

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 1698
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Veteran Affairs & Border Security
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Texas has the largest women veteran population in the country. As of 2016, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs identified that there were 183,597 women veterans in Texas. Additionally, according to the 2016 Veteran Affairs and Military Installations Interim Report, the Texas women veterans population continues to increase.

Concerned stakeholders believe that because of the high number of women veterans in the state, Texas can build upon its existing framework of services relating with women veterans and ultimately work to better improve their quality of life and to better address the unique needs of women veterans.

S.B. 1698 addresses this concern by strengthening the state's effort to address the needs of Texas' women veterans. Specifically, the bill provides for additional information to be reported to the legislature (e.g., the number of women veterans who contact the Texas Veterans Commission for assistance and who receive assistance from state agencies). Additionally, S.B. 1698 provides that the report to the legislature identify the unique problems faced by women veterans and recommend policy initiatives to address them.

S.B. 1698 also requires the Texas women veterans coordinator to work in consultation with the Governor's Commission for Women and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to develop an outreach campaign with the goal of improving awareness of benefits, access to services and participation to programs, while providing information on the significant contributions of women veterans in Texas.

As proposed, S.B. 1698 amends current law relating to outreach and awareness for women veterans in this state.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Veterans Commission in SECTION 2 of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter E, Chapter 434, Government Code, by adding Sections 434.212 and 434.213, as follows:

Sec. 434.212. WOMEN VETERANS REPORT. (a) Requires the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC), not later than November 1 of each even-numbered year, to submit to the governor, lieutenant governor, and legislature a report on women veterans in this state. Requires the report to estimate the number of women veterans in this state, that contact TVC for assistance, and who receive assistance from TVC, the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), the Department of State Health Services (DSHS), and other state agencies, and identify the unique problems faced by women veterans, and recommend policy proposals, initiatives, and funding levels to address the identified problems.

Sec. 434.213. WOMEN VETERANS COMMUNITY OUTREACH CAMPAIGN. Requires the women veterans coordinator designated under Section 434.203

(Coordinator), in consultation with the Governor's Commission for Women, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, and any other appropriate agency, to conduct a community outreach campaign to provide information relating to and increase awareness of benefits and services available to women veterans, to improve access to benefits and services for women veterans, to increase participation of women veterans in programs that provide benefits and services, and provide information on the significant contributions of women veterans in this state.

SECTION 2. Requires the women veterans coordinator, not later than November 1, 2018, to establish the women veterans community outreach campaign as required under Section 434.213, Government Code, as added by this Act, and TVC to adopt any rules necessary to implement the campaign.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2017.