

SUBJECT: Facilitating the awarding of college credit to veterans

COMMITTEE: Defense and Veterans' Affairs — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 9 ayes — Raymond, Buckley, Biedermann, Cyrier, Gervin-Hawkins, Lambert, Lopez, Morales, Tinderholt

0 nays

WITNESSES: For — Salvador Castillo, Cameron County Veterans Department; Mitch Fuller, Department of Texas Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), aka Texas VFW; Steven Price, The Texas Democratic Veterans Caucus/The VOICES Foundation; Steven Davidson; (*Registered, but did not testify:* R Clint Smith, Abilene Chamber of Commerce; Dana Harris, Austin Chamber of Commerce; Guadalupe Cuellar, City of El Paso; Daniel Collins, County of El Paso; Daniel Womack, Dow, Inc.; Traci Berry, Goodwill Central Texas; Logan Spence, Lone Star College; John Hryhorchuk, Texas 2036; J.D. Hale, Texas Association of Builders; Lori Henning, Texas Association of Goodwills; Mike Meroney, Texas Association of Manufacturers; Jim Brennan, Texas Coalition of Veterans Organizations; Molly Weiner, United Ways of Texas); Thomas Parkinson

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Stacey Silverman, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board; Courtney Arbour, Texas Workforce Commission)

DIGEST: HB 33 would require the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to evaluate courses and programs of study offered by colleges and career schools leading to industry certification or workforce credentials and identify those for which skills gained through military experience and training frequently align. These courses and programs would have to be listed on the appropriate website along with any military experience that could align with them.

To receive approval from TWC, a college or career school that offered such courses and programs would have to grant the appropriate credit to a student for skills gained through military service unless the college or school was able to demonstrate that student's military experience did not appropriately align with the course or program.

HB 33 also would require TWC to identify, develop, and support methods to facilitate the awarding of credit based on military experience toward such courses and programs under the College Credit for Heroes Program.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2021.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

HB 33 would provide help ensure that veterans who had developed skills relevant to the civilian workforce during their military service received the appropriate credit for those skills in the process of earning degrees or certificates from accredited colleges and career schools. Veterans often struggle to find civilian jobs commensurate with the skills they already possess, needlessly adding to the many other stressful challenges they face in transitioning into civilian life.

HB 33 would help ease this burden by streamlining the educational process for the approximately 70 percent of veterans who pursue post-secondary education and would help prevent them from wasting time and money on redundant studies and training. Specifically, the bill would create a comprehensive and accessible list of courses and programs at accredited schools for which veterans could receive credit based on their military experience. This list would provide clarity to veterans about their educational options following military service and could even help with military recruiting since prospective recruits could more easily evaluate long-term career paths.

**CRITICS
SAY:**

No concerns identified

NOTES:

The author plans to offer a floor amendment that the list compiled by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) of courses and programs for which

veterans may receive credit based on military experience would be published on the commission website.