

SUBJECT: Exempting certain disabled veterans from personal ID certificate fee

COMMITTEE: Transportation — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 11 ayes — Phillips, Darby, Bonnen, Y. Davis, Fletcher, Harper-Brown, Lavender, Martinez, McClendon, Pickett, Rodriguez

0 nays

WITNESSES: For — None

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Rebecca Davio, Texas Department of Public Safety)

BACKGROUND: Transportation Code, sec. 521.426 exempts certain veterans from paying a fee to the Department of Public Safety (DPS) for a driver's license. To qualify, a veteran must:

- be honorably discharged;
- have a service related disability of at least 60 percent; and
- receive federal compensation due to the disability

DIGEST: HB 1148 would exempt certain veterans of the armed forces from paying a fee to DPS for a personal identification certificate. Veterans who were honorably discharged, had a service-related disability of at least 60 percent, and received federal compensation due to the disability would qualify for this exemption, the same as for a driver's license.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2011.

SUPPORTERS SAY: Although they currently are exempt from paying a fee to DPS for a driver's license, some honorably discharged veterans sustained injuries during the course of their service that may prevent them from driving and, therefore, from qualifying for a driver's license. HB 1148 would recognize this limitation in current law and help veterans who fought and were injured protecting their country to obtain a personal ID certificate.

The bill would cost the state a relatively miniscule sum from the Texas Mobility Fund, leaving general revenue and federal funds untouched.

OPPONENTS
SAY:

Although the total revenue loss from HB 1148 would be minimal, during a biennium in which the state is dealing with a large budget deficit, it cannot afford to reduce fees, even for noble causes. Revenue lost from the Texas Mobility Fund would mean less money for other transportation needs.

NOTES:

The fiscal note indicates that HB 1148 would result in an annual revenue loss from the Texas Mobility Fund of \$45,480 per year over the next five years.

HB 1148 originally was recommended for the Local, Consent, and Resolutions Calendar, then was transferred to the Calendars Committee.