

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
85R11279 YDB-D

S.B. 1677  
By: Lucio  
Veteran Affairs & Border Security  
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As Filed

### **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.

As proposed, S.B. 1677 amends current law relating to information about services for women veterans provided through certain state agency and hospital 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 OR HOSPITAL HEALTH CARE SERVICES. (a) Provides that this section applies to:

(1) 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; and

(2) a hospital licensed under Chapter 241 (Hospitals), Health and Safety Code, that provides health care services to adult women in this state.

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

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

(2) notice that on indication under Subdivision (1) that the applicant is a veteran, the agency or hospital will forward the applicant's information to the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC); and

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

(c) Requires TVC, on receipt of information provided under Subsection (b), to enter the information into a database established by TVC and contact the applicant to inform her of any additional services for which the applicant may qualify under state or federal law.

(d) Requires TVC to develop the model language required on an application under Subsection (b)(3). Requires the language to 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. Amends Subchapter A, Chapter 241, Health and Safety Code, by adding Section 241.0075, as follows:

Sec. 241.0075. COMPLIANCE WITH CERTAIN APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS.  
Requires a hospital to comply with Section 434.212, Government Code.

SECTION 3. (a) Requires TVC, not later than December 1, 2018, 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 and hospital subject to Section 434.212, Government Code, as added by this Act, not later than January 1, 2018, to modify the agency's or hospital's application for programs, services, or assistance as necessary to implement that section.

(c) Provides that, notwithstanding Section 434.212, Government Code, as added by this Act, a state agency or hospital is not required to include information on the application as required by that section before January 1, 2018.

SECTION 4. Effective date: September 1, 2017.