

Senate Bills of Interest - Travis County Health and Human Services and Veterans Services

Bill No	Author	Description	Local Impact	Status
<a href="#">SB 55</a>	Nelson	The bill creates a grant program for community services and treatment for veterans with mental illness. The program will receive legislative appropriation but the will be designed and administered through contract with a private entity which will match grant funds.	If the program serves local veterans, then the county will benefit from the program. The bill does not appear to pose any fiscal impact locally, other than a positive one should local vets enjoy increased capacity and availability of mental health services tailored for their particular needs.	06/01/2015 E Sent to the Governor
<a href="#">SB 169</a>	Uresti	The bill allows Texas residents on active military duty, as well as their spouses and children, to maintain their position on public benefit waiting lists while they temporarily reside out of state for up to one year after death or active duty ends.	Veterans who are Travis County residents will avoid losing their wait list positions for public benefits due to a temporary period of living out of state. Because Travis County veteran residents will not lose their wait list position, they may enjoy greater access to public benefits for which they and their families are eligible for. This will increase the income of these individuals and families and could lead to improved outcomes for veterans and their families affected by this bill. Companion is HB 765.	05/25/2015 E Sent to the Governor
<a href="#">SB 267</a>	Perry	Blocks cities and counties from enacting source of income discrimination ordinances which are designed to give low-income renters more housing options.	Many American cities have such ordinances in effect which increase access to housing options for the working poor, veterans, seniors and disabled populations. Currently, landlords can refuse to accept Section 8 renters. According to a 2012 Austin Tenant's Council survey, less than 10% of Austin Area landlords are said to currently accept Section 8 vouchers. Without income discrimination ordinances, Section 8 programming can't be fully implemented. With Austin's rising rents and high occupancy rates, Section 8 housing is a critical resource for low-income families and is intended to allow eligible families to live in "high opportunity" areas. In December 2014, Austin City Council unanimously passed an ordinance that bans discrimination based on a renter's source of income. The ordinance is being challenged in Travis County District Court. The bill will block local ordinances which give low-income renters more housing options, including housing options in more densely populated and well-connected (via public	05/30/2015 E Sent to the Governor

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			transportation) parts of the County. This can stifle economic well-being for low-income families and individuals, restricting employment options and making transportation to school and child care difficult. HB 738 is a companion.	
<a href="#">SB 660</a>	Rodriguez	Bill mandates that regional coordinators are established within the Veteran Entrepreneur program in major centers of economic growth to support veteran business owners and entrepreneurs. Mandates that the program coordinate with US Veterans Affairs and US Small Business Administration to eliminate and prevent duplication of effort regarding these services.	Assuming Austin/Travis County is indicated as a center of major economic growth in the State, there could be improved coordination and capacity of services to support veteran-owned businesses and veteran entrepreneurs.	<i>05/22/2015 E Effective immediately</i>
<a href="#">SB 832</a>	Campbell	Coordinates work groups of the Texas Coordinating Council for Veteran's services. Allows council to establish by majority vote workgroups that focus on specific issues of veterans, service members, and their families. Issues include but are not limited to: health, gender, employment, criminal justice, housing.	If the groups work products yield better services for veterans in Travis County it may mean that the county will be able to allocate fewer resources to meet unmet needs in the veteran and service member population. However, fiscal impact is unknown.	<i>05/28/2015 E Effective on 9/1/15</i>
<a href="#">SB 1049</a>	Campbell	Amends tax code to exempt new vet owned businesses from franchise taxes for up to 5 years	Encourages veterans to create businesses by relieving them of franchise tax burden. Franchise taxes based upon net worth of tax payer; may have unintended negative consequences upon state revenue streams depending on uptake. Companion is HB 2111.	<i>05/29/2015 E Sent to the Governor</i>

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<a href="#">CSSB 1580</a>	Garcia	This bill directs the Department of Family and Protective Services, Texas Veterans' Commission, Texas Workforce Commission, and the Texas Homeless Education Office to conduct a study on homeless youth and homeless veterans, including data collection on demographics, needs assessment, service gap analysis, and funding sources.	Comprehensive study of this population may improve services for affected persons. Homeless veterans have traditionally been high cost drivers of EMS, ER and jail expenditures. Veterans that served and are serving in Iraq and Afghanistan who are suffering from TBI and other physical and behavioral effects of IEDs may have needs perhaps not sufficiently addressed in existing service environments. Companion is HB 4013. CS removes "Youth" as a focus of the study.	06/01/2015 E Sent to the Governor
<a href="#">CSSB 1928</a>	Seigler	Directs the Executive Commissioner of HHSC to adopt rules for collecting and considering community input on how localities are currently required to report refugee resettlement distribution to the US Refugee Resettlement Program at the state level.	No direct, immediate local impact but the codification of the importance of community input is something to watch. Also of interest due to changes in immigration policy and the politics concerning those changes.	06/01/2015 E Sent to the Governor