

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
83R4073 AJZ-F

S.B. 557
By: Davis
Veteran Affairs & Military Installations
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The purpose of the Fund for Veterans' Assistance (fund) is to provide grants to local government and nonprofit organizations to enhance or improve veterans' assistance programs that address the needs of veterans and their families.

S.B. 1940, 81st Legislature, Regular Session, 2009, approved voluntary contributions to the fund from donations made by an individual on his or her vehicle registration form.

S.B. 1635, 82nd Legislature, Regular Session, 2011, mandated that the notice regarding the opportunity to contribute to the fund be provided on the same page as the individual's total registration fee, and that a person who registers the person's vehicle online has the ability to contribute using the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (TxDMV) website.

Voluntary contributions through TxDMV have generated an estimated \$40,000 a month and approximately \$400,000 per fiscal year for the fund. These funds have been used to help Texas veterans and their families.

Since 2009, the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) has awarded approximately \$23.8 million in 112 fund grants to 82 organizations, and approximately \$3.2 million to eight organizations for H4TxH (Housing for Texas Heroes) programs, which have served approximately 140,000 veterans, family members, and surviving spouses. However, need for this funding far exceeds the funding available to award. During the July 2012 grant solicitation period, 117 organizations submitted applications, requesting over \$30 million in funding. In November 2012, TVC was only able to award 25 grant proposals for a total of \$3.1 million, approximately one-tenth of the total request.

S.B. 557 seeks to provide an opportunity to voluntarily contribute to the fund through the Department of Public Safety of the State of Texas (DPS). The bill requires that DPS include space to voluntarily contribute to the fund on the front page of an application for an original or renewal driver's license or personal identification certificate. It also mandates that DPS provide an opportunity for the person to contribute to the fund on an online application on the DPS Internet website.

As proposed, S.B. 557 amends current law relating to a voluntary contribution to the fund for veterans' assistance when applying for a driver's license or personal identification certificate.

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 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 certain

monies, including money deposited to the credit of the fund under Section 521.008, Transportation Code.

SECTION 2. Amends Subchapter A, Chapter 521, Transportation Code, by adding Section 521.008, as follows:

Sec. 521.008. VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTION TO FUND FOR VETERANS' ASSISTANCE. (a) Authorizes a person, when a person applies for an original or renewal driver's license or personal identification certificate under this chapter, to make a voluntary contribution in any amount to the fund established by Section 434.017 (Fund for Veterans' Assistance), Government Code.

(b) Requires the Department of Public Safety of the State of Texas (DPS) to include space on the first page of each application for an original or renewal driver's license or personal identification certificate that allows a person applying for an original or renewal driver's license or personal identification certificate to indicate the amount that the person is voluntarily contributing to the fund and provide an opportunity for the person to contribute to the fund during the application process for an original or renewal driver's license or personal identification certificate on the DPS's Internet website.

(c) Requires DPS to send any contribution made under this section to the comptroller of public accounts for deposit in the state treasury to the credit of the fund not later than the 14th day of each month. Authorizes DPS, before sending the money to the fund, to deduct money equal to the amount of reasonable expenses for administering this section.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2013.