

MINUTES

SENATE COMMITTEE ON VETERAN AFFAIRS & MILITARY INSTALLATIONS

Tuesday, August 28, 2012

8:30 AM

Killeen, TX

Pursuant to a notice posted in accordance with Senate Rule 11.10 and 11.18, a public hearing of the Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs & Military Installations was held on Tuesday, August 28, 2012, in the Killeen, TX.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Leticia Van de Putte, Chair
Senator Brian Birdwell, Vice Chair
Senator Wendy Davis
Senator Craig Estes
Senator Jose Rodriguez

MEMBERS ABSENT:

The Chair called the meeting to order at 8:39 AM. There being a quorum present, the following business was transacted:

The Chair recognized Gene Hall, Regional Manager with the Texas Veterans Commission and a Navy submariner, to lead the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Chair recognized Earlene Hodge, Family Employment Counselor with the Texas Veterans Commission, to lead the Committee in the Pledge to the Texas Flag.

The following member arrived at 8:44 AM after the roll was called: Senator Rodriguez.

The chair recognized and welcomed Senator Fraser and Representative Aycock to the hearing.

The chair recognized and welcomed Judge Jon H. Burrows, Bell County Judge, to the hearing.

Senator Birdwell moved adoption of the minutes from the previous hearings held on May 21, 2012, and July 16, 2012; without objection, it was so ordered.

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The Chair called the following persons to provide invited testimony on Interim Charge 1: Study the employment rate of Texas veterans, and consider ways to better coordinate federal, state, local and private resources to enhance employment services. Examine the transfer of Veteran Employment Services (VES) from the Texas Workforce Commission to the Texas Veterans Commission, and include an assessment of the impact on Texas veterans and their families. Make recommendations for improving services and possible expansion of services to potential additional returning veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. (see attached witness list).

Witnesses providing public testimony are shown on the attached list.

At 11:38 AM Senator Van de Putte moved that the Committee stand recessed subject to the call of the chair. Without objection, it was so ordered.

At 11:55 AM Senator Van de Putte reconvened the meeting.

The Chair called the following persons to provide invited testimony on Interim Charge 3: Examine methods to support veteran participation in higher education. Examine the use of the Hazlewood Act by Texas veterans, and include recommendations to maximize programs to effectively serve veterans and their families. Determine the efficacy of establishing Veteran Resource Centers at institutions of higher education to assist in student veteran academic achievement, provide additional funding for institutions from increased Montgomery GI Bill revenue, and better integrate veterans on college campuses. (see attached witness list).

The Chair called the following persons to provide invited testimony on Interim Charge 8: Monitor the implementation of legislation addressed by the Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs & Military Installations, 82nd Legislature, Regular and Called Sessions, and make recommendations for any legislation needed to improve, enhance, and/or complete implementation. Specifically, monitor the following:

-the "College Credit for Heroes" program as administered by the Texas Workforce Commission (see attached witness list).

The Chair called the following persons to provide invited testimony on Interim Charge 8c: The Texas Coordinating Council for Veterans Services, authorized by SB 1796, 82nd Regular Legislation Session. (see attached witness list).

The chair moved that the public testimony be closed; without objection, it was so ordered.

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There being no further business, at 2:38 PM Senator Van de Putte moved that the Committee be adjourned in memory of Manuel Antonio Espinoza, Cpl., USMC (Ret), husband of Maria Espinoza and stepfather of Senate Staff Member, Alexis Fonseca. Senator Van de Putte also moved to adjourn in memory of Mrs. Mary E. Little, wife of Morgan Little, Capt., USN (Ret), Chairman of the Texas Coalition of Veterans Organizations. Without objection, it was so ordered.

Senator Leticia Van de Putte, Chair

Heidi Kluber, Clerk