

HB 559 (Sheffield): Relating to a Bronze Star Medal and Bronze Star Medal with Valor specialty license plates. Amends the Transportation Code to require the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles to issue specialty license plates for recipients of the Bronze Star Medal and Bronze Star Medal with Valor. The bill exempts a vehicle issued and displaying such license plates from the payment of a parking fee collected through a parking meter charged by a governmental authority other than a branch of the federal government when the vehicle is being operated by or for the transportation of the recipient of the specialty license plates.

HB 1127 (Gutierrez): Relating to notice of relief available to certain members of the military required to be provided in certain real property documentation. House Bill 1127 amends the Property Code to require the following notices to contain a prescribed statement or certain information regarding the rights or relief that may be available to a tenant, debtor, or owner, as applicable, who is serving on active military duty: a notice to a defendant in a citation for a suit filed by a landlord seeking to recover possession of the premises, a notice in regard to the sale of real property under a deed of trust or other contract lien served on a debtor in default under that trust or lien, and the notice required to be given to a property owner by a property owners' association before the association is authorized to take certain enforcement action against the owner.

HB 1148 (W. Smith): Relating to an exemption for certain disabled veterans from the payment of a fee for the issuance of a personal identification certificate. HB 1148 would exempt certain veterans of the armed forces from paying a fee to DPS for a personal identification certificate. Veterans who were honorably discharged, had a service-related disability of at least 60 percent, and received federal compensation due to the disability would qualify for this exemption, the same as for a driver's license.

HB 1514 (Isaac): Relating to the issuance of specially marked drivers licenses. House Bill 1514 amends the Transportation Code to require the Department of Public Safety to include the designation "VETERAN" on a driver's license issued to a person who has served in and been honorably discharged from the United States armed forces or the Texas National Guard if the person requests the designation and provides proof of that military service and honorable discharge. The bill requires the application for an original driver's license to provide space for an applicant to voluntarily list any military service qualifying the applicant to receive a license with a veteran's designation and to include proof of the applicant's eligibility to receive a license with such a designation.

HB 1665 (King, S.): Relating to the notification requirements regarding certain land use regulations in an area near military facilities.

House Bill 1665 amends Local Government Code provisions that are applicable to a defense community that includes a municipality with a population of more than 110,000 located in a county with a population of less than 135,000 and that has not adopted airport zoning regulations under the Airport Zoning Act. The bill requires such a community that proposes to approve a proposed structure or adopt or amend an ordinance, rule, or plan in an area located within eight miles of the boundary line of a defense base to notify, rather than seek comments and analysis from, the defense base authorities concerning the compatibility of the proposal with base operations. The bill removes language that included an area located within eight miles of the military exercise or training activities connected to the base in the requirement.

HB 2417 (Flynn): Relating to the Texas Code of Military Justice.

House Bill 2417 amends the Government Code to update the Texas Code of Military Justice. Among other provisions, the bill revises provisions relating to the imposition of non-judicial punishment by a commanding officer and the court-martial jurisdiction of each state military force. The bill revises punishments that a general court-martial, special court-martial, or summary court-martial may adjudge and prohibits trial counsel or defense counsel detailed for a general court-martial from being under the supervision or command of the other counsel unless the accused and the prosecution expressly waive this restriction. The bill prohibits a person subject to the Texas Code of Military Justice from considering or evaluating, in determining the advancement, assignment, transfer, or retention of a member of the state military forces, the performance of duty of a member of the state military forces as a witness in a court-martial. The bill specifies that a person subject to the Texas Code of Military Justice who commits a Penal Code offense is considered to violate the Texas Code of Military Justice and is subject to punishment under that code.

HB 2624 (Sheffield): Relating to procedures applicable in circumstances involving family violence or other criminal conduct and military personnel.

HB 2624 would require military officers to be notified if a member within their unit was named in a protective order. If a person named in the protective order was in the state military or active-duty armed forces, the court clerk would have to send a copy of the protective order to the staff judge advocate at Joint Force Headquarters or the provost marshal at the person's military installation. If the order was modified or withdrawn, the court would have to notify all parties who received a copy of the original order.

The bill also would require a peace officer investigating a domestic violence incident to include in his or her report whether the suspect or complainant was a member of the state military or active-duty armed forces. If so, the peace officer

would have to provide written notice of the incident to the staff judge advocate or provost marshal at the suspect's or complainant's military installation.

If a member of the state military or active-duty armed forces was convicted or put on probation in a homicide, kidnapping, assault, sexual assault, human trafficking, or domestic violence case, the court clerk would have to provide written notice of this to the staff judge advocate or the defendant's provost marshal.

HB 2624 also would require a presentence investigation to include information on whether the defendant was currently or formerly in the state military or active-duty armed forces. If so, the investigation would have to identify if the defendant was deployed to a combat zone and if he or she suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or traumatic brain injury. The investigation report would have to include a copy of the defendant's military records and discharge papers.

HB 2851 (Mallory Caraway): Relating to deferral of certain surcharge payments for military payments for military personnel deployed outside of the continental United States. House Bill 2851 amends the Transportation Code to require the Department of Public Safety to establish a deferral program for surcharges assessed against a person who is a member of the United States armed forces on active duty deployed outside of the continental United States for a conviction of driving while a license is invalid, driving without financial responsibility, driving with suspended registration, or driving without a valid license.

HB 2928 (Farias): Relating to privileged parking for recipients of the Silver Star Medal House Bill 2928 amends the Transportation Code to exempt a vehicle issued and displaying Silver Star Medal specialty license plates from the payment of a parking fee collected through a parking meter charged by a governmental authority other than a branch of the federal government when the vehicle is being operated by or for the transportation of the recipient of the Silver Star Medal specialty license plates.

HB 3470 (Patrick, D.): Relating to the Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program House Bill 3470 amends provisions of the Education Code relating to the Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program. The bill removes language limiting eligibility for an initial scholarship to students enrolled as freshmen, increases from five to six the number of years within which a student is required to graduate as a condition of eligibility under a scholarship agreement, and extends scholarship eligibility to include students who agree to enter into a four-year commitment to be a member of the Texas State Guard, United States Coast Guard, or United States Merchant Marine.

Previous law required the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board by rule to provide for any amount paid to a student by a branch of the United States armed services during an academic year to be deducted from the amount of the scholarship awarded to the student for that academic year. House Bill 3470 removes that requirement and instead requires a scholarship to be reduced for an academic year by the amount by which the full amount of the scholarship plus the total amount to be paid to the student for being under contract with one of the branches of the United States armed services exceeds the student's total cost of attendance for that academic year at the institution of higher education in which the student is enrolled. The bill requires the coordinating board to adopt rules for the administration of the Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program as amended by the bill's provisions.

SB 201 (Uresti): Relating to the calculation of ad valorem taxes on the residence homestead of a 100% or totally disabled veteran for the tax year in which the veteran qualifies or eases to qualify for an exemption from taxation of the homestead. SB 201 would allow totally disabled veterans to claim the exemption from property taxes on their residential homesteads as of the day they qualified for the exemption. The taxes paid would be prorated on the property from the day the veteran qualified until the end of the year.

If the property became ineligible to receive the totally disabled veterans homestead exemption because the veteran no longer lived there or because his or her eligible survivors had moved out, the bill would require that the taxes on the property be pro-rated. The amount of taxes that otherwise would have been due on the property would apply for the remainder of the year.

The bill would take effect on January 1, 2012, and would apply only to an ad valorem tax year that began on or after that date.

SB 327 (Van de Putte): Relating to including certain veterans service organizations as small businesses for the purpose of state contracting. SB 327 would include veterans service agencies in the definition of small businesses that vendors would be encouraged to use in providing services. An eligible veterans service agency would be a federally tax-exempt organization that principally provided housing, substance abuse treatment, case management, and employment training to low-income, disabled, or homeless veterans and that employed veterans to provide at least 75 percent of the direct labor hours required to produce the goods or services required by the vendor contract.

The bill's requirements would apply only to service or procurement contracts whose requests for bids or proposals were published after September 1, 2011.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2011.

SB 516 (Patrick): Relating to the exemption from ad valorem taxation of all or part of the appraised value of the residence homestead of the surviving spouse of a 100 percent or totally disabled veteran. SB 516 would allow the surviving spouse of a totally disabled veteran to continue to receive the property tax exemption for a residential homestead after the veteran's death. A homestead would qualify if:

- it had received the exemption from property taxes under the disabled veteran's exemption;
- the property was the residence homestead of the surviving spouse when the disabled veteran died;
- the property remained the residence homestead of the surviving spouse;
- and the surviving spouse had not remarried.

SB 516 would allow the exemption to follow the surviving spouse to a new homestead. The exemption would be limited to the dollar amount of the exemption in the prior qualifying homestead. The exemption would end if the surviving spouse remarried.

The surviving spouse would be entitled to receive from the local appraisal district information necessary to determine the dollar amount of the homestead exemption to which the surviving spouse was entitled on a subsequently qualifying homestead if the spouse decided to move.

The change would apply starting with the tax year beginning January 1, 2012. The bill would take effect January 1, 2012, if the Texas Constitution was amended to authorize the Legislature to provide for these changes.

SB 540 (Van de Putte): Relating to a study of the fiscal impact of adjusting the amount of the ad valorem tax exemption to which disabled veterans and the surviving spouses and children of disabled veterans and certain members of the armed forces are entitled. A disabled veteran currently is entitled to an exemption from taxation of a portion of the assessed value of the veteran's property, with the amount of the exemption being based on the veteran's disability rating according to a schedule set forth in the Tax Code. If the disabled veteran dies, the veteran's surviving spouse and children, if any, are entitled to all or a share of the veteran's exemption, depending on the circumstances. The surviving spouse and children of a member of the United States armed forces who dies while on active duty also are entitled to an exemption in a specified amount. The exemption amounts set out in the statute were last revised in 2001.

Senate Bill 540 requires the comptroller of public accounts to study what the fiscal impact on state and local governments would have been during the preceding 10 years had the maximum amount of the property tax exemption to which disabled veterans and their surviving spouses and children and certain members of the armed forces are entitled been adjusted to reflect the annual percentage change in the average market value of residence homesteads in each appraisal district in which such property is located. The bill requires a state agency or local government, at the comptroller's request, to provide information and assistance in conducting the study. The bill requires the comptroller, not later than December 1, 2012, to report the results of the study to the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the presiding officers of the standing committees of each house of the legislature with primary jurisdiction over matters affecting tax revenue and veterans affairs.

SB 639 (Van de Putte): Relating to tuition and fee exemptions at public institutions of higher education for certain military personnel, veterans, and dependents residing in this state. Senate Bill 639 amends the Education Code to require current residence in Texas as an additional condition under which certain military veterans and their spouses and dependents are exempt from the payment of tuition, dues, certain fees, and other required charges at an institution of higher education and provides for the continued eligibility of a person who received such a tuition exemption before the 2011-2012 academic year under the terms of the exemption as it existed on January 1, 2011, other than the residency requirement. The bill adds a requirement for the submission of an application for the exemption, in addition to the submission of satisfactory evidence that the applicant qualifies for the exemption, and sets a deadline for the submission of the application and satisfactory evidence.

Senate Bill 639 requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board by rule to prescribe procedures to allow, following the death of a person who becomes eligible for a tuition exemption, the assignment of the exemption for the unused portion of the credit hours to a child of the person, to be made by the person's spouse or by the conservator, guardian, custodian, or other legally designated caretaker of the child, if the child does not otherwise qualify independently for an exemption.

The bill provides a tuition exemption for a dependent child of a member of the armed forces of the United States who is a Texas resident or is entitled to pay resident tuition for any semester or other academic term during which the member is deployed on active duty in a combat operation outside the United States, establishes a requirement for the submission of satisfactory evidence that an applicant qualifies for the exemption, and prohibits a person from receiving the exemption for more than a cumulative total of 150 semester credit hours and from receiving the exemption if the person is in default on a student loan made or guaranteed by the State of Texas. The bill prohibits an institution from considering the person's eligibility for the exemption in determining whether to admit the

person to any certificate or degree program. The bill requires the legislature, based on availability, to provide sufficient money in its appropriations to institutions of higher education to cover the full costs of the exemptions and, if sufficient money is not available, requires the coordinating board to prorate the available funding to each institution in proportion to the total amount the institution would otherwise be entitled to receive. The bill requires an institution to grant such an exemption only to the extent money is available for that purpose.

SB 966 (Uresti): Relating to high school diplomas for certain military personnel . Senate Bill 966 amends the Education Code to expand the conditions that qualify a veteran to be issued a high school diploma by including an honorably discharged member of the armed forces of the United States who was scheduled to graduate from high school after 1989 and left school after completing the sixth or a higher grade, before graduating from high school, to serve in the Persian Gulf War, the Iraq War, or the war in Afghanistan or any other war formally declared by the United States, military engagement authorized by the United States Congress, military engagement authorized by a United Nations Security Council resolution and funded by the United States Congress, or conflict authorized by the president of the United States under the federal War Powers Resolution of 1973.

SB 988 (Van de Putte): Relating to the creation of a cybersecurity, education, and economic development council. Senate Bill 988 amends the Government Code to establish the Cybersecurity, Education, and Economic Development Council to conduct an interim study and make recommendations to the executive director of the Department of Information Resources regarding improving the infrastructure of Texas' cybersecurity operations with existing resources and through partnerships between government, business, and institutions of higher education and regarding examining specific actions to accelerate the growth of cybersecurity as an industry in Texas. The council is abolished September 1, 2013.

SB 1002 (Van de Putte): Relating to the designation of program costs for providing bill payment assistance to certain military veterans as a necessary operation expense that is a first lien against revenue of certain electric and gas utilities; revenue securing certain public securities or obligations. Current law makes the first lien against the revenue of an electric or gas utility system owned by a municipality with a population of more than one million that secures the payment of certain public securities issued or obligations incurred applicable to funding, as a necessary operations expense, for a bill payment assistance program for certain low-income utility system customers. Senate Bill 1002 amends the Government Code to include under this provision a bill payment assistance program for utility system customers who are military veterans with a significantly decreased ability to regulate body temperature because of severe burns received in combat.

SB 1635 (Davis): Relating to contributions to the fund for veterans' assistance. Senate Bill 1635 amends the Transportation Code to require the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (TxDMV) to provide an opportunity for a person renewing a motor vehicle registration to voluntarily contribute to the fund for veterans' assistance. The bill sets out provisions relating to providing space to indicate such a contribution on each motor vehicle registration renewal notice and during the registration renewal process on the department's Internet website. The bill authorizes a county assessor-collector to credit all or part of the contribution to a registration fee under certain circumstances and makes its provisions apply only to a motor vehicle registration renewal notice issued for a registration that expires on or after January 1, 2012.

SB 1732 (Van de Putte): Relating to authorizing the adjutant general to operate post exchanges on state military property.

SB 1732 would allow the adjutant general to establish up to three post exchanges on a state military property. The adjutant general would have to develop rules to ensure these post exchanges would be operated similarly to those run by the U.S. armed forces.

The post exchange could sell, lease, or rent various goods and services, including prepared foods, tobacco products, and beer and wine, but not distilled spirits. The post exchange would have to comply with any rules, including the need for any alcohol permit or license, of the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission.

Only current and retired members of the state military forces, full-time adjutant general employees, active, retired, and reserve members of the U.S. armed services, and the dependents of these individuals could buy, lease, or rent goods and services from the post exchange.

All the goods and services sold would be tax exempt. All funds received and interest earned would go to the company fund under the authority of the commanding officer and could be spent as authorized by the general appropriations act.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2011.

SB 1733 (Van de Putte): Relating to the occupation licensing of spouses of members of the military. Senate Bill 1733 amends the Occupations Code to require a state agency that issues a license to adopt rules for the issuance of the license to an applicant who is the spouse of a person serving on active duty as a member of the armed forces of the United States and who either holds a current license issued by another state that has licensing requirements that are

substantially equivalent to Texas requirements or, within the five years preceding the application date, held the license in Texas that expired while the applicant lived in another state for at least six months. The rules must include provisions to allow alternative demonstrations of competency to meet license requirements. The executive director of a state agency may issue a license to such an applicant by endorsement in the same manner as the Texas Commission of Licensing and Regulation

SB 1736 (Van de Putte): Relating to the establishment of the College Credit for Heroes Program. Senate Bill 1736 amends the Labor Code to require the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to establish and administer the College Credit for Heroes demonstration program to identify, develop, and support methods to maximize academic or workforce education credit awarded by institutions of higher education to veterans and military service members for military experience, education, and training obtained during military service in order to expedite the entry of veterans and military service members into the workforce. The bill sets out provisions relating to requiring the TWC to work with other state agencies to accomplish the goals of the program, authorizing the TWC to award grants to certain entities, funding administration of the program, authorizing the TWC to adopt rules, and requiring the TWC to report to the legislature and the governor specified information relating to the program.

SB 1739 (Davis): Relating to the use of the fund for Veterans Assistance. Senate Bill 1739 amends the Government Code to remove the enhancement or improvement of veterans' assistance programs, including veterans' representation and counseling, from the authorized uses of money appropriated to the Texas Veterans Commission fund for veterans' assistance.

SB 1796 (Van de Putte): Relating to the creation of the Texas Coordinating Council for Veteran Services Senate Bill 1796 amends the Government Code to establish the Texas Coordinating Council for Veteran Services to coordinate the activities of state agencies that assist veterans, service members, and their families; coordinate outreach efforts that ensure those people are made aware of services; and facilitate collaborative relationships among state, federal, and local agencies and private organizations to identify and address relevant issues. The bill sets out provisions relating to the operation of the council.

SJR 14 (Van de Putte): Proposing a constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to provide for an exemption from ad valorem taxation of all or part of the market value of the residence homestead of the surviving spouse of a 100% or totally disabled veteran. SJR 14 would allow the surviving spouse of a totally disabled veteran to continue to receive the property tax exemption for a residential homestead after the veteran's death. A homestead would qualify if:

- it had received the exemption from property taxes under the disabled veteran's exemption;
- the property was the residence homestead of the surviving spouse when the disabled veteran died;
- the property remained the residence homestead of the surviving spouse;
- and the surviving spouse had not remarried.

SJR 14 would allow the exemption to follow the surviving spouse to a new homestead. The exemption would be limited to the dollar amount of the exemption in the prior qualifying homestead. The exemption would end if the surviving spouse remarried.

The change would apply starting with the tax year beginning January 1, 2012, and would apply only to tax years after that date. The proposal would be presented to the voters at an election on Tuesday, November 8, 2011. The ballot proposal would read: "The constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to provide for an exemption from ad valorem taxation of all or part of the market value of the residence homestead of the surviving spouse of a 100 percent or totally disabled veteran."