

MINUTES

SENATE COMMITTEE ON VETERAN AFFAIRS & MILITARY INSTALLATIONS

Thursday, March 10, 2016

9:00 AM

Capitol Extension, Room E1.012

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 Thursday, March 10, 2016, in the Capitol Extension, Room E1.012, at Austin, Texas.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Donna Campbell, Chair
Senator Konni Burton, Vice Chair
Senator Brian Birdwell
Senator Sylvia Garcia
Senator Bob Hall
Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr.
Senator José Rodríguez

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

The chair called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM. There being a quorum present, the following business was transacted:

The chair recognized Lt. Colonel Scott Kingsley to lead the committee in the Pledges to the United States and Texas flags.

The chair laid out the following interim charge: “Study the state of veteran health and mental health in Texas. Review the progress made by state strike force teams to reduce the claims backlog and decrease wait times at VA hospitals. Evaluate if the passage of the federal Veterans' Access to Care through Choice, Accountability, and Transparency Act of 2014 and other state initiatives have improved access and outcomes. Determine if state strike force teams should continue as established and make recommendations on necessary changes”.

Invited testimony was provided by those designated on the attached list.

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At 11:37 AM Senator Burton assumed the chair.

At 11:47 AM Senator Campbell resumed the chair.

The chair laid out the following interim charge: Study current veteran hiring policies among state agencies and consider the effectiveness of a percentage-based system. Make recommendations if there are other ways to equitably measure the success of veteran employment within an agency”.

Invited testimony was provided by those designated on the attached list.

At 1:00 PM Senator Burton assumed the chair.

At 1:30 PM Senator Campbell resumed the chair.

The chair laid out the following interim charge: “Study successes and challenges of veteran's courts in Texas, including evidence of rehabilitation or recidivism. Consider alternative means of funding, such as voluntary donations at points of contact with state services, and make recommendations”.

Invited testimony was provided by those designated on the attached list.

The chair opened public testimony on all charges. Witnesses who provided testimony are shown on the attached list.

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

There being no further business, at 4:06 PM Senator Campbell moved that the Committee stand recessed subject to the call of the chair. Without objection, it was so ordered.

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Senator Donna Campbell, Chair

Bailey Olderog, Clerk