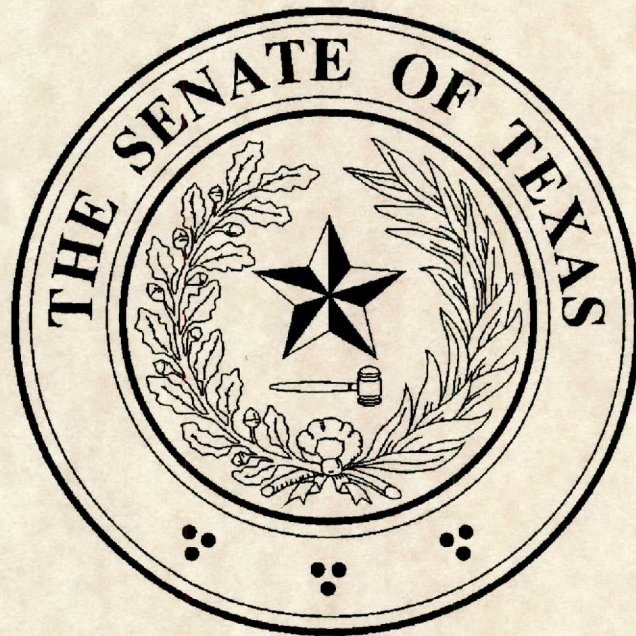


**The Senate Committee on  
Veteran Affairs and Military Installations**

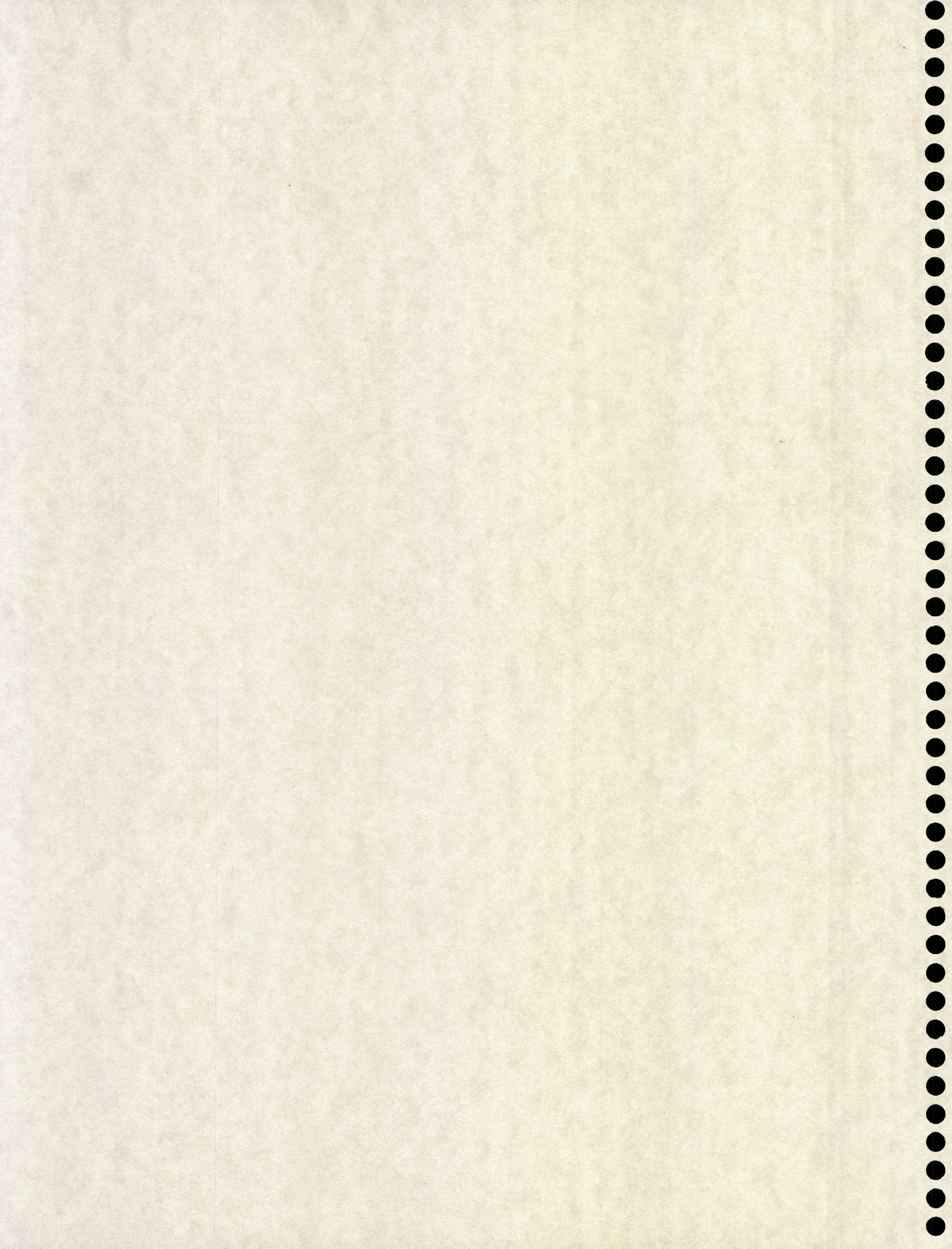


**Report and Recommendations to the  
84th Texas Legislature**

December 2014







December 1, 2014

The Honorable David Dewhurst  
Lieutenant Governor of Texas  
P.O. Box 12068  
Austin, Texas 78711

Dear Lieutenant Governor Dewhurst:

The Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs and Military Installations hereby submits our interim report, including recommendations to the 84<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature.

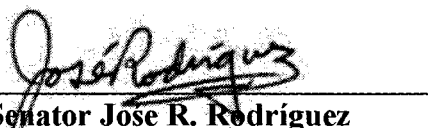
Respectfully submitted,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Senator Leticia Van de Putte, Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Senator Brian Birdwell, Vice Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Senator Donna Campbell

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Senator Wendy Davis

  
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Senator José R. Rodriguez





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**Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs & Military Installations**  
**83<sup>rd</sup> Legislature, Interim Charges**

1. Investigate the impact of federal actions (including the federal government shutdown, sequestration, military force reductions, and potential base closure or realignment) on active-duty service members, the Texas Military Department, veterans, their families, defense-related contractors, small businesses, local governments, and state agencies.
2. Monitor and examine efforts to provide employment and workforce opportunities for veterans, service members, and their families. Make recommendations on how best to continue collaborating with and supporting our honored veterans as they re-enter the civilian workforce, including improving employment opportunities for veterans at all state agencies.
3. Provide an update on the State Strike Force teams' progress and recommendations on any additional steps necessary to ensure that veterans promptly receive all federal disability benefits to which they are entitled.
4. Study and make recommendations to improve access to services provided by non-profit organizations to veterans, their families, and survivors, including examining the effectiveness, standards, and consistency of the 2-1-1 information and referral system for military and veteran families statewide.
5. Monitor the implementation of the veteran occupational licensure bills passed during the 83<sup>rd</sup> Legislative Session to expedite the licensure process for those who are serving, have served, or are married to someone serving our nation in uniform. Study and make recommendations to strengthen and improve state efforts to ease the transition of military veterans and their spouses into the Texas civilian workforce.
6. Monitor implementation of the veteran's mental health legislation passed during the 83<sup>rd</sup> Legislative Session, including funding to support the Military Veteran Peer Network at the Department of State Health Services. Assess whether state mental health initiatives targeted to veterans and their families appropriately address Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Study and make recommendations to enhance the delivery of mental health services to veterans at the local level through the network of Veterans County Service Officers.

In addition to the formal Interim Charges, the VAMI Committee reviewed allegations that the VA has denied health and mental health care and manipulated waiting lists to access care. The Committee also considered whether or not the state has a role in assisting veterans in Texas with VA health care as it did with the Strike Force Teams for VA disability claims

**Committee Hearings**

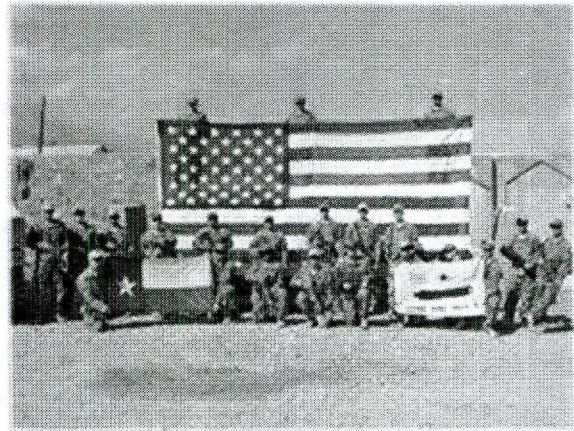
- November 20, 2013, San Antonio. Interim Charge #1.
- April 15, 2014, Austin. Interim Charges #2 and #5.
- June 12, 2014, Pasadena. Interim Charges #1, #3, and VA Issues.
- September 16, 2014, Austin. Interim Charges #4 and #6.



## Texas Veteran and Military Overview

Challenges at the federal level tainted much of the 83<sup>rd</sup> Interim Session for active duty military, veterans, and their families. The final months of 2013 saw a massive federal government shut down affecting veteran services and benefits, military operations for active duty, reservists, National Guard members, and furloughs for federal employees. In 2014, serious allegations about denying access to health care at the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) resulted in the resignation of the VA Secretary and a massive legislative overhaul of that agency. Casting a federal shadow over both years was the Budget Control Act, which brought the term “sequestration” to the vocabulary of many in the military community.

The military is winding down two of the longest conflicts in our nation’s history, after eight years of war in Iraq and over twelve years in Afghanistan. As these wars come to an end, force-shaping efforts are underway to reduce the size of the U.S. Armed Forces and to decrease defense spending. This follows a similar trend to the post-war years over forty years ago when the last American troops left Vietnam. As these conflicts, and the stories of those brave men and women who fought them, vanish from newspaper headlines, some in the federal government are tempted to cut back on support for these servicemembers as they transition to civilian careers and become Veterans.



The State of Texas, through the Governor and the Texas Legislature, continues to make significant commitments to care for Texas Veterans, their families, and survivors. The regular session of the 83<sup>rd</sup> Texas Legislature will be remembered as one in which lawmakers made among the most significant and meaningful commitments to Texas Veterans. State leaders passed legislation that invested in a solution to help address the growing backlog of federal disability claims in Texas, promoted Veteran entrepreneurship as good for business in Texas, committed to preserving the state’s Hazlewood Exemption program, and enhanced critical mental health services for Veterans.

The 83<sup>rd</sup> Legislature also passed significant legislation affecting a number of critical issues and services for Veterans including professional and occupational licenses and certifications, state contracting preferences for service-disabled Veteran small business owners, discounts on utility bills for certain disabled Veterans and property tax exemptions for surviving spouses of servicemembers killed in action.

Texas continues to be recognized for aggressively leading the nation on Veteran issues. National leaders have referred to the “Texas-model” when advocating for the integration of Veterans services. This integration allows the agency to remain Veteran focused, with no competing priorities.<sup>1</sup>

*“The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional to how they perceive the Veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by their nation.”*

- George Washington

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<sup>1</sup> Texas Veterans Commission, Strategic Plan 2015-2019.



## Texas Military and Veteran Statistics at a Glance

### *15 Military Installations*

- Direct economic impact from military installations: \$150 billion
- Total Defense Personnel in Texas: 244,874<sup>2</sup>
- Total Texas National Guard Members: 24,384<sup>3</sup>
- Oversees Deployments of Texas National Guard Members since 9/11: 29,003<sup>3</sup>
- Spouse Underemployment Rate: 90% of female spouses of active duty servicemembers<sup>4</sup>
- Post 9/11 Texas Army National Guard Unemployment: 24%<sup>5</sup>

### *1,667,740 Veterans in Texas<sup>6</sup>*

- Estimated Number of Veterans added to Texas in 2015: 34,187<sup>7</sup>
- VA expenditures in Texas: \$12.9 billion<sup>6</sup>
- VA Disability Compensation and Pension payments: \$6.1 billion<sup>6</sup>
- Number of veterans receiving disability compensation or pension payments: 362,255<sup>6</sup>
- VA Expenditures on Educational Benefits: \$1.1 billion<sup>6</sup>
- Number of Texas veterans using VA Educational Benefits: 71,331<sup>6</sup>
  - Post 9/11 GI Bill Beneficiaries: 49,938<sup>6</sup>
- Number of Hazlewood Benefit Recipients: 38,393<sup>8</sup>
- Post 9/11 Veteran Unemployment in Texas: 8.7%<sup>9</sup>
- Post 9/11 Women Veteran Unemployment: 10.6%<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Texas Military Preparedness Commission, Installation Fact Sheet, 2012.

<sup>3</sup> Texas Military Forces, Organizational Handout, May 2014.

<sup>4</sup> 2013 MilSpouseSurvey on Employment.

<sup>5</sup> Texas National Guard Testimony, April 15, 2014 VAMI Hearing.

<sup>6</sup> US Department of Veteran Affairs.

<sup>7</sup> Texas Veterans Commission, Strategic Plan 2015-2019.

<sup>8</sup> Higher Education Coordinating Board.

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Situation of Veterans 2013.

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, June 2014 Employment Facts and Statistics.

## **INTERIM CHARGE 1**

*Investigate the impact of federal actions (including the federal government shutdown, sequestration, military force reductions, and potential base closure or realignment) on active-duty service members, the Texas Military Department, veterans, their families, defense-related contractors, small businesses, local governments, and state agencies.*

The United State military is winding down two of the longest conflicts in our nation's history, after eight years of war in Iraq and over twelve years in Afghanistan. As these wars come to an end, force-shaping efforts are underway to reduce the size of the U.S. Armed Forces and to decrease defense spending. This follows a similar trend to the post-war years over forty years ago when the last American troops left Vietnam. As these conflicts, and the stories of those brave men and women who fought them vanish from newspaper headlines, some in the federal government are tempted to cut back on support for these servicemembers as they transition to civilian careers and become Veterans.

At the National level, budgetary restrictions from the Budget Control Act (BCA) have pushed the Department of Defense (DOD) into significant reductions in force strength, particularly in the US Army. The end of combat operations in Iraq and an already significantly decreased military presence in Afghanistan followed by a possible complete withdrawal by December 2014 are all expected to increase the number of servicemembers separating from the military, either voluntarily or as the result of force reductions measures.

An analysis of this impact to Texas reveals that approximately 31,600 additional Veterans will either remain or migrate to Texas as the result of separation from the military related to the drawdown. This surge will have a significant impact on the demand for Veterans services.

Despite an effort nationwide to scale back military-related spending, now is not the time to scale back our commitments to Texas' Veterans. On the contrary, now is the time to strengthen the foundation that Texas' leaders have built and to remind Veterans everywhere that Texas will not forget the sacrifices made by so few on behalf of so many.<sup>11</sup>

### **Sequestration**

"Sequestration was a product of the 2011 Budget Control Act provision to reduce Federal spending to offset raising the debt ceiling by \$1.2 trillion. The 2011 BCA cut Defense spending by \$487 billion over a 10-year period. Sequestration intensified the problem by imposing a disproportionate share of spending cuts on DoD (an additional \$600 billion over 10 years beginning in 2013)."<sup>12</sup>

As a result of sequester-required budget cuts, significant reduction in military force strength has been proposed by the US Department of Defense (DoD). The largest reductions are in the US Army, moving from a 2013 force of 522,000 troops to a 2019 troop strength of 420,000.

The Texas Military Department's largest component is Army National Guard and could be dramatically affected. Major General John Nichols, Texas Adjutant General, has argued that big reductions in National Guard strength are counterintuitive in the current budgetary environment. At a November Joint Hearing of VAMI and the House Defense and Veterans' Affairs Committees, Major General Nichols suggested that a National Guard soldier costs roughly one-third the cost of an active duty soldier. Since 2001, National Guard servicemembers have deployed frequently to combat in Iraq

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<sup>11</sup> Texas Veterans Commission, Strategic Plan 2015-2019.

<sup>12</sup> Testimony of Paul Paine, Chair, TMPC, Nov. 2013



and Afghanistan, making them equally trained and qualified when compared to their active duty counterparts.

According to Cindy Williams, Massachusetts Institute of Technology researcher, “As they bring the military’s ground forces in line with budgetary realities, officials would also be wise to disproportionately favor the reserve component, which includes the National Guard and the Reserves. When deployed, reserve forces cost as much as active-duty ones, but in peacetime, they cost just a fraction of their fill-time counterparts.”<sup>13</sup>

### **Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC)**

“Many states compete for missions currently performed on Texas military installations. Regardless if the reductions in military end strength are by either BRAC or the “alternatives” other states have already started to prepare for the inevitable.”<sup>12</sup>

The Department of Defense has requested Congressional approval of a formal BRAC-related process in each of their budget requests since 2013. As yet, Congress has denied their request; however, sequestration is forcing DoD action to reduce force strength, creating what has become known as a “shadow BRAC.” As the DoD shifts military and civilian personnel and deactivates military units to increase efficiency and save money, excess capacity at specific sites have the potential to leave hollow bases.

To help Texas prepare for the possibility of future BRAC actions, the 83<sup>rd</sup> Legislature created a BRAC Task Force under the Texas Military Preparedness Commission (TMPC) in SB 1200. During the Interim Session, the BRAC Task Force was created and held meetings around the state. The goal of the Task Force is to make recommendations to the TMPC and the Legislature on any strategy, policy, project, or action the Task Force believes will strengthen defense communities and military installations. A report with recommendations from the BRAC Task Force is expected in December 2014.

One of the primary tools that the state has available to support improvement project on and around military installations is the Defense Economic Adjustment Assistance Grant (DEAAG) program. DEAAG grants, created in 1997, were designed as a job creation grant to assist defense communities that are responding to or recovering from a reduction or termination of defense contracts. The program was later expanded to assist defense communities that have been positively affected with new or expanded military missions, as well as, qualified job retention. There is currently no funding for DEAAG grants.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Continue to support active duty and reserve military installations and prepare them for future reductions by funding DEAAG grants at the Texas Military Preparedness Commission. The Committee recommends funding DEAAG grants at \$30 million per year.
2. To support a sustained, and possibly increased, level of Texas National Guard troops, National Guard armories are in need of repair and update. The Committee recommends fully funding Texas Military Forces request for armories in their Legislative Appropriations Request.
3. The Committee recommends continuing the BRAC Task Force through 2019 and allowing members to be reimbursed for travel expenses.

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<sup>13</sup> Foreign Affairs, November/December 2013 issue, *Accepting Austerity, The Right Way to Cut Defense*.



## **INTERIM CHARGE 2**

*Monitor and examine efforts to provide employment and workforce opportunities for veterans, service members, and their families. Make recommendations on how best to continue collaborating with and supporting our honored veterans as they re-enter the civilian workforce, including improving employment opportunities for veterans at all state agencies.*

### **Veteran Employment Situation**

The United States Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics releases an annual report on the national veteran employment situation. Some of the highlights from the 2013 data:

- Among all veterans, the unemployment rate for women declined to 6.9 percent in 2013. The rate for male veterans edged down to 6.5 percent.
- Among the 722,000 unemployed veterans in 2013, 60 percent were age 45 and over. Thirty-five percent were age 25 to 44, and 5 percent were age 18 to 24.
- Veterans with a service-connected disability had an unemployment rate of 6.2 percent in August 2013, little different than the rate for veterans with no disability (6.6 percent).
- One in 3 employed veterans with a service-connected disability worked in the public sector in August 2013, compared with 1 in 5 veterans with no disability.<sup>14</sup>

### **Employment of Veterans at State Agencies**

Texas Government Code mandates that public entities or public works of the state must give veteran's employment preference until at least 40 percent of the employees of the public entity are veterans. The Comptroller's Office is charged with producing a quarterly report summarizing the veterans employment levels at all state agencies and institutions of higher education.

According to the 2014, 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter report, less than five percent of all state employees are veterans. Conversely, federal executive agencies report that nearly 30 percent of their employees are veterans. The Federal Government hired approximately 195,000 new employees, approximately, 56,000 were veterans, equaling 28.9 percent of total hires.<sup>15</sup> While hiring trends in the federal executive branch have steadily increased since FY2009, the percentage of veterans working at Texas' state agencies has decreased over the same period.



### *Texas Veterans Commission*

The premier state employment service dedicated to veterans is the Veterans Employment Services (VES) program at the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC). The VES staff provide employment services to all veterans, particularly recently separated and disabled veterans, and eligible persons in Texas. All VES staff are veterans themselves, with a large number of them disabled veterans.

In April 2014, the US Department of Labor, Veterans Employment and Training Services, which funds and provides federal oversight of the VES program, issued guidance that dramatically impacted the

<sup>14</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Situation of Veterans 2013.

<sup>15</sup> US Office of Personnel Management Report – Employment of Veterans in the Federal Executive Branch FY2012



program by limiting the number of veterans that can be seen. The guidance in Veteran Program Letter 03-14 limited some VES staff to “only serve veterans with significant barriers to employment” as defined by the Secretary of Labor. This change requires veterans entering a local Workforce Solutions office to be screened by workforce solutions staff to determine if they qualify for VES staff services. The shift in service delivery methods moves VES away from the very successful model of veterans serving veterans that has resulted in a robust and very effective Texas Veterans Commission.

#### *Texas Workforce Solutions*

Texas Workforce Solutions (TWS) is comprised of the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), a statewide network of 28 Workforce Development Boards for regional planning and service delivery, their contracted service providers and community partners, and the TWC unemployment benefits Tele-Centers. This network gives customers local access to workforce solutions and statewide services at numerous TWS offices and six Tele-Centers.

The TWS provides workforce development services that help workers find and keep good jobs and also helps employers hire the skilled workers they need to grow their businesses. Workforce partners include community colleges, adult basic education providers, local independent school districts, economic development groups, businesses and other state agencies. Collaboration and coordination among all partners is critical for the success of the Texas workforce system.

Both Federal and state law require that veterans receive a priority for services at local TWS offices. Priority of service means that veterans receive services before other non-veterans.

#### *Job Connection Education Program - Texas Military Forces*

The Job Connection Education Program (JCEP) began in 2010 and helps National Guard and Reserve Service Members and their spouses who are unemployed or under-employed find careers. Offered by the Army National Guard, dedicated training development specialists and a skilled business advisor assist participants in making their job connections. Texas was selected as the first site for the JCEP with offices in the Fort Worth Sandage Armory and the Houston Westheimer Armory. Since 2010, JCEP has made 2,129 job placements at an average salary of \$16.60/hour.<sup>16</sup>

#### **Additional Employment Resources for Veterans**

In addition to these major programs designed to assist veterans, a number of state agencies have staff and/or programs in place to help veterans, such as the Health and Human Services Commission and Department of Public Safety. Numerous non-profit organizations also assist veterans with their employments needs. Some of these non-profit organizations include: Texas Rural Water Foundation, American GI Forum; and Goodwill Industries; Grace After Fire. Local governments also have employment and training assistance available for veterans such as the City of Austin, City of Houston, and CPS Energy in San Antonio.

#### *CPS Energy*

CPS Energy is the nation’s largest municipally owned utility providing both natural gas and electric service to San Antonio and the surrounding area. CPS Energy hosts an annual Veterans Symposium & Expo to connect veterans with procurement decision makers and business partners in an attempt to expand the Veteran Owned Business Community. During the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Expo on January 14, 2014, over 400 attended, which is an increase of over 80% from the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Expo.

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<sup>16</sup> Testimony of Lt. Colonel Miguel Torres, Texas Military Forces.

The Expo is designed to be an educational event to help our veterans gain access to resources and relationships that can help them establish a business, market and grow their business, finance their business, etc. As a direct result of hosting The Expo, CPS Energy has been able to connect with over 600 veterans in order to highlight CPS Energy's and San Antonio's diverse business needs. CPS Energy has also seen a 39% increase from 2012 to 2013 in contract dollars awarded to veteran owned businesses which equates to over \$6 million.

*Texas Rural Water Foundation*

The Texas Rural Water Foundation (TRWF) created a Veteran Employment Program to attract veterans to the water and wastewater utility industry and match them with utilities interested in hiring veterans. A critical piece to this initiative is that basic training and educational resources are provided to veterans hired in operator positions at no cost to the veteran. Further, the TRWF provides reimbursement for the expenses of the Class D water or wastewater operator license exam.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Employment of veterans at state agencies and institutions of higher education is very low. The process for hiring at state agencies is often drawn out and complicated. Veterans often struggle to match their military experience with key words and terminology in state job postings. The Committee recommends creating a mechanism for the direct, non-competitive hiring of veterans and disabled veterans by state agencies and institutions of higher education using the State's automated labor exchange (WorkinTexas.com).
2. Many of the large state agencies use proprietary automated job systems instead of the standard state application in WorkinTexas. The result is confusing and repetitive entries of identical information by veterans and other job seekers into each agency's hiring system. The Committee recommends that state agencies and institutions of higher education use the state application or, at a minimum, import information from the WorkinTexas system to avoid repetitive entry by veterans.
3. To ensure that the Texas Veterans Commission's Veterans Employment Services program continues to be allowed to provide direct services to job seeking veterans, the Committee recommends creation of a 21<sup>st</sup> century Veterans Employment Program that incorporates increased access to direct services through technology and staff dedicated to providing in-person assistance to veterans. The Texas Veterans Commission should be authorized and funded to design a non-traditional employment assistance program for veterans.
4. The current goal for veteran employment at state agencies is 40 percent. The Committee recommends lowering that goal to a more attainable goal of 15-20 percent.

### INTERIM CHARGE 3

*Provide an update on the State Strike Force teams' progress and recommendations on any additional steps necessary to ensure that veterans promptly receive all federal disability benefits to which they are entitled.*

As major combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), drawdown, the expectation is for more veterans to file first-time claims for disability with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The Texas Veterans Commission anticipates nearly 100,000 new veterans in Texas over the next 3-4 years.

Post 9/11 (Gulf War II) veterans are accessing their VA benefits at a much greater rate than Vietnam or Pre-9/11 (Gulf War I) era veterans. The VA reports that nearly 50 percent of both men and women Post 9/11 veterans are using their services, compared with an approximate 35 usage for Vietnam era veterans. Over 83 percent of these OIF/OEF veterans were under 45 years old – meaning services to these veterans will need to be delivered for the next 40-50 years in the future.

**BEATING THE VA BACKLOG**

TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION

July 13, 2013  
8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Westin Dallas Ft. Worth Airport  
4545 W. John Carpenter Freeway  
Irving, TX 75063

This "Beating the VA Backlog" event is open to all Veterans, their families, and survivors. The TVC is a state organization and all services are provided free of charge.

Have you been waiting on your claim for more than 125 days? Come to this FREE event!

Attendees from the TVC State Office, Fort Worth, as well as TVC Claims Counselors and Counsel Associates (CA's) will be on hand to provide direct and valuable assistance in Veterans' pending claims, and appeals.

Specific assistance includes, but is not limited to:

- Provide status on pending claims or appeals
- Accept new evidence for your claim or appeal
- Submit a Notice of Disagreement (NOD) to support a VA decision

Attendees from the TVC will be able to schedule a meeting with a Counselor (CA) to discuss their pending claims or appeals. It is possible to change your POC to TVC pending your appeal. TVC will not charge you for this service. Please call the TVC office for more information.

It is not possible to get a VA decision during the event. Appeal at this event.

### US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Claims Backlog

On July 16, 2012, the Texas Veterans Commission testified before the VAMI Committee and shared data which showed that the backlog (claims older than 180 days) of veterans claims filed with the VA in Texas grew rapidly between 2010 and 2012. The total pending caseload more than doubled, while the backlog more than quadrupled according to data received from the two VA regional offices in Texas.

Following that VAMI hearing in July 2012, Lieutenant Governor David Dewhurst, working with Governor Perry and Speaker Straus, directed the Texas Veterans Commission to reinstitute the "State Strike Force Teams" that were implemented in 2009 to help reduce this federal backlog of

veterans' claims for disability benefits. The state leadership also directed the Texas Veterans Commission to help the backlog by assisting veterans in filing fully developed claims, which are processed faster by the VA, and to address critical staffing needs in areas where Veterans need additional access to TVC Claims Counselors.

The Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Speaker authorized the agency to utilize \$1,511,267 in the 2012-2013 biennium to begin this work immediately. There are two State Strike Force Teams located at each of the two VA regional offices in Texas, working exclusively on backlogged claims and appeals. Also located at each regional office is a Fully Developed Claims Team, working to expedite newly filed, fully-developed claims. Essentially, these teams are working both ends of the backlog, concurrently.

In January 2013, state leaders committed additional resources to the State Strike Force and Fully Developed Claims Teams by authorizing an additional \$534,736 to support an additional sixteen (16) team members. The 83<sup>rd</sup> Texas Legislature appropriated funds to continue the initiative through 2014 and 2015.



### State Strike Force Team Activity

- 43,544 Cases reviewed by Strike Force Team.
- 7,959 Cases worked by the Strike Force Team and returned to the VA ready to rate.
- 35,585 Returned for VA “directed” development (actions only the VA can execute).

### Fully Developed Claims (FDC) Team Activity

The FDC Team reviewed claims received from County Service Officers and TVC Counselors located at VA Medical Centers, Outpatient Clinics, and Regional Offices. This includes both original and reopened claims.

- 33,441 Claims reviewed.
- 22,455 Submitted as FDC Cases to VA for 90 day(s) processing.
- 286 Met the Service Center Manager’s Pledge Case criteria to be processed within two weeks.

### Claims Backlog Reduction

The table below illustrates the recent history of the backlog at the Houston and Waco Regional Offices since the State Strike Force and Fully Developed Claims Teams became operational:

	Houston		Waco		Total (Texas)	
	Pending	Backlog	Pending	Backlog	Pending	Backlog
August 2012	37,879	28,241	51,460	40,008	89,339	68,249
September 2012	37,726	27,673	50,633	38,859	88,359	66,532
October 2012	37,385	27,272	48,933	37,460	86,318	64,732
November 2012	37,604	27,630	48,555	37,073	86,159	64,703
December 2012	37,567	27,636	47,985	36,596	85,552	64,232
January 2013	37,604	28,095	47,439	37,084	85,043	65,179
February 2013	37,471	28,193	46,330	36,400	83,801	64,593
March 2013	36,793	27,701	45,520	35,972	82,313	63,673
April 2013	36,392	26,966	44,597	35,055	80,989	62,021
May 2013	36,044	26,331	43,157	33,272	79,201	59,603
June 2013	35,275	25,308	40,912	30,532	76,187	55,840
July 2013	34,120	24,401	37,287	26,606	71,407	51,007
August 2013	33,662	23,992	35,083	23,602	68,745	47,594
September 2013	32,022	22,783	31,320	20,227	63,342	43,010
October 2013	30,151	20,639	27,116	15,531	57,267	36,170
November 2013	29,159	19,570	25,667	13,738	54,826	33,308
December 2013	28,281	18,777	25,367	12,927	53,648	31,704
January 2014	26,865	18,221	25,342	13,295	52,207	31,516
February 2014	27,888	17,073	25,436	13,260	53,324	30,333
March 2014	26,136	14,900	25,077	12,696	51,213	27,596
April 2014	26,211	14,398	25,692	12,575	40,060	26,973

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Strike Force teams for VA Claims have been immensely successful in speeding up claims decisions by the VA and securing medical appointments. The Committee recommends continuing this activity for the 2016/2017 biennium.

## INTERIM CHARGE 4

*Study and make recommendations to improve access to services provided by non-profit organizations to veterans, their families, and survivors, including examining the effectiveness, standards, and consistency of the 2-1-1 information and referral system for military and veteran families statewide.*

### 2-1-1 System

The 2-1-1 system is the telephone dialing code assigned by the federal government to provide consumers with access to health and human services information and referrals. The system includes Internet access to services through [www.211texas.org](http://www.211texas.org). Consumers of 2-1-1 can:

- Obtain information and referrals for federal, state, and community-based services
- Access state benefit programs
- Report suspected abuse or fraud of state benefit programs
- Register for the State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry
- Seek disaster and emergency response information (operational only during disaster)
- Obtain information about and referral to mental health services

During 2013 there were 2.7 million 2-1-1 callers who expressed a need. Out of those, 58,465 were identified as either active duty military (3,056) or veterans (55,409). The following charts show the Top 10 needs of general callers compared to military/veteran callers of the 2-1-1 system.<sup>17</sup>

General Callers				Military/Veteran Callers			
Rank	Need	Total	%	Rank	Need	Total	%
1	Food Assistance Benefits (SNAP)	1,023,452	37.9	1	Utility Payment	11,891	20.3
2	Medicaid	533,300	19.8	2	Food Assistance Benefits (SNAP)	9,030	15.4
3	Utility Payment	275,727	10.2	3	Rent Payment	7,472	12.8
4	Rent Payment	173,551	6.4	4	Food Pantries	5,356	9.2
5	Food Pantries	134,203	5.0	5	Medicaid	3,831	6.6
6	Medicare Savings	59,833	2.2	6	VA Benefit Assistance	2,477	4.2
7	Housing Authorities	46,881	1.7	7	VITA Programs*	1,461	2.5
8	Child Care Expenses	40,674	1.5	8	Medicare Savings	1,139	1.9
9	VITA Programs*	38,229	1.4	9	Housing Authorities	1,135	1.9
10	CHIP**	36,241	1.3	10	Prescription Expenses	1,075	1.8

\* Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)

\*\* Children's Health Insurance Programs (CHIP)

The 2-1-1 network is operated through 25 Area Information Centers (AIC) and overseen by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC). Each AIC is operated by a local organization. The 25 AICs include 11 United Ways, eight Councils of Government, and six non-profit organizations

<sup>17</sup> Testimony of Beth Wick, HHSC, during VAMI hearing on September 16, 2014.

(community councils, local Workforce Boards, or city entities). The AIC uses a combination of national, state, and local information to maintain a database of regional resources to assist customers of the 2-1-1 system.

Active duty military, veterans, and their families access the state's 2-1-1 information and referral network the same way any member of the public would access these resources. In the telephone-based access method, callers typically encounter an automated menu. Once connected to a representative, callers are asked if they are military or a veteran, which allows the representative to provide a unique set of referrals.

### **Additional Information & Referral Resources**

#### *TexVet*

TexVet is organized under the Texas A&M Health Science Center and primarily funded through a contract with the Texas Department of State Health Services. Through their website, [www.TexVet.org](http://www.TexVet.org), they offer curated or specialized information and referral. They resource the Military Veteran Peer Network by sub-contracting the administration of the network with the Texas Veterans Commission and by documenting their activities to the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS).

#### *OneStar Foundation*

OneStar Foundation's mission is to connect partners and resources to build a stronger nonprofit sector in Texas. To accomplish this mission, they:

- **Connect:** OneStar connects faith-based and community organizations, businesses, government and foundations to resources and information about the nonprofit sector.
- **Promote:** OneStar promotes the nonprofit sector, innovative strategies and public-private partnerships to drive community solutions.
- **Convene:** OneStar is the statewide convener of nonprofit networks, developing a coordinated approach to building the strongest most impactful nonprofit sector.

OneStar Foundation has partnered with HHSC's 2-1-1 System to provide data to a complimentary online mapping tool, Texas Connector. Texas Connector is an online non-profit mapping tool that empowers communities, governments, funders and nonprofits to more effectively meet Texas' growing needs. Texas Connector displays statewide nonprofit and social service provider information pulled from numerous databases including 2-1-1 Texas and GuideStar USA. This nonprofit and social service data is visually displayed along with demographic and socioeconomic data from governmental and other sources in a user-friendly online platform that supports large initiatives designed to address pressing community challenges, such as access to services for veterans and their families.

During her testimony to the VAMI Committee on September 16, 2014, OneStar CEO, Elizabeth Darling, stressed the importance of creating an identifier for "military or veteran" specific service within the 2-1-1 system. As increasing numbers of military and veteran callers seek social service referrals, it is vital that those providers understand the military culture and are able to "speak the language" of military veterans. As seen in the case study below, she also voiced the concern that veterans are often in need of multiple services, even when they call for just one needed service.

#### *Veteran Case Study*

A healthcare specialist in another state recently contacted OneStar looking for assistance for a veteran and his family who were relocating to the Tyler area. The father, having served honorably in two tours



of duty in active combat zones in the Middle East suffers from PTSD. As a result, he needed trauma-informed counseling as close to his home as possible. This was also causing marital and parenting issues with his family, job-related difficulties for the veteran himself, and even episodes of family violence. Provider searches in existing databases listed individual and/or family counselors in both Tyler and nearby towns, some of which identified as providing PTSD-specific counseling. However, few of the identified providers were listed as being military-sensitive, which was a crucial factor for this family. By calling all the listed providers, a military-sensitive counselor was finally identified, however, the process was inefficient and lacking in specificity needed to find the most appropriate services for this family. Many families attempting to locate services on their own might be overwhelmed with this process and, as a result, may stop looking for the help they need.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The 2-1-1 system in Texas is doing an excellent job of coordinating among many entities that provide social services to veterans. However, veterans may still be confused and frustrated by the many access points for similar information at different organizations. The Committee recommends greater coordination for non-profit organizations serving veterans. The Texas Veterans Commission should consider forming a workgroup as a part of the Coordinating Council for Veterans Services that would make recommendations to the 85<sup>th</sup> Legislature.
2. The Legislature should continue the valuable role of TexVet and its contributions to the 2-1-1 network and mental health initiatives. However, the Committee recommends clarifying its purpose in statute and identifying the appropriate agency to host and support the TexVet initiative.

## **INTERIM CHARGE 5**

*Monitor the implementation of the veteran occupational licensure bills passed during the 83<sup>rd</sup> Legislative Session to expedite the licensure process for those who are serving, have served, or are married to someone serving our nation in uniform. Study and make recommendations to strengthen and improve state efforts to ease the transition of military veterans and their spouses into the Texas civilian workforce.*

### **Professional Accreditation and Licensure**

Texas is regularly identified as a national leader in the area of professional licensure and accreditation for active duty military, veterans, and their spouses. The 83<sup>rd</sup> Legislature passed a number of bills that have improved the employability of transitioning service members, spouses of active duty military and veterans. Below are a few of the highlights:

- SB 162 Occupational Licenses for Military, Spouses and Veterans (Van de Putte/ Menendez) requires state agencies that issue occupational licenses to recognize occupational licenses issued by other jurisdictions and provide an expedited licensure for military service members, military spouses, and military veterans within one year of separation from the military. It also provides a waiver from some law enforcement certification requirements for "special forces" veterans.
- SB 229 CDL Residency Waiver (Davis/ Turner, Chris) will allow Texas to take full advantage of federal authority to waive the residency requirements for Commercial Driver's Licenses (CDL).
- SB 242 Partial Credit Occupational Licenses (Carona/ Farias) requires TDLR to credit verified military service, training, or education towards licensing requirements for all of their occupational licenses.
- HB 1960 EMT Certification for Veterans (Cortez/ Campbell) provides a statutory basis for the Health and Human Services Commission to issue Texas EMT certification if the veteran has military combat medic training or a military EMS certification.
- HB 2028 Military Experience Toward Plumbing License (Turner, Chris/ Davis) provides statutory support for the Texas State Board of Plumbing Examiners (TSBPE) to credit military experience requirements for veterans applying for plumbing license in the state.
- HB 2029 Military Experience Toward Electrician License (Turner, Chris/ Davis) directs the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation to credit military experience, training, or education in electrical work obtained toward the requirements needed to obtain an electrician's license in Texas.
- HB 2135 Military Experience Toward Private Eye License (Cortez/ Campbell) requires the Texas Private Security Board (PSB) to adopt rules allowing the PSB to waive any prerequisite to obtaining a license or credit military experience toward a license.
- HB 2254 Veteran Apprenticeship Credit (Geren/ Van de Putte) requires state agencies to adopt rules to provide credit towards occupational licenses which require an apprenticeship in fields relevant to a service member's training and experience in a military occupational specialty.

### **College Credit for Heroes**

The College Credit for Heroes (CC4H) initiative seeks to maximize college credits awarded to veterans for their military experience in order to expedite each veteran's transition into the Texas workforce. Administered and funded by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), this workforce development initiative is designed to recognize the exceptional knowledge and skills gained by military service members and award them college credits for their military experience, allowing these veterans to more easily re-enter the workforce.

College Credit for Heroes started in 2011 as a pilot program using \$3 million in Workforce Investment Act funds. Permanent statutory authority was contained in SB10 of the 83<sup>rd</sup> Regular Session, but did



not pass. College Credit for Heroes continues because of the commitment and funding from the Texas Workforce Commission. Seven community colleges were selected in 2011 to participate in the first phase of the College Credit for Heroes program. The colleges developed models for awarding college credit by evaluating military training, including testing and prior learning assessments, with the goal of implementing a statewide assessment system for other colleges and training providers.

Phase I focused on allied health careers, and the program partnered with the Military Education and Training Campus (METC) in San Antonio to provide veterans and service members with an accelerated degree plan. The second phase of College Credit for Heroes expands the initiative throughout Texas to increase the number of veterans and service members that can benefit from the program. In October 2013 all 13 campuses of the Texas A&M System joined College Credit for Heroes.

According to TWC, veterans currently received an average of 25 semester hours of college credit in academic, workforce, and other credits when their military training was evaluated by the College Credit for Heroes website ([www.collegecreditforheroes.org](http://www.collegecreditforheroes.org)).

#### *Phase I College Partners*

1. Alamo Community College District Veterans Associate Degree Programs
2. Central Texas College Online Military Training Evaluation System
3. Houston Community College Accelerated Alternate Delivery Program
4. Lee College Model Program for Individual Education Plan for Veterans
5. Lone Star College Texas Inter-College Council on Veterans and Best Practices
6. San Jacinto College Allied Health Programs Analysis Project and Summit
7. Temple College Accelerated Emergency Services Program for Veterans

#### *Phase II College Partners*

1. Angelo State University Accelerated Pathways to Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in Security Fields
2. Alamo Community College District Accelerated Associate's Degree in Respiration Technology and Health Information Technology Specialty Tracks
3. Austin Community College District Accelerated Pathways to Certifications in Advanced Technology Fields
4. Dallas County Community College District Veteran Success Through Accelerated IT Career Pathways
5. Grayson College
6. Lee College Accelerated Manufacturing and Logistics Certifications and Associate's Degree Programs
7. Lone Star College System Fast Track Field Service Technician Marketable Skill Award Toward Oil Field Certification
8. San Jacinto Community College District Veterans' IT Fast Track to Employment Program
9. Tarrant County College District Fire Technology
10. Texas State Technical College-Harlingen

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Despite a wide range of expedited licensure and accelerated educational programs for veterans, unemployment remains high and veterans still complain of a trouble converting military experience and training into civilian job descriptions. The Committee recommends permanently authorizing the College Credit for Heroes program and promote similar accelerated degree or certification programs.
2. The Committee recommends updating Chapter 55 of the Texas Occupations Code, which was amended by several bills enacted by the 83<sup>rd</sup> Texas Legislature, to remove redundant definitions and to clarify statutory language. This would help Texas occupational licensing agencies to better assist military service members, veterans, and spouses to become licensed in Texas.



## **INTERIM CHARGE 6**

*Monitor implementation of the veteran's mental health legislation passed during the 83rd Legislative Session, including funding to support the Military Veteran Peer Network at the Department of State Health Services. Assess whether state mental health initiatives targeted to veterans and their families appropriately address Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Study and make recommendations to enhance the delivery of mental health services to veterans at the local level through the network of Veterans County Service Officers.*

A New York State Health-supported study, conducted by the RAND Corporation, found that veterans returning to New York State from Iraq and Afghanistan have considerable unmet mental health needs. Nearly one-quarter (22%) of veterans surveyed have a probable diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and/or major depression, and many veterans face barriers to seeking and receiving adequate treatment. The study is the first-ever statewide assessment of the needs of returning veterans and their families.

The report also points to a need for more community-based resources for veterans; nearly half of those surveyed indicated that they would prefer to receive services outside of the VA system. Although services are available to those in need, more than 40% of veterans report being unaware of what help is available or uncertain about how to navigate the systems that provide assistance. Outreach to connect veterans with services and better coordination among government and community agencies is needed.<sup>18</sup>

### **Peer-to-Peer Counseling Services**

The Peer-to-Peer model of allowing veterans to meet informally with another veteran is a great success for Texas. Starting with the 81<sup>st</sup> Legislature, Senate Bill 1325 established the state Military Veteran Peer Network (MVPN) at Department of State Health Services (DSHS). The 82<sup>nd</sup> Legislature authorized continued funding for MVPN in order to maintain and enhance the MVPN, to expand existing mental health programs for veterans and their families, and to recruit and train volunteers and practitioners for veterans' mental health treatment and peer support. During the 83<sup>rd</sup> Regular Legislative Session, House Bill 2392 further expanded this model of mental health services at the MVPN.

Due to the stressful and unique nature of the work of service members, particularly those who have seen combat, the military has created a culture in which service members take care of each other. The MVPN program uses peer support as a primary intervention for veterans, especially for those who are in crisis and for those who are in adjustment phases. Although peer support discussions can improve the mental health of a veteran, peer support is not professional counseling. Some individuals may have needs that are beyond the scope of a MVPN peer and require professional support. Providing peer-to-peer support training to service members and veterans, many of whom are already providing informal social support, increases the effectiveness of the individual providing the support as well as increase his or her ability to identify a potential high-risk situation before a crisis event occurs.

The trained volunteers are enrolled by the Local Mental Health Authorities (LMHAs). In fiscal year 2014, over 800 trained Veteran volunteers reported more than 72,000 interactions with more than 30,000 veterans or family members. During fiscal year 2014, the program increased volunteer training and raised the number of full-time volunteer coordinators from 22 to 35. The coordinators are

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<sup>18</sup> A Needs Assessment of New York State Veterans, Technical Report, Jan. 2011.

employed by the LMHAs. Since the program began in 2010, more than 1,000 volunteers have been trained to provide these services, and, as the program continues, more are trained each month.

Veterans who participate in the peer programs are reporting to DSHS that they are experiencing very positive responses to the creation of Veteran One-Stop Resource Centers (VOSRC). There are at least four such VOSRC in Texas where veteran response has been positive: Cedar Park, Tyler, Seguin, and Waco. At these VOSRCs, the County Veterans Service Officers are typically on-site at least a few days a week. Other service providers have also leased space to provide employment assistance, financial, legal, educational counseling, medical and mental health care, as well as making referrals to a wide range of services from acupuncture, to horse therapy, to finding a service dog. The VOSRCs are perceived as far less stigmatizing than conventional mental health care facilities. Veterans who need, but otherwise might resist seeking those services, therefore can learn about them even if their first visit is to see someone about a job lead. Veterans who are returning to civilian life typically have many and disparate needs, having trained trusted peers on site can be a first step to a healthy return from military service.

### **Texas Military Forces Peer-to-Peer Program**

The TXMF Peer-to-Peer (P2P) Training Program strives to train at least 5% (1,000) of their service members at the unit level annually to: (1) IDENTIFY potential warning signs of mental distress; (2) perform unit level INTERVENTION; and (3) INITIATE referrals for ongoing care. According to TXMFs, over 825 Peer-to-Peer Specialists have been trained since August of 2010 and a number of these specialists have aided in crisis interventions with fellow service members.

The TXMFs Joint Family Support Services is host to other programs including:

- The Yellow Ribbon Program - This is a congressionally mandated program which focuses on preparing, sustaining, and reintegrating service members and their families before and after deployment. During deployment sessions, family members receive resources focused on stress management, healthy communication skills, reintegration, and the needs of children. Once a service member has returned home, training is focused on identifying warning signs for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression, substance abuse, and other deployment related stressors.
- The Strong Bonds Program - This Chaplain led program offers weekend retreats for veterans and their spouses, entire families, and solely for veterans. The retreats provide learning tools and educational seminars that enhance family and marital relationships.

### **Veteran County Service Officers**

While approximately 70 percent of Texas Veterans live within one of the largest 25 counties, the remaining 30 percent, which represents approximately 503,000 Veterans, are spread across 229 counties, many of those rural, to very rural, with less than 7 persons per square mile. This presents huge challenges to providing comprehensive services to all Veterans across the state. The network of Veteran County Service Officers throughout the state is a potential solution to this challenge.

The “reach” of state agencies and programs that provide services and resources to Veterans is greatly extended through the network of Veterans County Service Officers throughout the state. Current statute requires each county with a population of over 200,000 to employ a Veteran County Service Officer. State law is permissive for those counties with a population under 200,000, they may employ a Veterans County Service Officer, but are not required to do so.



No state funding is appropriated to Texas counties to support the implementation of this requirement. According to 2010 Census, 23 Texas counties have populations greater than 200,000. Currently, 195 (75%) counties have at least one VCISO working in them. Of the 195 counties staffed with a VCISO, only 97 are available to Veterans on a full-time basis. Others are either part-time or work on an “on-call” basis. Ideally, Veterans in every Texas county would have access to a professional Veteran County Service Officer.<sup>19</sup>

### **Additional Mental Health Service**

The US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is the primary resource for veterans seeking mental health services; however, Texas' efforts are vital to fill the substantial gaps in those services. Gaps in VA service are created by the considerable backlog in VA Disability Claims and the stigma associated with seeking mental health services for active Texas Military Forces (TXMF) members.

Since 2001, 29,003 members of TXMF service members have deployed overseas. An additional 22,764 have been deployed in support of state missions. The Texas National Guard reports that approximately 22% of National Guard Soldiers returning from deployments exhibit mental health issues and would benefit from psychological healthcare.

While a number of services exist to support the physical and mental health needs of TXMF service members, connecting to those services remains one of the largest challenges. The TXMF service members reside all over the state, typically not near an active duty installation or Military Treatment Facility (MTF) such as Fort Hood, Fort Sam Houston, or Fort Bliss; all of which have immediately available resources for active duty service members. The lack of access to installation-based services for geographically dispersed service members translates into their lack of knowledge of programs such as those provided to the local community through state funding. Furthermore, for those service members living outside reasonable commuting distances from major metropolitan areas, the mental health services available are much harder to access.

While the State of Texas has made great strides to develop a coordinated infrastructure of collaborative referral, services, and support, there is more work to be done and there are still gaps in the services provided. Ongoing support is needed to sustain the improvements made to date and to continue to improve the state's ability to effectively provide health and mental health services to veterans with complex injuries before they are in crisis.

With the war in Iraq having now drawn to a close and the U.S. military commitment to Afghanistan soon coming to an end, the Department of Defense (DoD) has already begun to execute force-shaping initiatives in order to reduce the size of the active military force. Given the substantial number of Texans who have already returned from service abroad and the many more who will return home in the next few years, continued support for such programs will be pivotal to ensure that veterans and their family members are properly served, and that the services are delivered as efficiently as possible.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The 83<sup>rd</sup> Legislature provided an expanded and clearer role for the MVPN. The Committee recommends clarifying the roles of partner agencies including, DSHS, TexVET, TVC, and local mental health authorities.

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<sup>19</sup> Texas Coordinating Council for Veterans Services 2014 Report.

2. County Veterans Service Officers are a vital to reaching Rural Veterans. The Committee recommends strengthening the CVSO network by supporting addition training, reviewing the statutory requirements for counties, and equipping current CVSOs with the marketing and outreach tools they need.
3. Access to services for veterans and Texas National Guard members living in rural areas of the state can be difficult. The Committee recommends the creation of an expansion of the MVPN specifically to benefit Rural Veterans. The focus of the Rural Veteran Initiative should be focused on enhancing the technology infrastructure and training to allow more tele-medicine mental health services.
4. Women veterans face unique challenges with a growing need to access gender-specific medical and mental health services. The Committee recommends expanding the MVPN to include a statewide Women Veteran coordinator and additional regional professional counselors who are available for direct mental health services.



## **Texas Veteran Access to Health Care at US Department of Veterans Affairs**

*In addition to the formal Interim Charges, the VAMI Committee reviewed allegations that the VA has denied health and mental health care and manipulated waiting lists to access care. The Committee also considered whether or not the state has a role in assisting veterans in Texas with VA health care as it did with the Strike Force Teams for VA disability claims.*

On May 28, 2014, the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Office of Inspector General (OIG) confirmed very serious allegations in the Phoenix VA Hospital related to manipulating patient wait times and denying access to health care for some veterans. Since then, the OIG expanded its investigations to 42 VA health care facilities around the country and the VA Secretary Eric Shinseki resigned. President Obama has appointed Robert McDonald as the new VA Secretary.

On June 9, 2014, the VA's Health Administration (VHA) released its own "VA Access Audit & Wait Times Fact Sheet." (*separate from OIG report*). It found that, "Overall, 13% of scheduling staff interviewed indicated they received instruction (from supervisors or others) to enter a date different than what the Veteran had requested in the appointment scheduling system." Additionally, it states, "In some cases, pressures were placed on schedulers to utilize unofficial lists or engage in inappropriate practices in order to make waiting times appear more favorable."

As a result of the OIG reports and numerous complaints from veterans and veteran groups, Congress passed massive agency overhaul legislation: The Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014. With the goal of improving both access and quality of care for veterans, the bill:

- Requires VA to offer an authorization to receive non-VA care to any veteran who is enrolled in the VA health care system as of August 1, 2014, or who is a newly discharged combat veteran if such veteran is unable to secure an appointment at a VA medical facility within 30 or resides more than 40 miles from the nearest VA medical facility.
- Extend the ARCH (Access Received Closer to Home) pilot program for two years.
- Extend for three years a pilot program to provide rehabilitation, quality of life, and community integration services to veterans with complex-mild to severe traumatic brain injury.
- Improve the delivery of care to veterans who have experienced military sexual trauma as well as care for Native Hawaiian and Native American veterans.
- Provide \$5 billion to VA to increase access to care through the hiring of physicians and other medical staff and by improving VA's physical infrastructure.
- Authorize 27 major medical facility leases in 18 states and Puerto Rico.
- Authorize VA to fire or demote Senior Executive Service (SES) employees and Title 38 SES equivalent employees for poor performance or misconduct.
- Reduce funding for bonuses available to VA employees by \$40 million each year through FY 2024.

While our reality is that this is a federally run and funded agency that serves Texas residents, that does not mean that Texas cannot ensure that our veterans are taken care of in the honorable way they deserve and have earned.

### **State Veteran Hotline**

During a June 12, 2014, VAMI committee hearing in Pasadena, the committee discussed options to address the long wait times for VA medical appointments for veterans in Texas. As a result, a Veteran Hotline was set up in cooperation with the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) and the Texas Veterans

Land Board. Through expanded Strike Force Teams, TVC will be able to help veterans navigate the VA's complicated system and get the medical appointments they need.

**Texas Veteran App**

Suzanna Hupp, Associate Commissioner for Veteran Services at the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, proposed development of a smartphone application. Quick action was taken and the application is currently available.

The Texas Veterans App is a mobile application designed to provide U.S. Military Veterans easy access to the Veterans Crisis Line, Hotline for Women Veterans, Connect with Texas Veterans, Texas Veterans Hotline, and the Texas Veterans Portal. The Veterans Crisis Line and Hotline for Women Veterans are nationally supported help lines. The Connect with Texas Veterans option provides a number for users to call and talk directly with MVPN staff. The Texas Veterans Hotline provides information on veteran's benefits. The Texas Veterans Portal option allows a user to easily access additional online resources located on the <http://veterans.portal.texas.gov/en/Pages/default.aspx> web page.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. To ensure veterans in Texas are receiving timely medical appointments and that the VA is following through with proposed federal changes, the Committee recommends continuing the Health Care Strike Force Teams.
2. The Committee recommends provides support for expansion and promotion of the Texas Veteran App to encourage maximum distribution of this free smart phone application.

APPENDIX A

Economic Impact of Certain Military Installations in Texas



**ESTIMATED CONTRIBUTION OF  
Dyess Air Force Base  
ON THE TEXAS ECONOMY<sup>20</sup>**

The purpose of this note is to provide an estimate of the contributions of Dyess Air Force Base on the economy of Texas.

Data utilized in this analysis was based on information obtained by the Dyess Air Force Base's economic resource impact statement for FY 2011. This information was incorporated into the REMI<sup>21</sup> model for the State of Texas in order to generate estimates of the facility's impacts on state-level employment, gross domestic product<sup>22</sup>, output<sup>23</sup> and disposable personal income<sup>24</sup>.

Table 1: Input Data (FY 2011)

Item	Number of Persons	Total Payroll (\$ Millions)
Active Duty Military <sup>25</sup>	4,325	\$228.695
Government Civilian	713	\$33.799
Contractors	66	\$3.511
Family Members	6,048	
Expense Items <sup>27</sup>		Cost (\$ Millions)
Retiree Pensions/Payments		\$81.288
Construction Projects		\$33.889
Medical Construction, Facilities Maintenance, and Utilities		\$0.602
Services & Commodities		\$19.482
Commissary & AAFES		\$0.485
Official Travel		\$0.029
Health Care		\$3.008
Educational Impact Aid & Tuition Assistance		\$3.569
<b>TOTAL DIRECT SPENDING</b>		<b>\$408.357</b>

SOURCE: "Economic Resource Impact Statement Fiscal Year 2011," 7<sup>th</sup> Comptroller Squadron, Financial Management Analysis, Dyes Air Force Base, Texas.

According to information presented in Table 1, total direct employment at Dyess Air Force Base stood at 5,104 active duty military, civilian, and contract personnel in FY 2011. Complementing this working population was 6,048 family members.

In terms of payroll, Dyess Air Force Base paid its military personnel over \$228 million in FY 2011. Civilian employees (federal and contract) received over \$37 million in the same time period.

<sup>20</sup> The economic impacts generated in the reports/studies developed by the Economic Development and Analysis Division is subject to the disclaimers outlined in the following link: <http://www.texasahead.org/texasedge/help.php#data>.

<sup>21</sup> Regional Economic Models, Inc. (<http://www.remi.com/>).

<sup>22</sup> This represents the total value of all final goods and services produced in Texas.

<sup>23</sup> This represents the total value of all goods and services (both final and intermediate) produced in Texas.

<sup>24</sup> This represents post income-tax income.

<sup>25</sup> The majority of the active duty military on base are from the air force (4,314). The navy has an 11-person complement at the air base.

<sup>26</sup> This category is composed of appropriated and non-appropriated funds employees.

<sup>27</sup> One expense item was not included as input data. This represents government purchase card expenses (\$8.5 million). There was not enough information in this particular category to determine the industries impacted. Exclusion of this information does not necessarily decrease the installation's impact. This expenditure is captured by the REMI model which incorporates an average cost of operation per worker.

Furthermore, Dyess Air Force Base spent close to \$81.3 million in retiree and veterans payments/benefits.

In addition to payroll and retiree/veteran payments, the joint base spent over \$61 million on various expenditure items. These range from about \$33.9 million in construction projects to over \$19 million on services/commodities and over \$6.5 million on health care, tuition assistance and educational impact aid.

Taking the employment, income, and expenditure values together and using these as inputs in the REMI model, estimates of their contributions to the Texas economy are presented in the next table.

TABLE 2: Estimated Contributions of Dyess Air Force Base to the Texas Economy<sup>28</sup>.

Variable	Total Statewide Impact
Total Employment	18,998
Output (\$Billions)	\$3.217
Gross Domestic Product (\$Billions)	\$1.785
Disposable Personal Income (\$Billions)	\$1.034

SOURCE: REMI Model for Texas.

From Table 1, 5,104 direct jobs were attributed to Dyess Air Force Base’s operations. Based on the REMI model’s estimation, an additional 13,894 jobs in the state were indirectly impacted by the base’s operations. These jobs can be traced to industries that supply inputs to the fort’s operations and to industries that cater to the consumer needs of the workers at the fort and workers in industries in the state that provide inputs for the fort’s operations.

The operations of Dyess Air Force Base were directly and indirectly associated with the production of over \$3.217 billion in total industry output in Texas. In terms of final goods and services (Gross Domestic Product) produced in- state, \$1.785 billion worth of economic activity could be attributed to the base’s operations.

In terms of disposable income, over \$1.034 billion was directly and indirectly linked to Dyess Air Force Base’s operations. As noted above, this disposable income accrued to Dyess Air Force Base workers, workers in in-state industries that provide inputs to the base’s operations, and in-state industries that cater to the consumer needs of on-post workers at the base and workers of its input suppliers.

<sup>28</sup> These values were estimated for 2011 to coincide with the installation’s most current input information.

ESTIMATED CONTRIBUTION OF  
**Fort Bliss**  
ON THE TEXAS ECONOMY

The purpose of this note is to provide an estimate of the contributions of Fort Bliss on the economy of Texas.

Data utilized in this analysis was based on FY 2012 information obtained from Fort Bliss by the Texas Military Preparedness Commission. This information was incorporated into the REMI model for the State of Texas in order to generate estimates of the facility's impacts on state-level employment, gross domestic product, output and disposable personal income.

Table 1: Input Data (FY 2012)

Item	Number of Persons	Total Payroll (\$ Millions)
Active Duty Military <sup>29</sup>	28,700	\$2,385.42
Government Civilian	8,109	\$710.56
Contractors	3,153	\$173.28
Family Members	43,685	
Expense Items <sup>31</sup>		Cost (\$ Millions)
Contracts – Medical		\$46.60
Contracts – Base Operations		\$173.28
Construction – Military		\$590.67
Construction – Family Housing		\$56.00
Supplies – Office and Subsistence		\$55.76
Equipment/Vehicles		\$89.75
Utilities		\$29.84
<b>TOTAL DIRECT SPENDING</b>		<b>\$4,311.16</b>

SOURCE: Fort Bliss Installation Analysis Variables for Texas Military Preparedness Commission Report: FY 2011 and FY 2012 (August 31, 2012). Data provided by Fort Bliss to the Texas Military Preparedness Commission.

According to information presented in Table 1, Fort Bliss employed 39,962 full-time equivalent direct workers in FY 2012. These workers are complemented by 43,685 family members. In addition to these numbers are approximately 5,364 reserve military, temporary duty/transient/rotational military and civilian personnel. It should be noted that this latter group is not included in the analysis given the short-term nature of their assignments at Fort Bliss.

<sup>29</sup> This number represents personnel from the Army (27,444), other services (587), and permanent change of station students (669).

<sup>30</sup> This category is composed of appropriated and non-appropriated funds employees. Included in this number is the full-time equivalent (458) of 572 part-time workers at the installation. The full-time equivalent number was estimated by Ms. Shannon Navarro, Chief of the Plans analysis and Integration Office of Fort Bliss.

<sup>31</sup> One expense item was not included as input data. This represents other expenses (\$345.4 million). In e-mail communications with Ms. Navarro, this category represented an assortment of expenses ranging from travel and transportation to supplies other than office supplies. Given its sundry nature, it was excluded from the analysis. Exclusion of this information does not necessarily decrease the installation's impact. This expenditure is captured by the REMI model which incorporates an average cost of operation per worker.



In terms of payroll, Fort Bliss paid its military personnel over \$2.38 billion in FY 2012. Civilian employees received close to \$710.56 million in the same time period. Furthermore, Fort Bliss spent approximately 173.28 million on contract services.

In addition to payroll and contractor services, the fort spent over \$1.04 billion on various expenditure items. These range from about \$590.67 million in military construction projects to over \$9.5 million on subsistence supplies.

Taking the employment, income, and expenditure values together and using these as inputs in the REMI model, estimates of their contributions to the Texas economy are presented in the next table.

TABLE 2: Estimated Contributions of Fort Bliss to the Texas Economy<sup>32</sup>.

Variable	Total Statewide Impact
Total Employment	155,346
Output (\$Billions)	\$25.48
Gross Domestic Product (\$Billions)	\$14.24
Disposable Personal Income (\$Billions)	\$8.53

SOURCE: REMI Model for Texas.

From Table 1, 39,962 direct full-time jobs were attributed to Fort Bliss’s operations. Based on the REMI model’s estimation, an additional 115,384 jobs in the state were indirectly impacted by the fort’s operations. These jobs can be traced to industries that supply inputs to the fort’s operations and to industries that cater to the consumer needs of the workers at the fort and workers in industries in the state that provide inputs for the fort’s operations.

The operations of Fort Bliss were directly and indirectly associated with the production of over \$25.48 billion in total industry output in Texas. In terms of final goods and services (Gross Domestic Product) produced in-state, \$14.24 billion worth of economic activity could be attributed to the fort’s operations.

In terms of disposable income, over \$8.53 billion was directly and indirectly linked to Fort Bliss’s operations. As noted above, this disposable income accrued to Fort Bliss workers, workers in in-state industries that provide inputs to the fort’s operations, and in-state industries that cater to the consumer needs of on-post workers at the fort and workers of its input suppliers.

<sup>32</sup> These values were estimated for 2012 to coincide with the installation’s most current input information.

ESTIMATED CONTRIBUTION OF  
**Fort Hood**  
 ON THE TEXAS ECONOMY

The purpose of this note is to provide an estimate of the contributions of Fort Hood on the economy of Texas.

Data provided by Mr. William H. Parry, III (Executive Director of the Heart of Texas Defense Alliance) and the Office of the Garrison Commander of Fort Hood from was incorporated into the REMI model for the State of Texas to obtain estimates of the facility's impacts on state-level employment, gross domestic product, output and disposable personal income.

Table 1: Input Data (FY 2011)

Item	Number of Persons	Total Payroll (\$Millions)
Military - Active Duty	46,734 <sup>33</sup>	\$2,686.67
Military - Civilian Employees	7,470 <sup>34</sup>	\$455.57
Contractors	13,965	\$514.27
KISD Staff and Employees	773 <sup>35</sup>	
Family Members	79,454 <sup>36</sup>	
Expense Item		Cost (\$Millions)
Retiree and Annuitant Payments		\$3,863.83
Utilities		\$40.02
Construction Projects		\$1,360.47
Government Travel Card		\$136.83
Other Input Information		Value (\$Millions)
Federal Impact Aid to School Districts in the Fort Hood Region		\$75.25
<b>TOTAL DIRECT SPENDING</b>		<b>\$9,132.91</b>

**SOURCES:**

- (1) Employment, family members, retirees, and survivor data was obtained from the USAG Fort Hood Fact Sheet (Sept. 5, 2012);
- (2) Payroll, contracts, construction project costs, and expenditures were obtained from the correspondence from the Office of the Garrison Commander to Mr. Parry (Sept. 5, 2012); and,
- (3) Federal Impact Aid to School Districts data was provided in a correspondence from Mr. Parry to the Comptroller's Office (Sept. 5, 2012).

According to information presented in Table 1, total direct employment at Fort Hood stood at 68,942 active duty military, federal civilian, contract personnel, and Killeen Independent School District (KISD) staff and employees in FY 2011. Complementing this working population was 79,454 family members.

<sup>33</sup> This includes 2,800 service members who are currently deployed.

<sup>34</sup> This includes civilian employees paid from appropriated funds (AF) and non-appropriated funds (NAF). Furthermore, Fort Hood based employees of the Army & Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) and the Defense Military Commissary Agency are also included.

<sup>35</sup> These workers represent employees of the Killeen Independent School District who are on-post at Fort Hood and provide educational services to school-age family members. While they are not directly paid by the fort, should a reduction in troop levels (and their family members) occur, it is possible that the number of KISD staff and employees could be reduced, as well. This could lead to increased area unemployment.

<sup>36</sup> This number includes family members who live on-post (18,627) and off-post (60,827).

In terms of payroll, Fort Hood paid its active duty military personnel and civilian workers over \$3.14 billion in FY 2011. In addition, the fort spent over \$514.27 million and over \$3.86 billion to its contractors and veteran retirees/annuitants (within 175 zip codes in TX), respectively.

Other direct expenses attributed to the fort include construction and utility payments that stood at over \$1.40 billion; travel expenses of over \$136.83 million; and, federal aid to area school districts totaling close to \$75.25 million.

Taking the employment, income, and expenditure values together, estimates of their contributions to the Texas economy are presented in the next table.

TABLE 2: Estimated Contributions of Fort Hood to the Texas Economy<sup>37</sup>.

Variable	Total Statewide Impact
Total Employment	283,286
Output (\$Billions)	\$44.49
Gross Domestic Product (\$Billions)	\$25.26
Disposable Personal Income (\$Billions)	\$18.58

SOURCE: REMI Model for Texas.

From Table 1, 68,942 jobs were directly attributed to Fort Hood’s operations. Based on the REMI model’s estimation, an additional 214,344 jobs in the state are indirectly impacted by the fort’s operations. These jobs can be traced to industries that supply inputs to the fort’s operations and to industries that cater to the consumer needs of the workers at the fort and workers in industries in the state that provide inputs for the fort’s operations.

The operations of Fort Hood were directly and indirectly associated with the production of over \$44.49 billion in total industry output in Texas. In terms of final goods and services (Gross Domestic Product) produced in-state, \$25.26 billion worth of economic activity could be attributed to the fort’s operations.

In terms of disposable income, over \$18.58 billion was directly and indirectly linked to Fort Hood’s operations. As noted above, this disposable income accrued to Fort Hood workers, workers in in-state industries that provide inputs to the fort’s operations, and in-state industries that cater to the consumer needs of on-post workers at the fort and workers of its input suppliers.

<sup>37</sup> These values were estimated for 2011 to coincide with the installation’s most current input information (FY 2011).



**ESTIMATED CONTRIBUTION OF  
Goodfellow Air Force Base  
ON THE TEXAS ECONOMY**

The purpose of this note is to provide an estimate of the contributions of Goodfellow Air Force Base on the economy of Texas.

Data utilized in this analysis was based on information obtained by the Texas Military Preparedness Commission from the installation. This Information was incorporated into the REMI model for the State of Texas in order to generate estimates of the facility's impacts on state-level employment, gross domestic product, output and disposable personal income.

Table 1: Input Data (FY 2011)

Item	Number of Persons	Total Payroll (\$Millions)
Military - Active Duty	5,807 <sup>38</sup>	\$323.37
Government – Civilian	1,102 <sup>39</sup>	\$46.07
Contract – Civilian	411 <sup>40</sup>	\$14.34 <sup>41</sup>
Family Members	1,050 <sup>42</sup>	
Expense Item	Cost (\$Millions)	
Construction Projects	\$75.19	
Commissary and Base Exchange Materials, Supplies, and	\$1.02	
Health (CHAMPUS, Gov't Cost only)	\$5.44	
Other Materials, Equipment, and Supplied (TDY)	\$7,995	
Other Input Information	Value (\$Millions)	
Federal Impact Aid to School Districts in the Goodfellow Air	\$1.09	
<b>TOTAL DIRECT SPENDING</b>	<b>\$466.52</b>	

SOURCE: Texas Military Preparedness Commission (October 2012).

According to information presented in Table 1, total direct employment at Goodfellow Air Force Base stood at 7,320 active duty military, federal civilian, and contract personnel in 2011. Complementing this working population was 1,050 family members.

In terms of payroll, Goodfellow Air Force Base paid its active duty military personnel close to \$323.37 million in 2011. In addition, the base spent approximately \$46.07 million on payroll for civilian employees. The base's contractors paid its workers approximately \$14.34 million in payroll.

Other direct expenses attributed to the base include construction expenditures that stood at over \$75.19 million; commissary and exchange supply and material purchases at close to \$1.02 million; and, health insurance costs and education impact aid and tuition assistance amounting to over \$6.53 million.

<sup>38</sup> This number represents service members who are on Active Duty, Reserve/Air National Guard, and Trainees/Cadets.

<sup>39</sup> This includes civilian employees paid from appropriated funds (AF) and non-appropriated funds (NAF).

<sup>40</sup> This includes employees of the base's civilian contractors and other private businesses on base (branch bank/credit union and commissary contractors).

<sup>41</sup> For the purpose of this analysis, the contract expenditures were assumed to be primarily salaries and wages for the contract employees. In the case of employees of on-base banks/credit unions and contract commissary workers, salary and wage data was provided. These were aggregated with the contract employees "salaries and wages."

<sup>42</sup> This represents family members who live both on and off base.

Taking the employment, income, and expenditure values together, estimates of their contributions to the Texas economy are presented in the next table.

TABLE 2: Estimated Contributions of Goodfellow Air Force Base to the Texas Economy<sup>43</sup>.

Variable	Total Statewide Impact
Total Employment	25,747
Output (\$Billions)	\$4.345
Gross Domestic Product (\$Billions)	\$2.408
Disposable Personal Income (\$Billions)	\$1.353

SOURCE: REMI Model for Texas.

From Table 1, 7,320 jobs were directly attributed to Goodfellow Air Force Base’s operations. Based on the REMI model’s estimation, an additional 18,427 jobs in the state are indirectly impacted by the base’s operations. These jobs can be traced to industries that supply inputs to the fort’s operations and to industries that cater to the consumer needs of the workers at the fort and workers in industries in the state that provide inputs for the fort’s operations.

The operations of Goodfellow Air Force Base were directly and indirectly associated with the production of over \$4.345 billion in total industry output in Texas. In terms of final goods and services (Gross Domestic Product) produced in-state, \$2.408 billion worth of economic activity could be attributed to the base’s operations.

In terms of disposable income, over \$1.353 billion was directly and indirectly linked to Goodfellow Air Force Base’s operations. As noted above, this disposable income accrued to Goodfellow Air Force Base workers, workers in in- state industries that provide inputs to the base’s operations, and in-state industries that cater to the consumer needs of on-post workers at the base and workers of its input suppliers.

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<sup>43</sup> These values were estimated for 2011 to coincide with the installation’s most current input information.

**ESTIMATED CONTRIBUTION OF  
Joint Base San Antonio<sup>44</sup>  
ON THE TEXAS ECONOMY**

The purpose of this note is to provide an estimate of the contributions of Joint Base San Antonio on the economy of Texas.

Data utilized in this analysis was based on information obtained by the Texas Military Preparedness Commission from the installation. This information was incorporated into the REMI model for the State of Texas in order to generate estimates of the facility's impacts on state-level employment, gross domestic product, output and disposable personal income.

Table 1: Input Data (FY 2011)

ITEM	Number of Persons	Total	Payroll
<b>PERSONNEL</b>			
Military Active Duty	50,043 <sup>45</sup>	\$2,128.72	
Reserve/National Guard, International Military	9,175 <sup>46</sup>	\$141.45	
Military Civilian Employees	23,720 <sup>47</sup>	\$1,652.92	
Civilian Contractors	9,363	\$542.61	
Family Members	52,197		
<b>EXPENDITURES<sup>48</sup></b>			
Retiree and Veterans Payments		\$2,817.29	
Construction		\$917.21	
Service Contracts		\$783.46	
Commissary and Army-Air Force Exchange Services		\$35.92	
Health Care (Tricare)		\$774.06	
Tuition Assistance		\$34.79	
Educational Impact Aid		\$21.16	
<b>TOTAL DIRECT SPENDING</b>		<b>\$9,849.59</b>	

SOURCE: Joint Base San Antonio Total Military Economic Impact Statement (FY 2011) as provided by the Texas Military Preparedness Commission (October 2012).

According to information presented in Table 1, total direct employment at Joint Base San Antonio stood at 83,162 active duty military, civilian, and contract personnel in FY 2011. Complementing this working population was 9,175 reserve/guard members, 1,129 international military students, and 52,197 family members.

<sup>44</sup> The following installations comprise Joint Base San Antonio: Fort Sam Houston, Lackland Air Force Base, and Randolph Air Force Base.

<sup>45</sup> This number represents both permanent party (24,205) and students/basic training (25,838).

<sup>46</sup> The number of reserve/national guard (8,046) and international military students (1,129) were not included in the analysis. The assumption is that these reservists and international students are not necessarily part of the permanent party at the installations comprising Joint Base San Antonio. However, their payroll is included in the analysis since it is assumed that these funds would be spent in-state.

<sup>47</sup> This includes appropriated funds civilian employees (20,127), non-appropriated funds civilian employees (2,106), and Army- Air Force Exchange Service civilian employees (1,487).

<sup>48</sup> One expense item was not included as input data. This represents other spending (\$49,288,081) due to the lack of information regarding the items making up this spending item. Exclusion of this information does not necessarily decrease the installation's impact. This expenditure is captured by the REMI model which incorporates an average cost of operation per worker.



In terms of payroll, Joint Base San Antonio paid its military personnel (permanent military, students/basic training, reservists/guardsmen, and international military students) over \$2.27 billion

In FY 2011. Civilian employees (federal and contract) received over \$2.19 billion in the same time period. Furthermore, Joint Base San Antonio spent close to \$2.82 billion in retiree and veterans payments/benefits.

In addition to payroll and retiree/veteran payments, the joint base spent over \$2.56 billion on various expenditure items. These range from \$917.21 million in construction to construction projects to over \$819.37 million on services and over \$830 million on health care, tuition assistance and educational impact aid.

Taking the employment, income, and expenditure values together and using these as inputs in the REMI model, estimates of their contributions to the Texas economy are presented in the next table.

TABLE 2: Estimated Contributions of Joint Base San Antonio to the Texas Economy<sup>49</sup>.

Variable	Total Statewide Impact
Total Employment	292,456
Output (\$Billions)	\$46.39
Gross Domestic Product (\$Billions)	\$26.04
Disposable Personal Income (\$Billions)	\$15.88

SOURCE: REMI Model for Texas.

From Table 1, 83,162 direct jobs were attributed to Joint Base San Antonio’s operations. Based on the REMI model’s estimation, an additional 209,294 jobs in the state are indirectly impacted by the base’s operations. These jobs can be traced to industries that supply inputs to the fort’s operations and to industries that cater to the consumer needs of the workers at the fort and workers in industries in the state that provide inputs for the fort’s operations.

The operations of Joint Base San Antonio were directly and indirectly associated with the production of over \$46.39 billion in total industry output in Texas. In terms of final goods and services (Gross Domestic Product) produced in-state, \$26.04 billion worth of economic activity could be attributed to the base’s operations.

In terms of disposable income, over \$15.88 billion was directly and indirectly linked to Joint Base San Antonio’s operations. As noted above, this disposable income accrued to Joint Base San Antonio workers, workers in in-state industries that provide inputs to the base’s operations, and in-state industries that cater to the consumer needs of on-post workers at the base and workers of its input suppliers.

<sup>49</sup> These values were estimated for 2011 to coincide with the installation’s most current input information.

**ESTIMATED CONTRIBUTION OF  
Laughlin Air Force Base  
ON THE TEXAS ECONOMY**

The purpose of this note is to provide an estimate of the contributions of Laughlin Air Force Base on the economy of Texas.

Data utilized in this analysis was based on information obtained by the Texas Military Preparedness Commission from the installation. This information was incorporated into the REMI model for the State of Texas in order to generate estimates of the facility's impacts on state-level employment, gross domestic product, output and disposable personal income.

Table 1: Input Data (FY 2011)

ITEM	Number of Persons	Total	Payroll
<b>PERSONNEL</b>			
Military Active Duty	1,935	\$45.02	
Air Force Reserve/National Guard	115 <sup>50</sup>	\$2.16	
Appropriated Fund Civilian Employees	916	\$67.23	
Non-Appropriated Fund Civilian Employees & Contractors	250	\$5.17	
Family Members	980		
<b>EXPENDITURES<sup>51</sup></b>			
Communications		\$0.93	
Equipment		\$1.59	
Purchased Services		\$25.96	
Supplies		\$15.52	
Printing and Reproduction		\$0.13	
Purchased Equipment Maintenance		\$0.17	
Travel of Personnel and Transportation of Goods		\$3.34	
Utilities		\$4.20	
Commissary and Base Exchange		\$1.08	
Health Care (Tricare)		\$1.20	
Tuition Assistance and Educational Impact Aid		\$0.13	
<b>TOTAL DIRECT SPENDING</b>		<b>\$173.83</b>	

SOURCE: Laughlin Air Force Base Total Military Economic Impact Statement (FY 2011) as provided by the Texas Military Preparedness Commission (October 2012).

According to information presented in Table 1, total direct employment at Laughlin Air Force Base stood at 3,216 active duty military, civilian, and contract personnel in FY 2011. Complementing this working population was 980 family members.

<sup>50</sup> The number of reserve and national guard personnel was not included in the analysis. The reason for this is the fact that these reservists and guard personnel have other fulltime jobs in the state. This may overestimate the total job impact. However, since these personnel are receiving income for their services, this is counted in the analysis.

<sup>51</sup> One expense item was not included as input data. This represents other spending (\$49,288,081) due to the lack of information regarding the items making up this spending item. Exclusion of this information does not necessarily decrease the installation's impact. This expenditure is captured by the REMI model which incorporates an average cost of operation per worker.

In terms of payroll, Laughlin Air Force Base paid its military personnel (permanent military and reservists/guardsmen) over \$47 billion in FY 2011. Civilian employees (federal and contract) received over \$74 million in the same time period.

In addition to payroll, the base spent over \$54 million on various expenditure items. These range from over \$25.9 million in purchased services to \$126,788 in tuition assistance and educational impact aid.

Taking the employment, income, and expenditure values together and using these as inputs in the REMI model, estimates of their contributions to the Texas economy are presented in the next table.

TABLE 2: Estimated Contributions of Laughlin Air Force Base to the Texas Economy<sup>52</sup>.

Variable	Total Statewide Impact
Total Employment	10,078
Output (\$Billions)	\$1.651
Gross Domestic Product (\$Billions)	\$0.916
Disposable Personal Income (\$Billions)	\$0.510

SOURCE: REMI Model for Texas.

From Table 1, 3,216 direct jobs were attributed to Laughlin Air Force Base's operations. Based on the REMI model's estimation, an 6,862 additional jobs in the state are indirectly impacted by the base's operations. These jobs can be traced to industries that supply inputs to the fort's operations and to industries that cater to the consumer needs of the workers at the fort and workers in industries in the state that provide inputs for the fort's operations.

The operations of Laughlin Air Force Base were directly and indirectly associated with the production of over \$1.651 billion in total industry output in Texas. In terms of final goods and services (Gross Domestic Product) produced in-state, over \$916 million worth of economic activity could be attributed to the base's operations.

In terms of disposable income, over \$510 million was directly and indirectly linked to Laughlin Air Force Base's operations. As noted above, this disposable income accrued to Laughlin Air Force Base workers, workers in in-state industries that provide inputs to the base's operations, and in-state industries that cater to the consumer needs of on-post workers at the base and workers of its input suppliers.

<sup>52</sup> These values were estimated for 2011 to coincide with the installation's most current input information.





