

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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H.B. 1584
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Agriculture, Water & Rural Affairs
5/7/2015
Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Fund for Veterans' Assistance (FVA) provides grants to local governments and nonprofit organizations to enhance and improve veterans' assistance programs that address the needs of veterans and their families. In the past few years, voluntary contributions to the fund have generated more than \$2 million and the Texas Veterans Commission has awarded nearly \$45 million in grants to address a broad range of needs such as limited emergency assistance, transportation services, housing assistance, family and child services, and other supportive services. The need for funding, however, continues to exceed the funding available to award grants and the commission is not able to provide funding to all applicants.

H.B. 1584 directs the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to include space for persons to voluntarily contribute \$1, \$5, \$10, or \$20 to the FVA when purchasing a fishing and hunting license, whether in person or on the Internet. Similar legislation allowing persons to voluntarily contribute to the FVA when renewing a driver's license generated approximately \$700,000 in 2014 alone. The changes proposed by this bill could generate even more revenue to assist veterans across the state.

H.B. 1584 amends current law relating to a voluntary donation to the fund for veterans' assistance when applying for a hunting or fishing license.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission in SECTION 3 of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 434.017(a), Government Code, as follows:

(a) Provides that the fund for veterans' assistance (fund) is a special fund in the state treasury outside the general revenue fund. Provides that the fund is composed of:

(1)-(4) Makes no change to these subdivisions;

(5) and (6) Makes nonsubstantive changes; and

(7) money deposited to the credit of the fund under Section 12.007, Parks and Wildlife Code.

SECTION 2. Amends Subchapter A, Chapter 12, Parks and Wildlife Code, by adding Section 12.007, as follows:

Sec. 12.007. VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTION TO FUND FOR VETERANS' ASSISTANCE. (a) Defines "veterans fund."

(b) Authorizes a person, when the person applies for a hunting or fishing license of any type, including a combination hunting and fishing license, under this code, to make a voluntary contribution of \$1, \$5, \$10, or \$20 to the veterans fund.

(c) Requires the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) to:

(1) include space on the first page of each application for a hunting or fishing license that allows a person applying for the license to indicate that the person is voluntarily contributing \$1, \$5, \$10, or \$20 to the veterans fund; and

(2) provide an opportunity for the person to contribute \$1, \$5, \$10, or \$20 to the veterans fund during the application process for a hunting or fishing license on TPWD's Internet website.

(d) Requires TPWD to send any contribution made under this section to the comptroller of public accounts of the State of Texas for deposit in the state treasury to the credit of the fund for veterans' assistance not later than the 14th day of each month. Authorizes TPWD, before sending the money to the veterans fund, to deduct money equal to the amount of reasonable expenses for developing and administering this section.

SECTION 3. (a) Requires the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission (commission), to implement Section 12.007, Parks and Wildlife Code, as added by this Act, to adopt rules as needed and requires TPWD to develop procedures to implement that section not later than August 1, 2016.

(b) Authorizes TPWD to consult with the Department of Public Safety of the State of Texas for assistance in developing procedures to implement Section 12.007, Parks and Wildlife Code, as added by this Act.

SECTION 4. Provides that Section 12.007, Parks and Wildlife Code, as added by this Act, applies only to a license purchased on or after September 1, 2016.

SECTION 5. Effective date: September 1, 2015.