEH-D

S.B. 1304
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Veteran Affairs & Military Installations
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Returning servicemembers face a host of challenges, many of which revolve around mental health concerns. S.B. 1304 seeks to strengthen the options that women veterans have when facing mental health issues. Mental health affects every aspect of an individual's life and underlies both behavioral and physical health. Women veterans face unique mental health concerns, from military sexual trauma (MST) to consolidating dual roles as soldiers and family caregivers.

Women veterans are a rapidly growing population with a host of complex and interconnected challenges associated with the transition to civilian life. Creating a women veterans mental health initiative within the existing mental health intervention program for veterans will be instrumental in easing this transition. Texas is home to the largest population of women veterans in the nation, and as such has numerous opportunities to work with local, state, and national groups to bring mental healthcare to women veterans and to develop best practices that can be expanded and improved upon for the future.

As proposed, S.B. 1304 amends current law relating to the creation of a women veterans mental health initiative within the mental health intervention program for veterans.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking previously granted to the Department of State Health Services is modified in SECTION 1 (Section 1001.202, Health and Safety Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Reenacts Section 1001.202, Health and Safety Code, as added by Chapter 352 (H.B. 2392), Acts of the 83rd Legislature, Regular Session, 2013, and amends it, as follows:

Sec. 1001.202. GENERAL POWERS AND DUTIES. (a) Makes no change to this subsection.

(a-1) Requires the Department of State Health Services to develop a women veterans mental health initiative as part of the mental health intervention program for veterans.

(b) and (c) Makes no change to these subsections.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2015.