

## Chapter 987

H.B. No. 865

### AN ACT

1  
2 relating to establishing a veterans services coordinator for the  
3 Texas Department of Criminal Justice and a veterans reentry dorm  
4 program for certain state jail defendants confined by the  
5 department.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

7 SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 501, Government Code, is  
8 amended by adding Section 501.025 to read as follows:

9 Sec. 501.025. VETERANS SERVICES COORDINATOR. (a) The  
10 department shall establish a veterans services coordinator to  
11 coordinate responses to the needs of veterans under the supervision  
12 of the department, including veterans who are released on parole or  
13 mandatory supervision. The veterans services coordinator, with the  
14 cooperation of the community justice assistance division, shall  
15 provide information to community supervision and corrections  
16 departments to help those departments coordinate responses to the  
17 needs of veterans placed on community supervision. The veterans  
18 services coordinator shall coordinate veterans' services for all of  
19 the department's divisions.

20 (b) The veterans services coordinator, in collaboration  
21 with the attorney general's office, shall provide each incarcerated  
22 veteran a child support modification application.

23 SECTION 2. Subchapter B, Chapter 507, Government Code, is  
24 amended by adding Section 507.034 to read as follows:

1       Sec. 507.034. VETERANS REENTRY DORM PROGRAM. (a) The  
2 department, in coordination with the Texas Veterans Commission,  
3 shall establish and administer a voluntary rehabilitation and  
4 transition program for defendants confined in state jail felony  
5 facilities:

6           (1) who are veterans of the United States armed  
7 forces, including veterans of the reserves, national guard, or  
8 state guard; and

9           (2) who suffer from a brain injury, a mental illness, a  
10 mental disorder, including post-traumatic stress disorder, or  
11 substance abuse, or were victims of military sexual trauma, as  
12 defined by Section 124.002, that:

13                   (A) occurred during or resulted from their  
14 military service; and

15                   (B) may have contributed to their criminal  
16 activity.

17       (b) The program established under this section must:

18           (1) provide for investigating and verifying the  
19 veteran status of each defendant confined in a state jail felony  
20 facility by using data made available from the Veterans Reentry  
21 Search Service (VRSS) operated by the United States Department of  
22 Veterans Affairs or a similar service;

23           (2) be available to male defendants and, if resources  
24 are available, female defendants;

25           (3) include provisions regarding interviewing and  
26 selecting defendants for participation in the program;

27           (4) allow a defendant to decline participation in the

1 program or to withdraw from the program at any time;

2 (5) house defendants participating in the program in  
3 housing that is designed to mimic the squadron structure familiar  
4 to veterans;

5 (6) coordinate and provide available services and  
6 programming approved by the department, including:

7 (A) individual and group peer support  
8 programming, as appropriate;

9 (B) access to military trauma-informed licensed  
10 mental health professional counseling, as appropriate;

11 (C) evidence-based rehabilitation programming;  
12 and

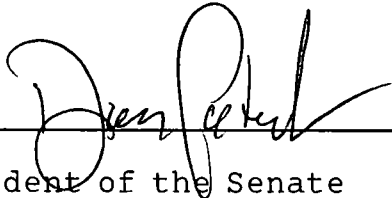
13 (D) reemployment services; and

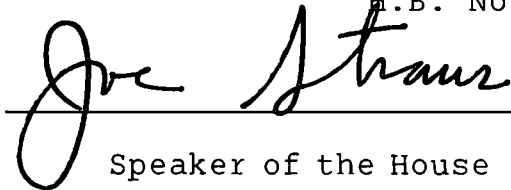
14 (7) to the extent feasible, not later than the 60th day  
15 before the date a defendant participating in the program is  
16 scheduled for release or discharge from the department:

17 (A) match the defendant with community-based  
18 veteran peer support services to assist the defendant in  
19 transitioning into the community; and

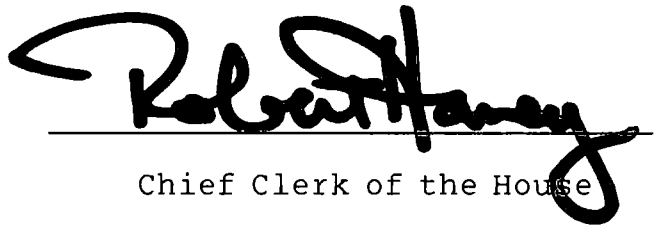
20 (B) transfer the defendant to a state jail felony  
21 facility located near the defendant's home community, or the  
22 community in which the defendant intends to reside after the  
23 defendant's release or discharge, to begin establishing transition  
24 relationships with community-based veteran peer support service  
25 providers and family members.

26 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2017.

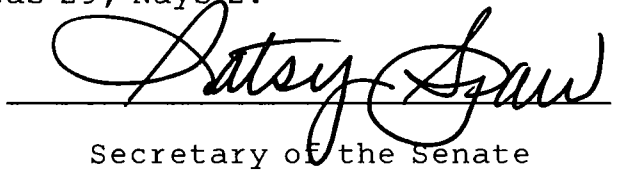
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
President of the Senate

  
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Speaker of the House

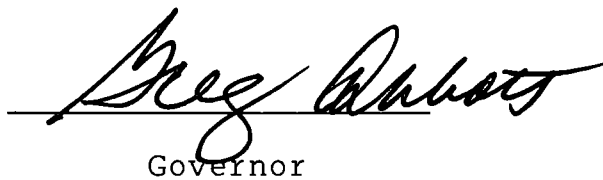
I certify that H.B. No. 865 was passed by the House on April 25, 2017, by the following vote: Yeas 113, Nays 30, 2 present, not voting.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Clerk of the House


I certify that H.B. No. 865 was passed by the Senate on May 24, 2017, by the following vote: Yeas 29, Nays 2.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary of the Senate

APPROVED: 6-13-2017  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Governor

FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE  
SECRETARY OF STATE  
3 PM O'CLOCK

JUN 15 2017  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary of State

**LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD**  
**Austin, Texas**

**FISCAL NOTE, 85TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION**

**May 12, 2017**

**TO:** Honorable John Whitmire, Chair, Senate Committee on Criminal Justice

**FROM:** Ursula Parks, Director, Legislative Budget Board

**IN RE: HB865** by Blanco (Relating to establishing a veterans services coordinator for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice and a veterans reentry dorm program for certain state jail defendants confined by the department.), **As Engrossed**

<b>No significant fiscal implication to the State is anticipated.</b>
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The bill would amend the Government Code relating to establishing a veterans services coordinator for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice and a veterans reentry dorm program for certain state jail defendants confined by the department. The Office of the Attorney General, Department of Criminal Justice and Veterans Commission have indicated that any costs associated with implementing the bill could be absorbed within existing resources.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2017.

**Local Government Impact**

No significant fiscal implication to units of local government is anticipated.

**Source Agencies:** 302 Office of the Attorney General, 403 Veterans Commission, 696 Department of Criminal Justice

**LBB Staff:** UP, ZB, LBO, NV, GGo, JSm, KVe, JGA

**LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD  
Austin, Texas**

**FISCAL NOTE, 85TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION**

**March 31, 2017**

**TO:** Honorable Roland Gutierrez, Chair, House Committee on Defense & Veterans' Affairs

**FROM:** Ursula Parks, Director, Legislative Budget Board

**IN RE:** HB865 by Blanco (Relating to establishing a veterans services coordinator for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice and a veterans reentry dorm program for certain state jail defendants confined by the department.), **Committee Report 1st House, Substituted**

**No significant fiscal implication to the State is anticipated.**

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**LBB Staff:** UP, LBO, NV, GGo, JSm, KVe, JGA

**LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD  
Austin, Texas**

**FISCAL NOTE, 85TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION**

**March 21, 2017**

**TO:** Honorable Roland Gutierrez, Chair, House Committee on Defense & Veterans' Affairs

**FROM:** Ursula Parks, Director, Legislative Budget Board

**IN RE: HB865** by Blanco (Relating to establishing a veterans services coordinator for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice and a veterans rehabilitation dorm program for certain state jail defendants confined by the department.), **As Introduced**

**No significant fiscal implication to the State is anticipated.**

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**Source Agencies:** 302 Office of the Attorney General, 403 Veterans Commission, 696 Department of Criminal Justice

**LBB Staff:** UP, LBO, NV, GGo, JSm, KVe, JGA