

SUBJECT: Providing electric bill payment assistance for veterans burned in combat

COMMITTEE: State Affairs — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 8 ayes — Cook, Giddings, Farrar, Frullo, Harless, Huberty, Menéndez, Sylvester Turner

0 nays

5 absent — Craddick, Geren, Hilderbran, Oliveira, Smithee

WITNESSES: For — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Wendell Bell, Texas Public Power Association; Eric Craven, Texas Electric Cooperatives; John W Fainter, Jr; The Association of Electric Companies of Texas, Inc.; Robert Flores, American G.I. Forum of Texas; Patrick Reinhart, El Paso Electric Co.; Ned Ross, Direct Energy)

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Bryan Kelly, Public Utility Commission of Texas; Kyle Mitchell, Texas Veterans Commission)

DIGEST: HB 2391 would allow all electric utilities, as well as municipally owned utilities and electric cooperatives, across the state to establish a bill payment assistance program for military veterans who have a significantly decreased ability to regulate body temperature as a result of severe burns received in combat.

All electric providers could recover costs associated with the program.

The bill also would require the Public Utility Commission (PUC) to compile a list of bill payment assistance programs for burned veterans and publish the list on the PUC's website.

This bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2013.