



INTERIM REPORT

to the 86th Texas Legislature



**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
DEFENSE & VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

December 2018

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON DEFENSE & VETERANS' AFFAIRS
TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
INTERIM REPORT 2018**

**A REPORT TO THE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
86TH TEXAS LEGISLATURE**

**CHAIRMAN ROLAND GUTIERREZ
CHAIRMAN**

**COMMITTEE CLERK
MARGARET FRAIN WALLACE**



Committee On
Defense & Veterans' Affairs

December 20, 2018

Chairman Roland Gutierrez
Chairman

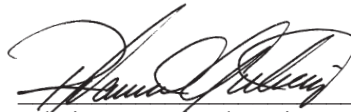
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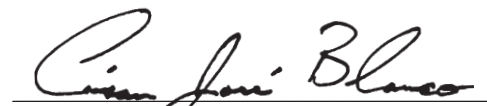
The Honorable Joe Straus
Speaker, Texas House of Representatives
Members of the Texas House of Representatives
Texas State Capitol, Rm. 2W.13
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Mr. Speaker and Fellow Members:

The Committee on Defense & Veterans' Affairs of the Eighty-fifth Legislature hereby submits its interim report including recommendations and drafted legislation for consideration by the Eighty-sixth Legislature.

Respectfully submitted,



Chairman Roland Gutierrez


César J. Blanco, Vice-Chair


Diana Arevalo

Briscoe Cain


Dan Flynn


Stan Lambert

Terry M. Wilson

Cesar Jose Blanco
Vice-Chairman

Members: Diana Arevalo, Briscoe Cain, Dan Flynn, San Lambert, Terry M. Wilson

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DEFENSE & VETERANS' AFFAIRS

BACKGROUND AND INTERIM CHARGES

The Speaker of the House, the Honorable Joe Straus, appointed seven members to the House Defense & Veterans Affairs Committee for the 85th Legislative Session, which began in January 2017. Representative Roland Gutierrez (HD-119, San Antonio) was appointed Chair and Representative Cesar Blanco (HD-76, El Paso) was appointed Vice-Chair. The remaining members of the Committee included Representative Diana Arevalo (HD-116, San Antonio), Representative Briscoe Cain (HD-128, Houston), Representative Dan Flynn (HD-2 , Van), Representative Stan Lambert (HD-71, Abilene), and Representative Terry Wilson (HD-20, Marble Falls).

Pursuant to House Rule 3, Section 9, the Committee was given jurisdiction over all matters pertaining to:

- (1) the relations between the State of Texas and the federal government involving defense, emergency preparedness, and veterans issues;
 - (2) the various branches of the military service of the United States;
 - (3) the realignment or closure of military bases;
 - (4) the defense of the state and nation, including terrorism response;
 - (5) emergency preparedness;
 - (6) veterans of military and related services; and
 - (7) the following state agencies: the Texas Military Department, the Texas Veterans Commission, the Veterans' Land Board, the Texas Military Preparedness Commission, the Texas Division of Emergency Management, and the Emergency Management Council.

In the pursuit of engaging partners in all areas of the State, the Committee conducted hearings in El Paso, San Antonio, Abilene and Austin. The Speaker of the House, the Honorable Joe Straus, assigned interim studies giving six charges to our Committee.

INTERIM CHARGES

1. Evaluate the impact of Hurricane Harvey related to the Texas Military Department, Emergency Management Council, and the Texas Division of Emergency Management. Recommend any changes that could improve operational stability and the reaction of these agencies following a natural disaster and changes that would allow for a more effective response.
2. Assess the State of Texas can further aid federal military installations and their communities in order to minimize the negative consequences of a Base Realignment and Closure round by the federal government.
3. Examine best practices related to use of the Defense Economic Adjustment Assistance Grant program to maximize support for military installations, and how the state can better serve military installations in Texas. Also, evaluate changes that would increase utilization of the Texas Military Revolving Loan Fund.
4. Study the economic impact of the aviation, aerospace, & defense manufacturing industry in Texas and the state's ability to facilitate industry job growth and investment. Review the relationship between the economic vitality of industry and military veterans transitioning into the workforce. Determine existing and potential barriers to the retention and expansion of the manufacturing industry in the state and the broader economic implications it may have on workforce readiness, as well as veteran employment and support services. (Joint charge with the House Committee on Economic & Small Business Development).
5. Examine the needs of homeless veterans in Texas. Examine obstacles veterans may face finding housing across the state. Recommend measures to bolster the state's efforts to address veteran homelessness in Texas.
6. Monitor the agencies and programs under the Committee's jurisdiction and oversee the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 85th Legislature. In conducting this oversight, review the implementation of S.B. 27 (85R) and the related Veterans Mental Health Program, as well as S.B.

INTERIM CHARGE #1

Evaluate the impact of Hurricane Harvey related to the Texas Military Department, Emergency Management Council, and the Texas Division of Emergency Management. Recommend any changes that could improve operational stability and the reaction of these agencies following a natural disaster and changes that would allow for a more effective response.

The Texas Division of Emergency Management, Operations Section, manages and staffs the State Operations Center (SOC), located at DPS Headquarters in Austin. The SOC serves as the state warning point and primary state direction and control facility. It operates 24/7 to monitor threats, make notification of threats and provide information on emergency incidents to local, state, and federal officials, and coordinate state emergency assistance to local governments that have experienced an emergency situation that local response resources are inadequate to deal with. During major emergencies, the State Operations Center Management Team, state agencies and volunteer groups that make up the state Emergency Management Council and Federal liaison teams convene at the SOC to identify, mobilize, and deploy state and volunteer group resources to respond to the emergency.

Hurricane Harvey is tied with 2005's Hurricane Katrina as the costliest tropical cyclone on record, inflicting \$125 billion in damage, primarily from catastrophic rainfall-triggered flooding in the Houston metropolitan area and Southeast Texas. It was the first major hurricane to make landfall in the United States since Wilma in 2005, ending a record 12-year span in which no hurricanes made landfall at the intensity of a major hurricane throughout the country. In a four-day period, many areas received more than 40 inches (1,000 mm) of rain as the system slowly meandered over eastern Texas and adjacent waters, causing unprecedented flooding. With peak accumulations of 60.58 in (1,539 mm), in Nederland, Texas, Harvey was the wettest tropical cyclone on record in the United States. The resulting floods inundated hundreds of thousands of homes, which displaced more than 30,000 people and prompted more than 17,000 rescues.

Hurricane Harvey damaged 204,000 homes. Three-fourths were outside of the 100-year flood plain. Those homeowners did not have flood insurance. There were 738,000 people who registered for assistance with the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The agency has paid \$378 million to them. Federal forces rescued 10,000 people who were trapped in their homes or on flooded highways. A flotilla of private boats rescued an unknown number of additional victims. The Houston Police Department's Dive Team rescued 3,000 people in four days. There were 37,000 people in shelters in Texas and 2,000 in Louisiana. Almost 7,000 people were in the George R. Brown Convention Center, where 1,700 received medical treatment. FEMA moved 14,900 to temporary housing. Houston's school district said 75 of its 275 schools were closed due to flood damage. The district is the nation's seventh largest. In the Gulf area, 1 million vehicles were ruined beyond repair, according to auto data firm Black Book. That includes 300,000 to 500,000 vehicles owned by individuals. Harvey flooded 800 wastewater treatment facilities and 13 Superfund sites. That spread sewage and toxic chemicals into the flooded areas.

Hurricane Harvey struck the Texas coast from Corpus Christi and Rockport to Houston, Port Arthur and Beaumont, dropping 24.5 trillion gallons of water and damaging or destroying hundreds of thousands of homes, schools, businesses and infrastructure.

At the direction of Gov. Greg Abbott more than 14,000 members of the Texas Military Department's Army National Guard, Air National Guard and Texas State Guard assisted in recovery efforts following landfall of Hurricane Harvey.

Soldiers and Airmen provided support to flooding regions of Houston and the Texas Gulf Coast. Partnering with local first responders Guardsmen assisted in search and rescue operations, swift water rescues and evacuations of flooding areas.

Members of the Texas State Guard were mobilized to provide local shelter operations and provided a tracking system that helped evacuees locate loved ones checking into shelters.

Additional Guardsmen were on standby to join operations as requested by the Texas Department of Emergency Management.



Disaster Regions Map

Recommendations

The Governor of Texas, the Honorable Greg Abbott, created the Governor's Commission to Rebuild Texas and he asked Texas A & M System Chancellor, John Sharp, to be Commissioner and oversee rebuilding efforts in Texas communities along the Gulf Coast in the wake of the devastation created by Hurricane Harvey.

As recovery continues in communities across the Gulf Coast Region and beyond, the State of Texas continues to work with our federal partners to cut red tape and secure more and faster funding. Texas is committed to working for as long as it takes to help rebuild critical public infrastructure in our communities — roads, bridges, schools and other public facilities — damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Harvey or the flooding that followed.

- Communicate effectively with all stakeholders
- Provide real-time information resources for local officials
- Focus on needs that will have the greatest impact locally and regionally
- Governor's Commission to Rebuild Texas presented their recommendation in December 2018.
- Legislature should continue to monitor along with the Commission this issue and the fiscal impact on our state.

Texas Recovery

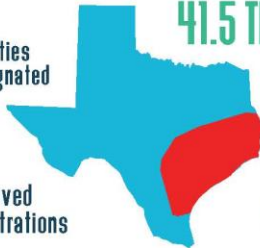


FEMA

Hurricane Harvey: Partnerships and Progress

all totals as of November 5, 2018

41 Individual Assistance / **53** Public Assistance counties designated



41.5 THOUSAND sq. miles of land mass impacted

Larger than Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont. ESTIMATED

306 participating National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) communities in declared areas

373,576 approved registrations



Mitigation

96,301

Texans offered advice on rebuilding safer and stronger



17,479 SURVIVORS IN TEMPORARY HOUSING & INNOVATIVE REPAIR PROGRAMS

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

1,281 REQUESTS FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

13 MILLION



Cubic Yards of Storm Debris Picked Up

2,585 Obligated Projects for **\$1.08 BIL**

Housing and Other Disaster Related Expenses: **\$1.64 BIL**

Small Business Administration (SBA) loans approved: **\$3.41 BILLION**

\$8.80 BIL NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM (NFIP) ADVANCE PAYMENTS AND CLAIMS PAID [ESTIMATE*]

91 THOUSAND FLOOD INSURANCE CLAIMS

Sources: FEMA, U.S. Small Business Administration

Texas Recovery

Hurricane Harvey: 1 Year Later



all totals as of Aug 17, 2018

Aug. 25, 2017
Harvey made landfall

as a **Category 4 Hurricane** and brought

132 MPH WINDS IN PORT ARANSAS

UP TO **60 INCHES** OF RAIN

PROVIDED TO STATE:

1+ MILLION GALLONS OF WATER

6,743,725 SHELF STABLE MEALS

18,607 tarps

294 shelters opened

with peak population at **42,399**

Disaster Case Management Program

calls disaster case managers took **19,195**

13,212 families working with Disaster Case Managers

\$1.22 BIL in FEMA housing assistance

1,302 FEMA TRAVEL TRAILERS

1,557 FEMA MHU

135 FEMA DIRECT LEASE

82 voluntary organizations

91,391 volunteers

83 DRCs open with **287,867** visits

3,324 hotels involved in the TSA program

3 Million+ nights hotel rooms occupied

374,466 eligible for TSA participated in TSA **54,640**

Community disaster loans **\$930K**

and **\$11.5 MIL** spent to reimburse for emergency shelters

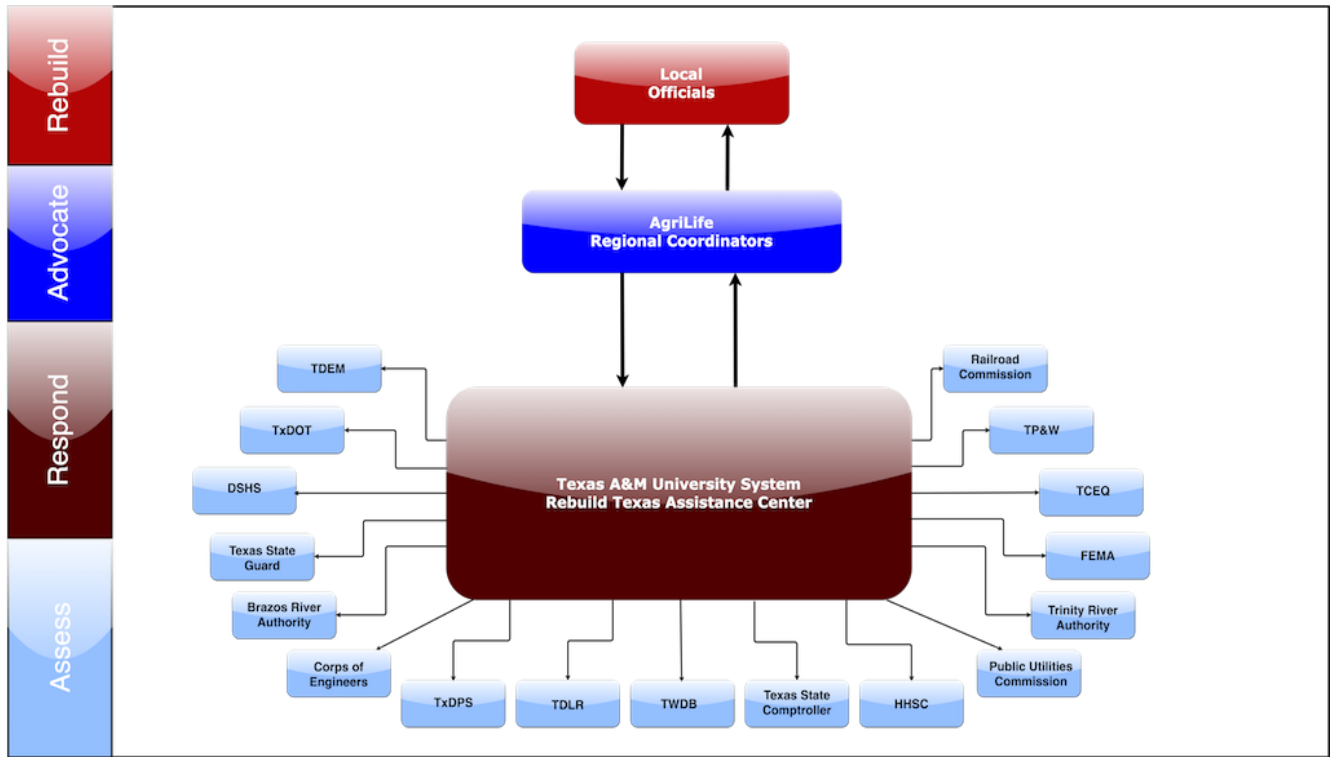
610,581 HOME INSPECTIONS

Small Business Administration

home loans **39,552** for **\$2.94 Billion**

3,877 business loans for **\$444.85 Million**

Sources: FEMA, U.S. Small Business Administration, NOAA, USCP



Rebuild Texas Assistant Center

Interim Charge #2

Assess the State of Texas can further aid federal military installations and their communities in order to minimize the negative consequences of a Base Realignment and Closure round by the federal government.

Military Officials and communities believe that a new round of Base Realignment and Closures (BRAC) could be forthcoming. The United States Congress has not authorized a BRAC, despite some statements from military officials due to excess capacity across the Department of Defense (DOD). A BRAC has not occurred since 2005, but we know in Texas the adverse affects of a base closure due to the closure of Kelly Air Force Base which became Kelly Annex and part of Joint Base San Antonio.

Texas is home to 15 military installations that provides \$150 billion impact to the state economy. Texas has immense training space on the ground and in the skies with mission friendly weather. Texas is home to supportive infrastructure and logistics making it effective and easy to deploy assets and personnel overseas. The Governor's Texas Military Preparedness Commission has awarded over \$50 million to support military installations in Texas in the past four years. The state economy is strong, including a robust defense industry, and veteran friendly communities which provide an excellent quality of life for service members and their families. Encroachments - whether architectural, environmental, or technological - have a deleterious impact on the military value of an installation during BRAC considerations. Due to the \$150 billion impact these military installations have on the Texas economy, the potential closures or relocation of basses or missions gravely threatens the economy at the local and statewide level. The Texas Military Value Task Force was created in the Texas Government Code to seek advice to prepare for possible actions by the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD). The Task Force identified strengths and opportunities to grow current and future military missions and enhance our communities. Having a military installation in a community is a privilege and should be maintained and supported

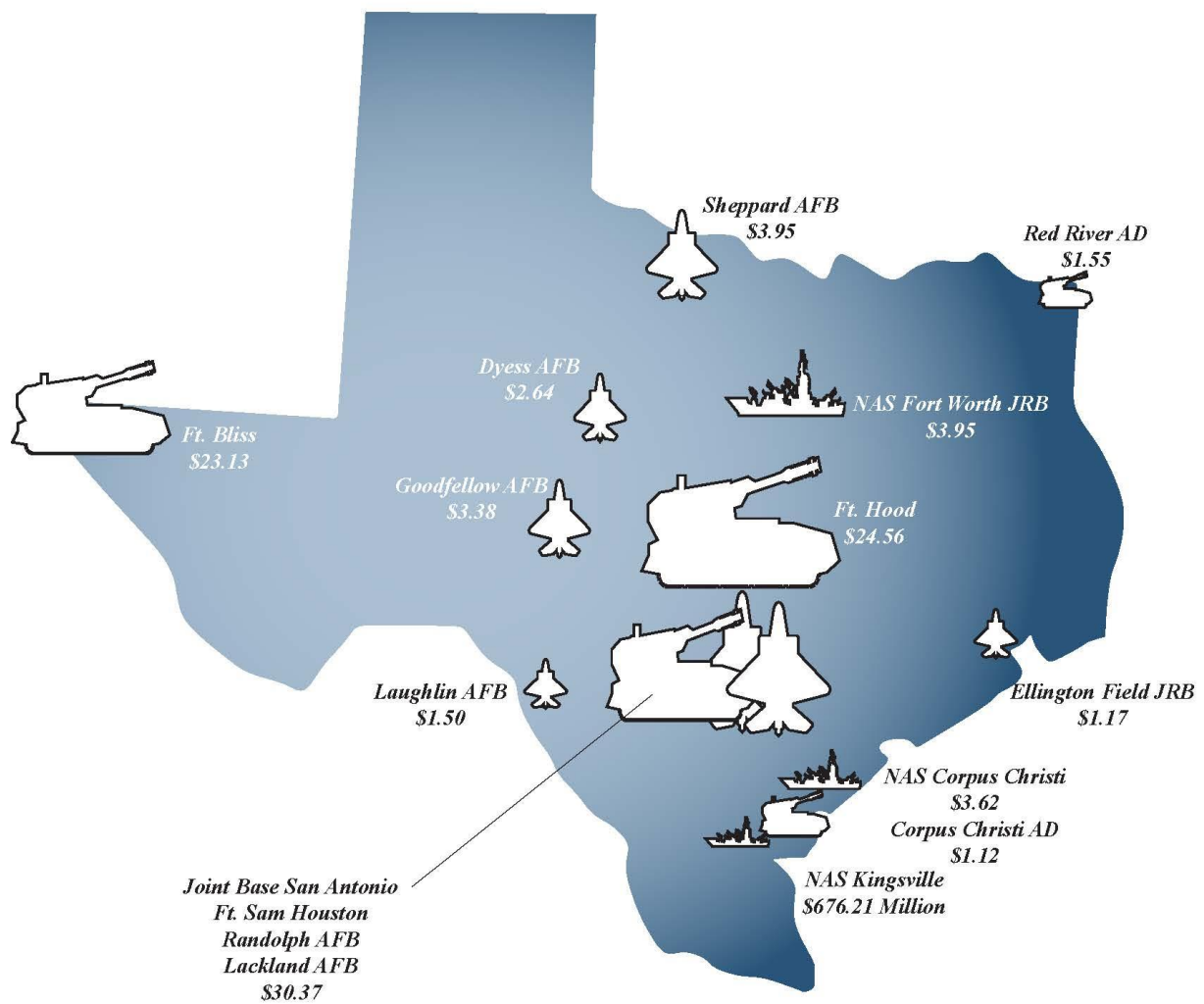
for it is an economic engine in our communities.

Recommendations

- Legislation that protects military installations and their training routes (air and land) from encroachment.
- Create and support opportunities for education, employment, and professional licensing for military members and their families.
- Ensure the quality of schools and quality of life. Strive to provide superior services for military families. Provide high-performing schools overall, and community leaders need to ensure the specific schools supporting military families are meeting high standards.
- Grow cyber security capabilities across academia, private industry and the military.
- Ensuring and supporting high quality healthcare facilities, primary care physicians, and specialists.
- Seeking partnerships with local communities and state agencies to reduce barriers and costs to military installations through intergovernmental agreements or other public partnerships opportunities.

Texas (2018)

Economic Impact (in Billions*)



*Unless otherwise noted



INTERIM CHARGE #3

Examine best practices related to use of the Defense Economic Adjustment Assistance Grant program to maximize support for military installations, and how the state can better serve military installations in Texas. Also, evaluate changes that would increase utilization of the Texas Military Revolving Loan Fund.

The Defense Economic Adjustment Assistance Grant Program (DEAAG), created in 1997, is an infrastructure grant program designed to assist defense communities that have been positively or negatively impacted by a change in defense contracts or an announced change. Funding can also be used proactively to support installations in the event of a change or announced change by the Department of Defense. DEAAG funding is available to local municipalities, counties, defense base development authority, junior college districts and Texas State Technical College campuses, and regional planning commissions representing these communities. DEAAG funding is available to meet matching requirements for federal funding.

Funding for negatively affected communities can be used for the purchase of Department of Defense property, new construction or rehabilitation of facilities in support of job creating projects and opportunities. Funding for positively affected communities can be used for infrastructure projects directly supporting the new military mission. Additionally, funds can be awarded to Public Junior Colleges or Texas State Technical College System for the purchase or leasing of capital equipment for the purpose of (re)training displaced defense workers.

Grants awarded may range from \$50,000 to \$5 million per project.

The following entities received FY2018-2019 DEAAG disbursements:

Bell County - \$3.1 million, Army Airfield security improvements.

City of Corpus Christi – \$3.3 million, Corpus Christi Army Depot security repairs and upgrades.

City of Corpus Christi - \$2.7 million, water infrastructure improvements at Naval

Air Station Corpus Christi.

Tom Green County - \$4.5 million, infrastructure for mission expansion at Goodfellow Air Force Base.

City of Kingsville - \$144,000, purchase of property to prevent encroachment around Naval Air Station Kingsville.

City of Abilene - \$282,000, improvements to Dyess Air Force Base security upgrade.

Port San Antonio - \$5 million, Airfield Operations upgrades and improvements.

City of Wichita Falls - \$900,000, improvements to Sheppard Air Force. Base security upgrade [partial funding].

DEAAG has been one of the programs that has been vital to supporting the economic development efforts that have resulted in growth of great jobs in some of Texas' top targeted industries. The leveraging of DEAAG grant money and matching federal funding illustrates precisely how this fund can and should be utilized.

Created by the 78th Legislature and signed into law by Governor Rick Perry, the Texas Military Value Revolving Loan Fund, or the “Revolving Loan Fund” as it has become known, is designed to:

- Assist defense communities in enhancing the military value of a military facility in their area.
- Provide financial assistance to defense communities for job creating economic development projects that minimize the negative effects of a defense base realignment or closure decision that occurred in 1995 or later.
- Provide financial assistance to defense communities for an infrastructure project to accommodate new or expanded military missions resulting from a base realignment and closure decision that occurred in 1995 or later.
- The Revolving Loan Fund provides a low cost source of revenue to eligible communities who meet the application criteria. The minimum amount of a loan is \$1,000,000 while the maximum amount of a loan is determined by the availability of funds and the creditworthiness of the applicant, State

funding will be obtained through the sale of general obligation bonds.

- The State may provide up to 100% of the cost of the described project, dependent upon the creditworthiness of the applicant

The Texas Military Value Revolving Loan Fund, is a program of tremendous potential in serving Texas' defense communities.

Recommendations:

- The Texas Military Value Revolving Loan Fund is in need of modifications in order to streamline and simplify the borrowing process. While this loan fund has a total authorized available amount of \$250 million, the program has been sparsely used to date.
- Identify opportunities for streamlining the program in an attempt to bring it more in line with commercial lending practices that commonly see loan transactions occurring within 45 days, as opposed to the six-month timeframe some communities have experience in pursuing transactions through The Military Value Revolving Loan Fund.
- Assess loan programs in other states with defense installations. If they have a Military Loan Fund, review their process and utilization of the program.

INTERIM CHARGE #4

Study the economic impact of the aviation, aerospace, & defense manufacturing industry in Texas and the state's ability to facilitate industry job growth and investment. Review the relationship between the economic vitality of industry and military veterans transitioning into the workforce. Determine existing and potential barriers to the retention and expansion of the manufacturing industry in the state and the broader economic implications it may have on workforce readiness, as well as veteran employment and support services. (Joint charge with the House Committee on Economic & Small Business Development).

Following the BRAC of Kelly Air Force Base in 1995, Boeing established a facility under a lease from Port San Antonio. Boeing, as well as other leading aerospace and aviation industry leaders, has gone above and beyond to facilitate job growth, specifically by focusing on veteran employment, to have a positive economic impact in the State of Texas. The hiring of Veterans left without a job after the base closure has resulted in Boeing becoming the largest aerospace employer in San Antonio. This has also resulted in one of the highest fleet readiness rates in the Air Force and demonstrates mutual benefit to the community and to the taxpayers.

Boeing has made it a priority to employ Veterans in Texas and throughout the rest of the United States. Since 2011 Boeing has hired more than 8,600 Veterans and has joined other industry leaders from the aerospace and defense sectors to hire an additional 30,000 Veterans over the next five years.

Boeing also offers transition services for active duty members nationally who look for work after their discharge. Last year Boeing awarded a \$5 million, multi-year donation to expand the United Service Operation (USO) Pathfinder Program. This comprehensive employment readiness program for transitioning military service members will reach nearly 80 percent of all active duty transitions each year. This gives transitioning Veterans the opportunity to work in impactful positions which in turn has a positive impact on the economy.

In the beginning of 2018 Boeing awarded \$10 million to the George W. Bush Institute's Military Service Initiative. The donation is a part of a \$30 million, multi-year investment aimed at Veterans' recovery and rehabilitation programs and military transition services to help military members get acclimated in their community. Boeing intends to increase this support to grow their Texas footprint. This includes grant money distributed to six other Veteran organizations across Texas as well as \$150,000 in sponsorship dollars to Veteran causes. This money is

used to utilize the skillsets Active Duty military members and Veteran's bring to the table.

In the future Boeing intends to focus on creating and sustaining a business environment that encourages capital and personnel intensive industries to flourish. A successful path for new growth includes transitional programs for past and present Service Members. The pursuit of growth that Boeing seeks also includes the investments made in education services for Veterans. These programs directly impact the future of our state, and countries' economy.

Raytheon is another industry leader in the aerospace and aviation field that has a strong history with the State of Texas. In 2013 the company relocated its Space and Airborne System headquarters from California to McKinney, Texas. Raytheon currently employs around 10,500 Veterans, many of which are right here in Texas.

Additional initiatives have been created by Raytheon to focus employment opportunities on Veterans. The Employee Resource Group called RAYVETS promotes Veterans and those who support our military by helping transition service members from a military career to an impactful job in the civilian sector through early engagement, mentorship and sponsorship.

Operation Phoenix is another Raytheon Enterprise team within their Talent Acquisition organization whose focus is to attract, recruit and retain Veterans and military talent as the transition into the workforce. The aerospace and aviation industry employs over 135,000 Texans, and Raytheon's efforts directly impact the number of Veterans in the Texas Workforce.

These programs often collaborate to put on career fairs, hiring events and outreach activities across the nation. The company also supports Student Veterans of America, which is the world's largest peer network of student veterans. The SVA provides critical resources to support and ensure Veteran's successful transition from serving to learning. Raytheon's support has helped SVA represent nearly 700,000 student veterans which is an increase of 26 percent since 2015. Support of the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act, also known as the "Forever GI Bill", has worked influenced legislation that expands veteran benefits to include STEM education and has made it available more broadly to Gold Star families to the National Guard and Reserves.

Lockheed Martin is another aerospace and aviation industry leader that contributes to the Texas economy by adding jobs to their jet program annually. Last year

Lockheed Martin added around 1,800 jobs to help speed up the production of the F-35 fighter jets and in July announced that they would be adding an additional 400 more technicians, mechanics and assemblers to that team. The Maryland-based defense company has ramped up its production at the Fort Worth plant, aiming to increase the output of F-35 jets from 66 a year to 91 by the end of 2018.

In Lockheed Martin's Fort Worth plant alone they employ 15,200 Texans. However, they plan to increase that number by almost 2,000 by the end of 2018 through hiring events in downtown Fort Worth. Through military partnerships Lockheed Martin has made it a priority to help transitioning service members prepare for civilian work. The Veteran Jobs Mission was established in 2011 and set a goal to hire 100,000 transitioning service members and military Veterans by 2020. Having surpassed that number Lockheed Martin adjusted their goal to hiring a million veterans instead. All together Lockheed Martin employs around 25,000 veterans around the United States and are actively involved in programs that help veterans transition into meaningful civilian careers.

Lockheed Martin also created the Military Spouse Employment Partnership to help service members and their families. Military spouses who want or need to work have an opportunity to do so with Lockheed Martin, though 25 percent of military spouses are unemployed and earn less than their civilian counterparts. However, Lockheed Martin works to close these gaps by helping spouses discover and develop professional skills, identifying academic requirements and goals for their chosen career path and build self-marketing skills to help promote themselves in the workforce. Through these efforts Lockheed Martin continues to pave the way as an industry leader that positively impacts the Texas economy while supporting and employing our nation's service members. Over 60,000 military spouses have been hired through this program in the United States through the years.

Aerospace and defense companies such as Boeing, Bell, Lockheed Martin, and Raytheon have the ability to increase the important workforce of service members including Veterans while remaining competitive, both domestically and globally, and is based on pro-business policies in each state where they have presence. However, in Texas their industry is at a disadvantage in regards to the current tax policy. We recommend the Legislature further study this tax issue and its impact

on the aerospace and defense industry in Texas.

INTERIM CHARGE #5

As of January of 2017 there were a total of 2,200 homeless veterans in Texas. Of the 2,200 veterans experiencing homelessness in Texas, 1,379 were counted while staying in shelters and 821 were counted in places not meant for habitation. These statistics are from the annual point-in-time (PIT) count, which is a federally-required count of unsheltered and sheltered persons experiencing homelessness during the last 10 days of January. Of all the people experiencing homelessness in Texas during the point-in-time count, 9.3 percent of them were veterans.

While Texas had a high number of veterans experiencing homelessness, the 2017 point-in-time count also showed that veterans in Texas experiencing homelessness during this time period had decreased by over 3,300—a decline of over 60 percent. Houston was the first city in Texas to effectively end veteran homelessness after a three-year effort in 2015. The term “effectively ending Veteran homelessness” means that there is a system of homeless service coordination between service providers and housing providers to ensure housing or shelter is provided within a specified period of time, such as 30 days after identification of the veteran experiencing homelessness. Thirty-five agencies in Houston collaborated to house more than 3,600 veterans.² Seven other Texas cities also aimed to effectively end veteran homelessness and have experienced varying degrees of success. The City of San Antonio and City of Austin met the federal benchmarks to effectively end veteran homelessness in May of 2016, and August of 2016, respectively. Also, while not part of the Mayors’ challenge, many local initiatives exist throughout Texas to address the high number of veterans experiencing homelessness.

There are approximately 23 million veterans in the United States today, and 1.7 million of those veterans reside in Texas. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides a comprehensive system of healthcare and other services to veterans to ensure their continued care after departing military service. Today, more than 8 million veterans are enrolled in services involving various kinds of medical care provided by the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), one of the three administrations within the VA. VA offers assistance to eligible veterans who are traveling for medical care.

Other reports have identified problems, concerns, and challenges with

transportation services now provided to veterans. The kinds of problems that have been observed include the following:

- Veterans report problems accessing VA medical services.
- Rural Texas areas have transportation challenges for serving veterans.
- More housing is needed, the lack of affordable housing is the #1 reason we have tens of thousands of people experiencing homelessness and specifically the veteran segment of the population.
- The Legislature needs to further study this issue and form a Select Committee on veterans and homelessness along with the mental health component.

Point-in-Time At a Glance

Veterans Experiencing Homelessness in Texas

2017



2,200

veterans experiencing homelessness were counted in the State of Texas on a single night in January of 2017.



1379

veterans were counted while staying in shelters



821

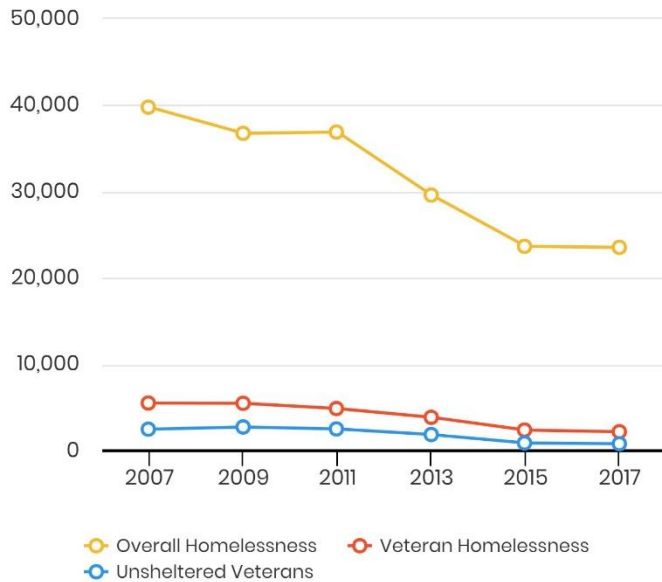
veterans were counted in places not meant for habitation



9.3%

of all people experiencing homelessness in Texas during the 2017 Point-In-Time Count were veterans

Between 2007 and 2017



Most veterans experiencing homelessness were counted in **3 CoCs**:

Balance of State CoC	674
Houston CoC	405
Dallas CoC	358

The **number of people in Texas** experiencing homelessness in annual Point-In-Time Counts has decreased by over 16,000--a **decline of over 40%**



The number of **veterans in Texas** experiencing homelessness during this same time period has decreased by over 3,300--a **decline of over 60%**



The number of **unsheltered homeless veterans in Texas** has decreased by over 1,600 between 2007 and 2017--a **reduction of over two-thirds**.



INTERIM CHARGE #6

Monitor the agencies and programs under the Committee's jurisdiction and oversee the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 85th Legislature. In conducting this oversight, review the implementation of S.B. 27 (85R) and the related Veterans Mental Health Program, as well as S.B. 578 (85R) and the development of the Veterans Suicide Prevention.

Senate Bill 27 (85R), effective September 1, 2017, allows for the addition of trained, licensed mental health professionals at Local Mental Health Authorities (LMHA)s to provide clinical interventions for veterans and families within the MH Program for Veterans. Increases access for veterans and families to mental health services and seek to decrease the overall cost associated with military traumas. It also directs Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) and Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) to collaborate with stakeholders to implement a pilot program in fiscal year 2019 to increase access to clinical treatment for service members, veterans, and their families residing in rural areas through veteran counselors. The counselors will receive military-informed care training through TVS, and work in concert with Peer Service Coordinators to ensure service members, veterans, and families have access to military trauma-related mental health care.

Update: HHSC received and began review of Veteran Counselor SOW comments provided by Texas Council of Community Center (TCCC) and ED Consortium. Veterans Working Group. HHSC initiated contracting activities for fiscal year 2019 contracts. They also met with TCCC to discuss Veteran Counselor SOW comments and plan for next steps. HHSC/TVC participated in a conference call with identified prepositive sites hosted by TCCC. Next steps will be to execute fiscal year 2019 contracts with six LMHA sites for veteran counselors. Contracts will take effect September 1, 2018. LMHA sites ramp up and prepare for service provision. Provide training and technical assistance for military-informed care; and educate providers about The US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA's) community care provider programs, such as VA Choice Program and Patient Centered Community Care. HHSC will monitor performance reports and solicit feedback from centers, veteran's counselors, and Peer Service Coordinators to evaluate effectiveness of pilot program.

Senate Bill 578 (85R), 2017, directed HHSC to create a comprehensive action plan with short and long-term goals to increase access to, and availability of,

professional veteran health service to prevent suicide among the population. Example initiatives include: employment, partnership with the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement and first responders, educate clergy, 9-1-1 operators linking with LMHAs for crisis services and develop public service announcements. HUSK identified all goals by September 1, 2018 and plan for implementation by September 2021, and long-term fully implemented by September 2027.

Mental Health Program for Veterans

- SB 1325 (81R), 2009, created the Mental Health (MH) Program for Veterans which initially provided peer-to-peer counseling for veterans.
- HB 19 (84R), 2015, required HHSC and the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) to coordinate the administration of the MH Program for Veterans.
- Using the \$5 million appropriated per fiscal year, HHSC implements the program through contracts with TVC, local mental health authorities (LMHAs), and Texas A & M University Health Science Center.
- In fiscal year 2017, LMHAs and Local Behavioral Health Authorities (LBHAs) reported an overall increase in the number of services delivered and the number of individuals trained compared to fiscal year 2016. Over 133,000 peer services were delivered to service members, veterans, and their families, and more than 6,000 peers were trained.

Interim Committee Hearing Dates

- **February 13, 2018 in Abilene, Texas**
Invited and public testimony on Interim Charge #3
- **April 10, 2018 in San Antonio, Texas**
Invited and public testimony on Interim Charge #2
- **May 15, 2018 in Austin, Texas**
Invited and public testimony on Interim Charges #4, #5 and #6

ENDNOTES

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