

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 1308
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Transportation
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AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

For the last several years, Texas has been working on creating and improving veteran support services. Unfortunately, many veterans are unaware of these programs and services. According to a 2013 report from the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, the unemployment rate for veterans in Texas is 8.7 percent, which is higher than the overall unemployment average of all Texans, which is 6.3 percent. Additionally, many veterans have struggled with continuing education, work skills, knowing where to go for mental and physical health care, and how to handle Veterans Affairs claims.

S.B. 1308 seeks to remedy this issue by tasking the Texas Veterans Commission and the Department of Public Safety of the State of Texas with creating an informational one-page pamphlet listing important information for services available to veterans. The pamphlet will include websites, hotlines, and various contact information for Veteran County Service Officers, groups with physical and mental health services, as well contact information for local peer-to-peer groups.

Peer to peer groups provide veterans with a way to connect to those in their communities, as well as provide an outlet for discussion regarding previous experiences and resources that have helped fellow veterans. This way, if the veteran has any questions, they know where to go or who to talk to.

In an effort to get a valid home address where the veteran can receive the pamphlet, there will be a check box available for veteran designation when applying for a driver's license or personal identification certificate. An incentive for veterans to apply for the driver's license or personal identification certificate will be by providing a discount, reducing the fee for veterans by half, thereby linking them to available services which they may be unaware of.

As proposed, S.B. 1308 amends current law relating to driver's licenses and personal identification certificates issued to veterans and reduces certain fees.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Department of Public Safety of the State of Texas in SECTION 4 (Section 521.4261, Transportation Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter A, Chapter 521, Transportation Code, by adding Section 521.010, as follows:

Sec. 521.010. SERVICES INFORMATION FOR VETERANS. Requires the Department of Public Safety of the State of Texas (DPS) and the Texas Veterans Commission to jointly develop for veterans who receive a driver's license or personal identification certificate with a veteran's designation a one-page informational paper about veterans services provided by this state.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 521.102, Transportation Code, by adding Subsection (c) to require DPS to provide to the recipient of a personal identification certificate with a veteran's

designation the informational paper described by Section 521.010 at the time the certificate is issued.

SECTION 3. Amends Section 521.1235, Transportation Code, by adding Subsection (c) to require DPS to provide to the recipient of a driver's license with a veteran's designation the informational paper described by Section 521.010 at the time the license is issued.

SECTION 4. Amends Subchapter R, Chapter 521, Transportation Code, by adding Section 521.4261, as follows:

Sec. 521.4261. REDUCED FEES FOR VETERANS. (a) Provides that, except as provided by Subsection (c) and Section 521.426 (Disabled Veteran Exemption), the fee for the issuance of a personal identification certificate or driver's license for a person who qualifies for a veteran's designation under Section 521.102 (Designator on Personal Identification Certificate Issued to Veteran) or 521.1235 (Designator on License Issued to Veteran) is half the amount of the fee that would otherwise apply under this chapter.

(b) Requires DPS to adopt rules relating to the proof of entitlement to a fee reduction under this section.

(c) Provides that Subsection (a) does not apply to a person subject to the registration requirements of Chapter 62 (Sex Offender Registration Program), Code of Criminal Procedure.

SECTION 5. Makes application of Section 521.4261, Transportation Code, as added by this Act, prospective in regard to a driver's license or personal identification certificate application.

SECTION 6. Effective date: September 1, 2015.