



Senator Eliot Shapleigh

District 29

Press Release

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For Immediate Release

April 1, 2008

SENATE VETERAN AFFAIRS & MILITARY INSTALLATIONS COMMITTEE MEETS IN SAN ANTONIO ON 81ST TEXAS LEGISLATURE INTERIM CHARGES

Senator Shapleigh Visits Brooke Army Medical Center

"Here is where wounded warriors come home. And the measure of our regard for their courage is in the quality of care we provide."

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EL PASO – The **Texas Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs and Military Installations (VAMI)** is meeting today, **April 1**, in San Antonio to hear testimony and discuss Interim Charges for the 81st Texas Legislature. Senator Eliot Shapleigh (D-El Paso) serves as Vice-Chair for VAMI and Chair for the Senate Subcommittee on Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC).

Senator Shapleigh also toured Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio and shared lunch with wounded veterans. "Here is where wounded warriors come home. And the measure of our regard for their courage is in the quality of care we provide," said Senator Shapleigh.

The VAMI Interim Charges are as follows:

- Examine any existing state veteran hiring and procurement preferences and procedures and make recommendations for improving and enhancing these programs to increase efficiencies and maximize funding.
- Study veteran reintegration issues, including the occurrence of post traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, substance abuse problems, and domestic violence and other family issues. Make suggestions regarding what the state could do to supplement and enhance related services for veterans and their families, focusing on state military forces veterans and reservists. Include an assessment of the implementation of SB 1058, 80th Texas Legislature, relating to reintegration counseling services.

- Study state services and benefits for injured service members and their families who are recovering from their injuries and rehabilitating in Texas. Make recommendations on how to better serve them.
- Study the relationships between military installations and the surrounding communities and make recommendations addressing encroachment and quality of life.
- Examine ways that "The Fund for Veterans Assistance" established by H.B. 3107, 80th Texas Legislature, could be maximized to the benefit of Texas veterans.
- Monitor the implementation of legislation addressed by the Veteran Affairs & Military Installations Committee, 80th Legislature, Regular Session, and make recommendations for any legislation needed to improve, enhance, and/or complete implementation. Focus on the implementation of the Texas Veterans Commission (H.B. 3426) and Texas Veterans Land Board (H.B. 3140) Sunset reviews.

In 2003, Senator Shapleigh spearheaded the state's preparation for the 2005 BRAC round by authoring the omnibus Texas Military Preparedness Act, SB 652. As a result of his commitment to Texas' defense dependent communities and military heritage, Senator Shapleigh was appointed Chair of the Subcommittee on Base Realignment and Closure in 2004 and continues to lead that committee.

Over the next five years, Ft. Bliss officials project that El Paso will see a boost in soldiers from an estimated 17,000 today to over 37,000 in 2012. The following chart shows the projected increase in El Paso's population, including spouses and children of addition soldiers.

Expected Growth at Fort Bliss, 2006-12

	Baseline 2005		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Endstate 2012
Soldiers	9330	+/-	3844	948	2778	2790	9785	4074	3787	28006
		Cumulative	13174	14122	16900	19690	29475	33549	37336	37336
Spouses	4945	+/-	2230	550	1611	1618	5675	2363	2196	16243
		Cumulative	7175	7724	9336	10954	16629	18992	21188	21188
Children	10385	+/-	2952	728	2134	2143	7515	3129	2908	21509
		Cumulative	13337	14065	16199	18341	25856	28985	31894	31894
6-12 years (34%)	3531	+/-	1004	248	725	729	2555	1064	989	7313
		Cumulative	4535	4782	5508	6236	8791	9855	10844	10844
13-18 years (29%)	3012	+/-	856	211	619	621	2179	907	843	6237
		Cumulative	3868	4079	4698	5319	7499	8406	9249	9249
Total School Age	6543	+/-	1860	459	1344	1350	4734	1971	1832	13550
		Cumulative	8403	8862	10206	11556	16290	18261	20093	20093

Source: Team Bliss Base Transformation Office. Current as of December 2007.

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