

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
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As Filed

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

The brutal murder of Vanessa Guillén and the reaction from service members on social media highlight the military's inadequate response to sexual harassment, sexual assault, and missing persons. Fort Hood soldier Vanessa Guillén had been missing for more than two months before her remains were discovered, and the murder investigation received widespread attention when law enforcement identified the suspect, a fellow military member whom Guillén was planning to formally accuse of sexual harassment. This prompted countless members of the U.S. military to share their personal experiences of sexual harassment and sexual assault on social media with the hashtag #IAmVanessaGuillen. A close look at current military laws and policies reveals concerning flaws, including conflicts of interest when commanding officers make charging decisions, investigations being made by untrained service members, and limited options for reporting sexual harassment. Too many military members have been failed by this system, and immediate action is imperative to avoid another tragedy.

To correct these issues, the I am Vanessa Guillén Act has been introduced in Congress with bipartisan support from the U.S. House of Representatives. If passed, the legislation would ensure that necessary changes are made, such as transferring charging decisions for sex-related offenses to a chief prosecutor, requiring independent investigations that are conducted by trained investigators, and establishing a confidential reporting option for sexual harassment that can convert to a formal complaint at any time. In addition, it would direct the Government Accountability Office to evaluate response procedures relating to missing service members. The brave men and women who fight for our nation deserve access to justice, and Congress should listen to the service members calling for change in the aftermath of Vanessa Guillén's murder.

### **RESOLVED**

That the 87th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby respectfully urge the Congress of the United States to pass the I am Vanessa Guillén Act.

That the Texas secretary of state forward official copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to the president of the Senate and the speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the Texas delegation to Congress with the request that this resolution be entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.