



The Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs & Military Installations

Leticia Van de Putte, R.Ph.
Chair

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Donna Campbell, M.D.
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October 11, 2013

Honorable David Dewhurst
Lieutenant Governor
PO Box 12068
Austin, Texas 78711

Dear Governor Dewhurst:

I appreciate the confidence you have placed in me as chair of the Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs and Military Installations (VAMI). Enclosed are the recommendations for interim study items as requested.

These interim study recommendations reinforce the legislative successes, partnerships, and cooperation the VAMI committee achieved to help the 1.7 million veterans and their families that call Texas home. The recommendations also look forward to ensure Texas is prepared for the future.

As fiscal cliffs, debt ceilings, government shutdowns, and partisan bickering make Washington, D.C. incapable of offering timely solutions, I am proud that Texas passed more than 85 pieces of legislation during the 83rd Regular Session that will make real differences in the lives of active duty service members, veterans, their families, and survivors.

This important group of people have served and sacrificed to secure the freedoms we exercise every day. They have earned all that the Texas Legislature can do for them. I am available anytime to discuss these charges further and look forward to an active interim.

Sincerely,

Leticia Van de Putte R.Ph.

Leticia Van de Putte, R.Ph

Cc: Senator Brian Birdwell, Vice-Chair
Senator Wendy Davis
Senator Jose Rodriguez
Senator Donna Campbell

Enclosure

Veteran Affair and Military Installations Committee
Recommended Interim Charges
October 11, 2013

1. Study the impact of military installations on local communities including the economic impact to local businesses, government services, housing, infrastructure, law enforcement, and quality of life issues. Identify statutory or regulatory obstacles in these communities and make recommendations for improvement.
2. Review the current statutory and regulatory requirements for Veteran County Service Officers to include minimum county veteran population, appointment, position qualifications, duties, training, organizational structure, and reporting. Make recommendations for improving services to military veterans, their families, and survivors delivered by Veteran County Service Officers.
3. Review methods for improving employment opportunities for veterans at state agencies, including institutions of higher education. Examine current hiring preferences, enforcement, and reporting related to disabled veterans and veterans. Make recommendations for improving the hiring of disabled and non-disabled veterans state agencies, including institutions of higher education.
4. Study methods that allow veterans, their families, and survivors to efficiently access services provided by non-profit organizations around the state. Examine the effectiveness, standards, and consistency of the 2-1-1 information and referral system for military and veteran families statewide. Make recommendations for improving access to non-profit organizations providing services to military, veterans, their families, and survivors.
5. Examine the condition of Texas National Guard (TxNG) facilities and infrastructure. Review the impact of facilities and infrastructure on the ability of the Texas Military Department to ensure the safety of service members, readiness, and ability to respond to natural disasters. Make recommendations for best practices, including funding options, to ensure compliance with health and safety code, gender-equal facilities, and Americans with Disability Act building requirements, as well as ensuring technological needs are met.
6. Research methods to prevent the abuse of controlled substances by investigating the ability for physicians not licensed in Texas but practicing through the Department of Defense to participate in the online drug monitoring program "Prescription Access in Texas."

7. Review Veteran Homes operated by the General Land Office. Research the locations, capacity, and quality of care provided to veterans and other residents. Make recommendations for expanding access and improving Veteran Homes.

8. Monitor the implementation of legislation addressed by the Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs & Military Installations, 83rd Legislature, Regular and Called Sessions, and make recommendations for any legislation needed to improve, enhance, and/or complete implementation. Specifically, monitor the following:
 - Peer-to-Peer Mental Health Program administered by the Health and Human Services Commission.
 - Hazlewood Act and other veteran-related legislation effecting institutions of higher education.
 - College Credit for Heroes operated by the Texas Workforce Commission.
 - State effort to reduce the backlog of compensation and pension claims at the US Department of Veterans Affairs.
 - Occupational licenses for active duty service members, veterans, and their families.
 - Entrepreneurship programs for veterans.
 - Other veteran-related legislation as determined by the VAMI Committee.