



TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION

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Press Release

For Immediate Release: February 17, 2015

Release No. 20150217-01

Gov. Abbott proposes solutions to key Veterans issues during State of the State Address

AUSTIN – Today, Gov. Greg Abbott outlined his vision, including significant commitments to Texas Veterans, during his inaugural State of the State address at a joint session of the 84th Legislature. The proposed budget includes several items that will benefit Veterans, including funding for Hazlewood Act exemptions, tax exemptions for Veteran-owned businesses and funding for Veterans mental health.

“Saying ‘thank you’ is great and a lot of fun but it is not enough for those who risked their lives,” said Gov. Abbott. “We must do more to help Veterans return to civilian life.”

Many Veterans who return to civilian life often pursue higher education. In his budget released today, Gov. Abbott proposed that the state provide \$532 million in tuition and fee exemptions for military families who qualify for Hazlewood Act exemptions. Previous state budgets provided little to no funding to cover the costs of Hazlewood.

The Hazlewood Act exemption provides an educational benefit of up to 150 credit hours of tuition exemption at public institutions of higher education in Texas.

Gov. Abbott also proposed that new businesses formed by Veterans should be exempt from paying state registration fees to open their businesses and should also be exempt from paying state franchise taxes for the first five years.

Veterans interested in starting or growing their own business can currently get assistance through the Veteran Entrepreneur Program at the Texas Veterans Commission which helps Veterans with identifying funding sources, mentorship, business opportunities and business education programs. These proposed exemptions will offer another incentive toward starting a Veteran-owned business in Texas.

In addition to the Hazlewood Act exemption and business tax exemptions, Gov. Abbott also stated that more must be done for Veterans mental health, and his budget includes funding that will help provide mental health screenings to Veterans and service members.

“We must also do more for our Veterans who return broken from battle,” said Gov. Abbott. “Not all wounds are seen.”

The state of Texas has several programs for Veterans who need mental health assistance. One program, the Military Veteran Peer Network (MVPN) connects Veterans to a community of trained volunteers across Texas who provide peer support and mental health awareness.

“Governor Abbott understands the important issues Veterans face in Texas,” said Texas Veterans Commission Chairman Al Cantu. “In his short time as governor, his continued focus on Veterans issues shows that he will remain informed and active in the Veteran community.”

For more information on the Texas Veterans Commission Veteran Entrepreneur Program, Hazlewood Act exemption or MVPN, please visit <http://www.tvc.texas.gov>.

Texas Veterans Commission

The mission of the Texas Veterans Commission is to advocate for and provide superior service to Veterans and their families in the areas of disability claims assistance, employment services, education benefits and grant funding. The commission is made up of five commissioners appointed by the governor of Texas. Current commissioners are Chair Eliseo “Al” Cantu, Vice Chair James H. Scott, Secretary Richard A. McLeon IV, and Members Jake Ellzey and Daniel P. Moran. Over 200 skilled counselors in 75 cities provide one-on-one guidance to Veterans and their families to ensure they receive all of the benefits to which they are entitled. For more information about the Texas Veterans Commission services click here: <http://www.tvc.texas.gov/Home.aspx> or all 512-463-5538.

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