

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 1677
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Veteran Affairs & Border Security
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Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

According to the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, the State of Texas has the highest population of women veterans in the nation with a total of 183,597 women veterans. Additionally, in the 2016 Interim Report to the Texas Legislature, the Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs and Military Installations (VAMI) reported that the number of women veterans in the state continues to increase.

Concerned women veteran advocates contend that the state could improve the manner by which it identifies women veterans in Texas and thus improve their participation in the services and benefits that they have earned for their military service. In order to address this concern, S.B. 1677 establishes a framework to better identify women veterans and to allow them to become better informed of the services and benefits they may be eligible for.

Specifically, the bill provides state agencies and hospitals, which assist adult women with services, with a mechanism by which they can ask applicants to their program and services whether they are veterans, and applicants can then be better informed that they may be entitled to services because of their veteran status. Additionally, the bill provides that the Texas Veterans Commission retain the information of veteran applicants in a veteran database and to inform veterans that they are eligible for services. (Original Author's / Sponsor's Statement of Intent)

S.B. 1677 amends current law relating to information about services for women veterans provided through certain state agency applications.

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 Subchapter E, Chapter 434, Government Code, by adding Section 434.212, as follows:

Sec. 434.212. APPLICATION FOR STATE AGENCY PROGRAMS, SERVICES, OR ASSISTANCE. (a) Provides that this section applies to a state agency in the executive branch of state government, including a health and human services agency, that provides to adult women in this state a program, a service, or assistance, including the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, the supplemental nutrition assistance program, the women's health program, Medicaid, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, and a housing program or service or housing assistance.

(b) Requires a state agency to include in each application for a program, a service, or assistance provided by the agency to adult women:

(1) a space to indicate whether the applicant is a veteran; and

(2) model language informing the applicant that she may be entitled to additional services because of her veteran status.

(c) Requires the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) to develop the model language required on an application under Subsection (b)(2). Requires that the language include a link to the veterans website established under Section 434.102 (Veterans Website) or, for an online application, a hyperlink to that website.

SECTION 2. (a) Requires TVC, not later than December 1, 2017, to develop the model application language required by Section 434.212, Government Code, as added by this Act, and post that information on TVC's Internet website.

(b) Requires each state agency subject to Section 434.212, Government Code, as added by this Act, not later than March 1, 2018, to modify the agency's application for programs, services, or assistance as necessary to implement that section.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2017.