

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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C.S.S.B. 2104
By: Zaffirini
Veteran Affairs & Border Security
4/5/2019
Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Veteran county service officers (VCSOs) assist veterans with accessing benefits and services. What's more, the creation and maintenance of a veterans county service office is an unfunded mandate for counties with a population of more than 200,000 persons. Given the larger number of veterans in these areas and the lack of clarity regarding the state's and the Texas Veterans Commission's role in funding VCSOs, more information is needed to ensure VCSOs have all the resources they need to advocate effectively for veterans statewide.

Accordingly, S.B. 2104 would create the Texas Veterans County Service Officer Task Force to study the impact and efficacy of VCSOs. The Task Force would be comprised of the chair of the Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs and Border Security, the chair of the House Committee on Defense and Veterans' Affairs, a representative of the Texas Veterans Commission, VCSOs from various regions of the state, and a representative of the Texas Coalition of Veterans Organizations.

The task force would:

1. Examine the role and duties of VCSOs in each county;
2. Identify the regions that are in greatest need of VCSOs; and
3. Determine types and levels of support needed in order for VCSOs to appropriately advocate for the veterans they serve.

The Task Force would prepare and submit a report of the issues described above to the Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs and Border Security, House Committee on Defense and Veterans' Affairs, and the Texas Veterans Commission by December 1, 2020. (Original Author's/Sponsor's Statement of Intent)

C.S.S.B. 2104 amends current law relating to the creation of the Texas Veterans County Service Officer Task Force.

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 B, Chapter 434, Government Code, by adding Section 434.040, as follows:

Sec. 434.040. TEXAS VETERANS COUNTY SERVICE OFFICER TASK FORCE. (a) Defines "rural county," "task force," and "urban county."

(b) Provides that the Texas Veterans County Service Officer Task Force (task force) is established to study the impact and efficacy of officers in this state.

- (c) Provides that the task force is composed of the following nine members:
- (1) the chair of the House Committee on Defense and Veterans' Affairs;
 - (2) the chair of the Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs and Border Security;
 - (3) a representative of the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC);
 - (4) the chair of the Veterans County Service Officer Advisory Committee;
 - (5) a representative of the Texas Coalition of Veterans Organizations;
 - (6) an officer representing a rural county selected by the chair of the House Committee on Defense and Veterans' Affairs;
 - (7) an officer representing an urban county selected by the chair of the House Committee on Defense and Veterans' Affairs;
 - (8) an officer representing a rural county selected by the chair of the Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs and Border Security; and
 - (9) an officer representing an urban county selected by the chair of the Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs and Border Security.
- (d) Provides that the chairs of the House Committee on Defense and Veterans' Affairs and the Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs and Border Security serve as co-chairs of the task force.
- (e) Requires a recommendation of the task force to be approved by a majority vote of the members of the task force.
- (f) Provides that each member of the task force has one vote.
- (g) Requires the task force to:
- (1) examine the role and duties of officers in each county;
 - (2) identify the regions of this state that are in need of officers; and
 - (3) determine types and levels of support needed from this state in order for officers to appropriately advocate for the veterans served by the officers.
- (h) Requires TVC, not later than December 1, 2020, to prepare and submit a report based on recommendations of the task force regarding the issues described in Subsection (g) to the Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs and Border Security and House Committee on Defense and Veterans' Affairs. Requires the report to be approved by a majority vote of the members of the task force.
- (i) Provides that this section expires January 1, 2021.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2019.