

From: [Sunset Advisory Commission](#)
To: [Brittany Calame](#)
Subject: FW: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)
Date: Wednesday, April 25, 2018 7:27:59 AM

-----Original Message-----

From: sundrupal@capitol.local [<mailto:sundrupal@capitol.local>]
Sent: Tuesday, April 24, 2018 7:35 PM
To: Sunset Advisory Commission
Subject: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)

Agency: TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION TVC

First Name: Jeremy

Last Name: Williams

Title: Chief Financial Officer

Organization you are affiliated with: Fireteam Apparel Company, LLC

Email:

City: Willis

State: Texas

Your Comments About the Staff Report, Including Recommendations Supported or
Opposed:

Removal of the Military Service Requirement of

SUBCHAPTER B. VETERANS COUNTY SERVICE OFFICES

Sec. 434.031. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

- (1) "Office" means a Veterans County Service Office created under this subchapter.
- (2) "Officer" means a veterans county service officer or assistant veterans county service officer.
- (3) "Commission" means the Texas Veterans Commission.

Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 147, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987. Amended by Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 364, Sec. 2, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

Sec. 434.032. CREATION. (a) In a county with a population of 200,000 or more, the commissioners court shall maintain a veterans county service office. The office must:

- (1) be separate and distinct from other county offices;
- (2) be staffed by at least one full-time employee; and
- (3) report directly to the commissioners court.

(b) In a county with a population of less than 200,000, the commissioners court, by a majority vote of its full membership, may maintain and operate a veterans county service office if the commissioners court determines that the office is a public necessity to enable county residents who are veterans to promptly, properly, and rightfully obtain benefits to which they are entitled.

Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 147, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Amended by:
Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1124 (S.B. 1676), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2017.

Sec. 434.033. OFFICERS. (a) A commissioners court that maintains and operates an office shall appoint a veterans county service officer and the number of assistant veterans county service officers that it considers necessary.

(b) To be appointed as an officer a person must:

- (1) be qualified by education and training for the duties of the office;
- (2) be experienced in the law, regulations, and rulings of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs controlling cases that come before the commission; and
- (3) have the service experience specified by Subsection (c) or be:
 - (A) a widowed Gold Star Mother or remarried widow of a serviceman or veteran whose death resulted from service;
 - (B) the spouse of a disabled veteran who has a total disability rating based either on having a service-connected disability with a disability rating of 100 percent or on individual unemployability; or
 - (C) the spouse of a retired veteran who served a minimum of 20 years on active duty.

(c) To meet the service experience requirement of Subsection (b)(3) a person must have:

- (1) served on active duty in a branch of the armed forces of the United States;
- (2) served for at least four months or have a service-connected disability; and
- (3) been honorably discharged.

(d) An officer serves at the pleasure of the commissioners court.

Removal of the military service requirement provides an unprofessional approach to supporting the duties and objectives of the the Veterans County Service Offices and Officers. This repeal of the law opens the environment to cronyism and contaminates the pure nature of veterans advocacy. The importance of maintaining the separation between civilian advocates and veterans advocates is to ensure the safety and appropriate understanding of the cultural differences between military service and the implications that that service has on the communities that veterans return to.

I am in STRONG OPPOSITION of the repeal of the military service provision of the statute for the following reasons:

1. Veterans across Texas find the solemn oath of service as a bond with other veterans and a means to support their continued life of service; 2. Veterans understand the meaning behind confidentiality and operational security, this is a honor code and way of life; 3. The unspoken understanding with regard to active duty military service is a commitment to the service their fellow veterans, past, present, and future.

Removing the military service requirement of Sec. 434.033 allows an opening of inexperienced and unknowledgable non-veteran individuals into the veterans services environment. The veterans seevices sector is one that cultivates a population of veterans advocates whose life expereinces are based on military service and are advocates that are committed to a culture of understaning an individual veterans case as a result of a similiar life experience; and in many cases can articulate the experience to greater impact then that of the veteran being served. Many civilians lack the understanding of the the difference between the various military branches, let alone the ability to represent, advocate, and understand the needs of veterans in their respective communities with the lack of knowledge and experience intenrisic to the fundamental skills of becoming a veterans advocate. It takes a-lot more skill, talent, and experience to understand the impact of military service and the veterans military produces than just watching a training video and reading a training manual.

Any Alternative or New Recommendations on This Agency:

I recceomend NO CHANGE to the Sec. 434.033 of SUBCHAPTER B. VETERANS COUNTY SERVICE OFFICES of GOVERNMENT CODE

TITLE 4. EXECUTIVE BRANCH

SUBTITLE C. STATE MILITARY FORCES AND VETERANS

CHAPTER 434. VETERAN ASSISTANCE AGENCIES

SUBCHAPTER A. TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION

My Comment Will Be Made Public: I agree