

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 879
By: Frank
Public Health
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Texas Hospital Association reports that there is an ongoing and increasing shortage of health care professionals in Texas and the bill author has also informed the committee that military personnel who have been providing health care to service members are retiring from military service, providing an opportunity to mitigate the health care personnel shortage. C.S.H.B. 879 seeks to create a narrow pathway for qualified military medical professionals who are retiring from active duty in Texas to remain here and provide health care services by establishing a process by which certain military veterans who have been trained as physicians and nurses can receive licensing to provide health care in Texas.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 879 amends the Occupations Code to require the Texas Medical Board (TMB) and the Texas Board of Nursing to issue a license to practice medicine and a license to practice nursing, respectively, to an applicant who:

- is licensed in good standing as a physician or nurse, as applicable, in another state;
- is a U.S. armed forces veteran who retired from or otherwise left military service not more than one year before the application date for a license issued under the bill's provisions;
- was, at the time of retiring from or leaving military service, serving on active duty in Texas and authorized as a physician or nurse to treat persons enlisted in the U.S. armed forces or veterans; and
- has passed the Texas medical jurisprudence examination or the jurisprudence examination, as applicable.

C.S.H.B. 879 prohibits the TMB and the Texas Board of Nursing from issuing a license under the bill's provisions to an applicant who, as follows:

- was discharged or separated from the U.S. armed forces on the basis of substandard conduct or for any act of misconduct or moral or professional dereliction;
- holds a medical or nursing license or a license to prescribe, dispense, administer, supply, or sell a controlled substance that is currently under active investigation or is or was subject to a disciplinary order or action or to denial by another jurisdiction; or

- has been convicted of, is on deferred adjudication community supervision or deferred disposition for, or is under active investigation for the commission of a felony or a misdemeanor involving moral turpitude.

For purpose of the bill's provisions, U.S. armed forces means the army, navy, air force, space force, coast guard, or marine corps of the United States or a reserve unit of one of those branches of the armed forces, and active duty means current full-time military service in those forces.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2025.

COMPARISON OF INTRODUCED AND SUBSTITUTE

C.S.H.B. 879 differs from the introduced in minor or nonsubstantive ways by conforming to certain bill drafting conventions.