



**RYAN GUILLEN**  
★  
TEXAS STATE REPRESENTATIVE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **EXPANDING VETERAN SERVICE OFFICER TRAINING** *HB 2154 Designed to Help Veterans Get the Benefits They Have earned*

**AUSTIN** – HB 2154, a bill filed by State Representative Ryan Guillen (D-Rural South Texas), will help veterans maximize access to available benefits by allowing accredited groups to help train Veterans County Service Officers. On **Tuesday, April 25**, HB 2154 was sent to the Local & Consent Calendar Committee.

**"When it comes to training Texas' Veteran County Service Officers, the current process is inefficient and leaves gaps in service," said Rep. Guillen. "By allowing accredited groups to help in the training process, we can streamline training these service officers, and increase access to benefit information for our veterans."**

Currently, the Texas Veterans commission (TVC) is in charge of training and producing training materials for their Veterans County Service Officers. At a recent hearing, TVC stated that they have no problem with an outside group doing the training so long as the entity is accredited by the US Department of Veteran Affairs (VA). They noted that, "many states already allow this practice and that there are many entities that offer such services." The only thing keeping TVC from following suit is an old statute in Texas' Government Code that seems to suggest that *only* the TVC can train Veterans County Service Officers, and requires them to create and maintain training materials.

HB 2154 would remove this outdated language and authorize the TVC to approve a public or private entity to provide training programs for individuals to become Veterans County Service Officers. The change would allow for an increase in qualified Veterans County Service Officers to help assist our veterans.

**"Assisting veterans has always been a priority for me and the Texas legislature," said Guillen, "and this bill will help bring our veterans access to the benefits they have earned."**

HB 2154 has been moving through the legislative process, and was recently sent to the Local & Consent Calendar Committee for consideration. Guillen hopes that the bill will be considered favorably and pass through the Texas House and Senate in the coming weeks.

Representative Ryan Guillen serves ten rural South Texas counties in the Texas House of Representatives, including Atascosa, Brooks, Duval, Jim Hogg, Kenedy, La Salle, Live Oak, McMullen, Starr, and Willacy.

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