



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Senate Veteran Affairs and Border Security Committee to discuss veterans' health and state-delivered federal services**

**Austin** - The Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs and Border Security will have a hearing tomorrow (Tuesday, May 22, 2018) to review interim charges related to veterans' health and state-delivered federal services. The interim charges to be discussed are as follows:

### **Tuesday, May 22, 2018**

- **Veterans Health:** Study the effectiveness of veterans' health and mental health initiatives in Texas and recommend ways to improve access and delivery. Explore the state of the federal VA Choice Program, including potential expiration, continuation, or expansion of the program. Consider the impact of the VA Choice Program on improving the delivery of health care, and determine ways to raise awareness and increase participation among Texas veterans. Consider the potential connection between chronic pain and mental health and identify strategies to improve the prevention of veteran suicide.
- **State-Delivered Federal Services:** Review the veteran services offered by the United States Department of Veteran Affairs and the Veteran Benefits Administration. Study those services which are being delivered by the Texas Veterans Commission, including but not limited to the state strike force teams and health care advocacy program. Consider ways to increase utilization of automated services, such as the Texas Veterans App, to reduce the need for additional staff time and to create a resource for veterans to access services at all times of the day.

The hearing begins at **10 a.m. CST** in Austin (9 a.m. MST in El Paso). You can find the live stream here: <http://www.senate.texas.gov/av-live.php>

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*José Rodríguez represents Texas Senate District 29, which includes the counties of El Paso, Hudspeth, Culberson, Jeff Davis, and Presidio. He represents both urban and rural constituencies, and more than 350 miles of the Texas-Mexico border. Senator Rodríguez currently serves as the Chairman of the Texas Senate Democratic Caucus, and is a member of the Senate Committees on Natural Resources and Economic Development; Transportation; Veteran Affairs and Border Security; and Agriculture, Water, and Rural Affairs (Vice Chair).*