

By: Lucio, et al.  
(Gutierrez, Blanco)

S.B. No. 578

Substitute the following for S.B. No. 578:

By: Gutierrez

C.S.S.B. No. 578

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT

2 relating to measures to facilitate the delivery of certain mental  
3 health services for veterans.

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

5 SECTION 1. Subchapter D, Chapter 74, Education Code, is  
6 amended by adding Section 74.155 to read as follows:

7 Sec. 74.155. NATIONAL CENTER FOR WARRIOR RESILIENCY. (a)

8 In this section:

9 (1) "Board" means the board of regents of The  
10 University of Texas System.

11 (2) "Center" means the National Center for Warrior  
12 Resiliency.

13 (b) The board shall establish the National Center for  
14 Warrior Resiliency at The University of Texas Health Science Center  
15 at San Antonio for purposes of:

16 (1) researching issues relating to the detection,  
17 prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of combat-related  
18 post-traumatic stress disorder and comorbid conditions; and

19 (2) providing clinical care to enhance the  
20 psychological resiliency of military personnel and veterans.

21 (c) The organization, control, and management of the center  
22 are vested in the board.

23 (d) The board shall:

24 (1) provide for the employment of staff and an

1 operating budget for the center; and

2 (2) select a site for the center at The University of  
3 Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio.

4 (e) The board may solicit, accept, and administer gifts and  
5 grants from any public or private source for the use and benefit of  
6 the center.

7 (f) The center may enter into agreements or otherwise  
8 collaborate with public or private entities, including other public  
9 institutions of higher education, private or independent  
10 institutions of higher education, the United States Department of  
11 Veterans Affairs, the United States Department of Defense, the  
12 National Institutes of Health, and the Texas Veterans Commission,  
13 to perform the research functions of the center.

14 (g) An employee of the center is an employee of The  
15 University of Texas System.

16 SECTION 2. Subchapter B, Chapter 531, Government Code, is  
17 amended by adding Section 531.0999 to read as follows:

18 Sec. 531.0999. VETERAN SUICIDE PREVENTION ACTION PLAN.

19 (a) The commission, in collaboration with the Texas Coordinating  
20 Council for Veterans Services, the United States Department of  
21 Veterans Affairs, the Service Members, Veterans, and Their Families  
22 Technical Assistance Center Implementation Academy of the  
23 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration of the  
24 United States Department of Health and Human Services, veteran  
25 advocacy groups, medical providers, and any other organization or  
26 interested party the commission considers appropriate, shall  
27 develop a comprehensive action plan to increase access to and

1 availability of professional veteran health services to prevent  
2 veteran suicides.

3 (b) The action plan must:

4 (1) identify opportunities for raising awareness of  
5 and providing resources for veteran suicide prevention;

6 (2) identify opportunities to increase access to  
7 veteran mental health services;

8 (3) identify funding resources to provide accessible,  
9 affordable veteran mental health services;

10 (4) provide measures to expand public-private  
11 partnerships to ensure access to quality, timely mental health  
12 services;

13 (5) provide for proactive outreach measures to reach  
14 veterans needing care;

15 (6) provide for peer-to-peer service coordination,  
16 including training, certification, recertification, and continuing  
17 education for peer coordinators; and

18 (7) address suicide prevention awareness, measures,  
19 and training regarding veterans involved in the justice system.

20 (c) The commission shall make specific short-term and  
21 long-term statutory, administrative, and budget-related  
22 recommendations to the legislature and the governor regarding the  
23 policy initiatives and reforms necessary to implement the action  
24 plan developed under this section. The short-term recommendations  
25 must include a plan for state implementation beginning not later  
26 than September 1, 2019. The initiatives and reforms in the  
27 short-term plan must be fully implemented by September 1, 2021. The

1 long-term recommendations must include a plan for state  
2 implementation beginning not later than September 1, 2021. The  
3 initiatives and reforms in the long-term plan must be fully  
4 implemented by September 1, 2027.

5 (d) The commission shall include in its strategic plan under  
6 Chapter 2056 the plans for implementation of the short-term and  
7 long-term recommendations under Subsection (c).

8 (e) This section expires September 1, 2027.

9 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
10 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
11 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
12 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
13 Act takes effect September 1, 2017.