### COMMITTEE MEETING EXPANDED AGENDA

**MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS, SPACE, AND DOMESTIC SECURITY**

**Senator Altman, Chair**  
**Senator Gibson, Vice Chair**

**MEETING DATE:** Tuesday, March 10, 2015  
**TIME:** 1:30 — 3:30 p.m.  
**PLACE:** Mallory Horne Committee Room, 37 Senate Office Building

**MEMBERS:** Senator Altman, Chair; Senator Gibson, Vice Chair; Senators Evers, Sachs, and Stargel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TAB</th>
<th>BILL NO. and INTRODUCER</th>
<th>BILL DESCRIPTION and SENATE COMMITTEE ACTIONS</th>
<th>COMMITTEE ACTION</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>CS/SB 394</td>
<td>Public Lodging Establishments; Requiring specified public lodging establishments to waive certain policies for individuals who present a valid Common Access Card; prohibiting duplication of Common Access Cards, etc.</td>
<td>Fav/CS Yeas 5 Nays 0</td>
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</table>
|     | Regulated Industries / Brandes (Similar CS/CS/H 277) | RI 02/18/2015 Fav/CS  
CM 03/02/2015 Favorable  
MS 03/10/2015 Fav/CS |
| 2   | SJR 910                 | Homestead Exemption/Living Spouse of Deceased Combat-Disabled Veteran; Proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to authorize the living spouse of a deceased veteran, who upon his or her death was aged 65 or older, partially or totally permanently disabled due to combat, and honorably discharged, to receive a discount on the payment of ad valorem taxes on homestead property based on the percentage of the veteran’s disability and to specify that the exemption is transferrable to another residence if the spouse remains unmarried and uses the residence as his or her primary residence, etc. | Favorable Yeas 4 Nays 0 |
|     | Altman (Similar HJ 299) | MS 03/10/2015 Favorable  
FT  
AP |
| 3   | SB 1296                 | Military and Veterans Affairs; Creating the Military and Overseas Voting Assistance Task Force within the Department of State; providing legislative findings regarding continuing education for veterans of the United States Armed Forces; requiring the application form for an original, renewal, or replacement driver license or identification card to include a voluntary checkoff permitting certain veterans to request written information for federal, state, and local veteran services programs, etc. | Temporarily Postponed |
|     | Bean (Similar H 1091, Compare H 7055) | MS 03/10/2015 Temporarily Postponed  
EE  
AP |

**Other Related Meeting Documents**
I. Summary:

CS/CS/SB 394 requires that public lodging establishments classified as a hotel, motel, or bed and breakfast inn waive any policy that restricts accommodations to individuals based on age for active duty members of the United States Armed Forces, the United States Reserve Forces, the National Guard, and the Coast Guard upon the presentation of a valid military identification card. The bill also prohibits public lodging establishments from duplicating military identification cards.

II. Present Situation:

Public Lodging Establishments

The Division of Hotels and Restaurants (division) within the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (department) is the state agency charged with enforcing the provisions of ch. 509, F.S., “and all other applicable laws and rules relating to the inspection or regulation of public lodging establishments and public food service establishments for the purpose of safeguarding the public health, safety, and welfare.”

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1 Section 509.032(1), F.S.
“Public lodging establishment” is defined to include both transient public lodging establishments and nontransient public lodging establishments.\textsuperscript{2} The principal differences between transient and nontransient public lodging establishments are the number of times that the establishments are rented in a calendar year and the length of the rentals. Section 509.013(4)(b), F.S., exempts dormitories, hospital and medical establishments, residential units, migrant labor camps, and establishments inspected by the Department of Health from the definition of “public lodging establishment.”

A public lodging establishment can be classified as a hotel, motel, nontransient apartment, transient apartment, bed and breakfast inn, timeshare project, or vacation rental.\textsuperscript{3}

Section 509.242(1)(a), F.S., defines a “hotel” as follows:

any public lodging establishment containing sleeping room accommodations for 25 or more guests and providing the services generally provided by a hotel and recognized as a hotel in the community in which it is situated or by the industry.

Section 509.242(1)(b), F.S., defines “motel” as follows:

any public lodging establishment which offers rental units with an exit to the outside of each rental unit, daily or weekly rates, offstreet parking for each unit, a central office on the property with specified hours of operation, a bathroom or connecting bathroom for each rental unit, and at least six rental units, and which is recognized as a motel in the community in which it is situated or by the industry.

Section 509.242(1)(f), F.S., defines a “bed and breakfast inn” as follows:

a family home structure, with no more than 15 sleeping rooms, which has been modified to serve as a transient public lodging establishment, which provides the accommodation and meal services generally offered by a bed and breakfast inn, and which is recognized as a bed and breakfast inn in the community in which it is situated or by the hospitality industry.

At the end of FY 2013-2014, there were 38,472 licensed public lodging establishments, divided as follows: \textsuperscript{4}

- Hotels – 1,720 licenses;
- Motels – 2,691 licenses;
- Nontransient apartments – 17,501 licenses;
- Transient apartments – 960 licenses;
- Bed and Breakfasts – 260 licenses;
- Vacation Rentals, Condominiums – 3,904 licenses; and
- Vacation Rentals, Dwellings – 11,436 licenses.

\textsuperscript{2} Section 509.013(4)(a), F.S.
\textsuperscript{3} Section 509.242(1), F.S.
\textsuperscript{4} Annual Report, Fiscal Year 2013-2014, Division of Hotels and Restaurants, Department of Business and Professional Regulation. A copy is available at \url{http://www.myfloridalicense.com/dbpr/hr/reports/annualreports/documents/ar2013_14.pdf} (last visited February 25, 2015).
Right to Refuse Accommodations

Public lodging establishments are private enterprises and may refuse accommodations to any person who is objectionable or undesirable to the operator, so long as the refusal is not “based upon race, creed, color, sex, physical disability, or national origin.” Public lodging establishments are also allowed to “establish reasonable rules and regulations for the management of the establishment,” which become part of “a special contract between the operator and each guest or employee using the services or facilities of the operator.”

A small sampling of hotels in Florida reveals that some public lodging establishments advertise age requirement policies. While employed by the military, or when traveling for military and personal purposes, some persons have been denied accommodations at public lodging establishments because of their age.

United States Armed Forces

The United States Armed Forces consists of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. Each branch of the Armed Forces has a U.S. Reserve Forces component that is under the command of their respective military branch. This is in addition to the Army National Guard and the Air Force National Guard. Florida Statutes defines active duty as full-time duty in active military service, to include federal duty such as full-time training, annual training, and attendance while a person is in active military service or in a school designated as a service school by law or by the secretary of the applicable military department. The term does not mean full-time duty in the National Guard. The minimum entrance-age requirement for all branches of the Armed Forces is 17 with parental consent or 18 without parental consent.

The Department of Defense (DoD) issues the Common Access Card (CAC) as the standard form of military identification for active duty uniformed service personnel, Selected Reserve, DoD civilian employees, and eligible contractor personnel. The CAC allows members to gain physical access to buildings and controlled spaces, and it provides access to DoD computer networks and systems.

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5 Section 509.092, F.S.
6 Section 509.101(1), F.S.
10 Id.
11 Section 250.01, F.S. (1)
12 Id.
14 Selected Reserve personnel are an element of the U.S. Reserve Forces that actively drill or participate in training at least 48 times per year and spend no less than 14 days on active duty for training. 10 U.S.C. s.10143(a) (2013); see also, 10 U.S.C. s.10147(a)(1) (2013).
16 Id.
According to the Military One Source 2013 Demographic Report, there are currently 2,513,168 active duty servicemembers in the U.S. Armed Forces. Florida has the seventh largest population of active duty service men and women at 60,234 and the third largest population of reserve forces at 36,745, which includes the 12,000 members of the Florida National Guard. Florida is home to 20 major military bases and three of the nation’s seven unified combatant commands.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill creates s. 509.095, F.S., to require that public lodging establishments classified as a hotel, motel, or bed and breakfast inn waive any policy that restricts accommodations to individuals based on age for active duty members of the United States Armed Forces, the United States Reserve Forces, the National Guard, and the Coast Guard. The bill prevents public lodging establishments from denying such persons accommodations based upon their age once a valid military identification card is presented.

The bill further prohibits a public lodging establishment from duplicating a military identification card.

The bill only applies to a public lodging establishment classified as a hotel, motel, or bed and breakfast inn as defined in s. 509.242, F.S.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

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18 Id.
19 Department of Military Affairs, dma.myflorida.com/about-us/ (last visited March 9, 2015).
B. Private Sector Impact:
None.

C. Government Sector Impact:
The Division of Hotels and Restaurants anticipates an indeterminate increase in complaints received and inspections required to investigate such complaints.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:
None.

VII. Related Issues:
None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:
This bill creates section 509.095 of the Florida Statutes.

IX. Additional Information:
A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

CS/CS by Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security on March 10, 2015:
The committee substitute (CS) requires the presentation of a “military identification card” instead of a “Common Access Card.” The term “military identification card” is commonly used in statute and includes the Common Access Card.

CS by Regulated Industries on February 18, 2015:
The committee substitute (CS) requires the presentation of a “Common Access Card” instead of a “military identification card.” The CS refers to active duty members of the United States Armed Services, the United States Reserve Forces, the National Guard, and the Coast Guard. The CS prohibits duplication of Common Access Cards that are presented pursuant to s. 509.095, F.S.

B. Amendments:
None.

This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill’s introducer or the Florida Senate.
The Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security (Stargel) recommended the following:

**Senate Amendment (with title amendment)**

Delete lines 14 - 23 and insert:

individuals with a valid military identification card.—Upon the presentation of a valid military identification card by an individual who is currently on active duty as a member of the United States Armed Forces, National Guard, Reserve Forces, or Coast Guard, and who seeks to obtain accommodations at a hotel, motel, or bed and breakfast inn, as defined in s. 509.242, such
hotel, motel, or bed and breakfast inn shall waive any minimum age policy that it may have which restricts accommodations to individuals based on age. Duplication of a military identification card presented pursuant to this

And the title is amended as follows:

Delete lines 5 - 6

and insert:

individuals who present a valid military identification card; prohibiting duplication of military identification cards;
A bill to be entitled
An act relating to public lodging establishments;
creating s. 509.095, F.S.; requiring specified public
lodging establishments to waive certain policies for
individuals who present a valid Common Access Card;
prohibiting duplication of Common Access Cards;
providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Section 509.095, Florida Statutes, is created to
read:

509.095 Accommodations at public lodging establishments for
individuals with a valid Common Access Card.—Upon the
presentation of a valid Common Access Card by an individual who
is currently on active duty as a member of the United States
Armed Forces, the United States Reserve Forces, the National
Guard, or the Coast Guard, and is seeking to obtain
accommodations at a hotel, motel, or bed and breakfast inn, as
defined in s. 509.242, such hotel, motel, or bed and breakfast
inn shall waive any minimum age policy that it may have which
restricts accommodations to individuals based on age.
Duplication of Common Access Cards presented pursuant to this
section is prohibited.

Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2015.
The Florida Senate
Committee Agenda Request

To: Senator Thad Altman, Chair
   Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security

Subject: Committee Agenda Request

Date: March 3, 2015

I respectfully request that Senate Bill #394, relating to Public Lodging Establishments, be placed on the:

☑ committee agenda at your earliest possible convenience.

☐ next committee agenda.

Senator Jeff Brandes
Florida Senate, District 22

File signed original with committee office
SENATOR JEFF BRANDES  
22nd District 

March 10, 2015 

Senator Thad Altman 
314 Senate Office Building 
404 South Monroe Street 
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100 

Dear Chair Altman, 

I will be unable to present my bill, **SB 394: Public Lodging Establishments**, in the Senate Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security today. 

I am requesting that my legislative assistant Trent Phillips be permitted to present this bill on my behalf. Please contact me with any questions on this request. 

Kind regards, 

Jeff Brandes 

CC: Elizabeth Ryon 
Lois Graham
The Florida Senate
APPEARANCE RECORD

(Deliver BOTH copies of this form to the Senator or Senate Professional Staff conducting the meeting)

3/10/15
Meeting Date

CS/SB 394
Bill Number (if applicable)

Topic
Public Lodging Establishments

Name
Col. Mike Prendergast

Job Title
Executive Director

Address
Suite 2105, The Capitol, 400 S. Monroe St.
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Phone
487-1533

Email

Speaking: ☑ For ☐ Against ☐ Information

Waive Speaking: ☑ In Support ☐ Against
(The Chair will read this information into the record.)

Representing
The Florida Department of Veterans Affairs

Appearing at request of Chair: ☐ Yes ☐ No
Lobbyist registered with Legislature: ☑ Yes ☐ No

While it is a Senate tradition to encourage public testimony, time may not permit all persons wishing to speak to be heard at this meeting. Those who do speak may be asked to limit their remarks so that as many persons as possible can be heard.

This form is part of the public record for this meeting.

S-001 (10/14/14)
### COMMITTEE VOTE RECORD

**COMMITTEE:** Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security  
**ITEM:** CS/SB 394  
**FINAL ACTION:** Favorable with Committee Substitute  
**MEETING DATE:** Tuesday, March 10, 2015  
**TIME:** 1:30 — 3:30 p.m.  
**PLACE:** 37 Senate Office Building

#### FINAL VOTE

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<tr>
<th>Senator</th>
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<td>Gibson, VICE CHAIR</td>
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**TOTALS**

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**CODES:**  
FAV=Favorable  
UNF=Unfavorable  
-R=Reconsidered  
TP=Temporarily Postponed  
WD=Withdrawn  
RE=Replaced by Engrossed Amendment  
VA=Vote After Roll Call  
OO=Out of Order  
RS=Replaced by Substitute Amendment  
VC=Vote Change After Roll Call  
AV=Abstain from Voting

**REPORTING INSTRUCTION:** Publish S-010 (10/10/09)  
03122015.1308  
Page 1 of 1
I. Summary:

Senate Joint Resolution 910 proposes an amendment to Article VII, section 6 of the Florida Constitution to allow the ad valorem tax discount on homestead property for combat-disabled veterans age 65 or older to carry over to the spouse of the veteran if the veteran predeceases his or her spouse. The spouse is eligible for the tax relief while he or she remains unmarried and uses the residence as his or her primary residence. The discount applied to the residence is determined by the percentage of the veteran’s disability.

This joint resolution will require approval by a three-fifths vote of the membership of each house of the Legislature for passage.

II. Present Situation:

Property Valuation in Florida

Florida law provides a number of options to reduce property tax liability. Article VII, section 2 of the Florida Constitution, provides for uniform ad valorem taxation, stating that “all ad valorem taxation shall be at a uniform rate within each taxing unit.” The property tax burden for an owner of any particular piece of real estate will depend on the property’s just value, its assessed value, and whether the property benefits from any tax exemptions or assessment limitations.

Just Value

Article VII, section 4, of the Florida Constitution, requires that all property be assessed at just value for ad valorem tax purposes. Just value has been interpreted by the courts to mean fair market value, or what a willing buyer would pay a willing seller for the property in an arms-length transaction.
**Assessed Value**

The Florida Constitution authorizes certain alternatives to the just valuation standard for specific types of property.\(^3\) Agricultural land, land producing high water recharge to Florida’s aquifers, and land used exclusively for noncommercial recreational purposes may be assessed solely on the basis of their character or use.\(^4\) Land used for conservation purposes must be assessed solely on the basis of character or use.\(^5\) Counties and municipalities may authorize historic properties to be assessed solely on the basis of character or use.\(^6\) Counties may also provide a reduction in the assessed value of property improvements on existing homesteads made to accommodate parents or grandparents that are 62 years of age or older.\(^7\) The Legislature is authorized to prohibit the consideration of improvements to residential real property for purposes of improving the property’s wind resistance or the installation of renewable energy source devices in the assessment of the property.\(^8\) Certain working waterfront property is assessed based upon the property’s current use.\(^9\)

**Taxable Value**

The taxable value of real and tangible personal property is the assessed value minus any exemptions provided by the Florida Constitution or by Florida Statutes. Such exemptions include, but are not limited to, homestead exemptions and exemptions for property used for educational, religious, or charitable purposes.\(^10\)

**Assessment Limitations**

**Save Our Homes**

The *Save Our Homes* assessment limitation was amended into the Florida Constitution in 1992. Article VII, section 4(d) of the Florida Constitution, limits the amount that a homestead’s assessed value can increase annually to the lesser of 3 percent or the percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI).\(^11\) In addition, an assessment may not exceed just value.

In 2008, Florida voters approved an additional amendment to Article VII, section 4(d) of the Florida Constitution, to provide for the portability of the accrued benefit under the *Save Our Homes* assessment limitation. This amendment allows homestead property owners who relocate to a new homestead to transfer up to $500,000 of the accrued benefit to the new homestead.

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\(^3\) The constitutional provisions in section 4, Art. VII, of the Florida Constitution, are implemented in Part II of ch. 193, F.S.

\(^4\) FLA. CONST. art. VII, s. 4(a).

\(^5\) Art. VII, section 4(b) of the Florida Constitution.

\(^6\) FLA. CONST. art. VII, s. 4(c).

\(^7\) FLA. CONST. art. VII, s. 4(e).

\(^8\) FLA. CONST. art. VII, s. 4(f).

\(^9\) FLA. CONST. art. VII, s. 4(i).

\(^10\) FLA. CONST. art. VII, ss. 3 and 6.

\(^11\) FLA. CONST. art. VII, s. 4(d).
Property Tax Exemptions for Homesteads

The Legislature may only grant property tax exemptions that are authorized in the Florida Constitution, and any modifications to existing property tax exemptions must be consistent with the constitutional provision authorizing the exemption.\textsuperscript{12}

\textit{Homestead Exemption}

Article VII, section 6 of the Florida Constitution provides that every person having legal and equitable title to real estate and who maintains a permanent residence on the real estate is eligible for a $25,000 homestead tax exemption applicable to all ad valorem tax levies including levies by school districts. An additional $25,000 homestead exemption applies to homesteads that have an assessed value greater than $50,000 and up to $75,000, excluding ad valorem taxes levied by school districts.

\textit{Additional Tax Exemptions}

Article VII, section 3 of the Florida Constitution, provides additional tax exemptions for certain types of property. These exemptions include, but are not limited to:

- Exemptions for municipal property that is used for a municipal or public purpose;
- Exemptions for household goods and personal effects up to a certain amount specified by general law not less than one thousand dollars;
- Widows/widowers exemptions up to a certain amount specified in general law not less than $500;
- Economic development exemptions created by county or municipal ordinance for new businesses and expansions of existing businesses;
- Historic preservation exemptions;
- $25,000 tax exemption for tangible personal property; and
- Exemptions for real property dedicated in perpetuity for conservation purposes.\textsuperscript{13}

Property Tax Exemptions for Ex-Service Members

In recognition of their service and sacrifice for our country the State of Florida has granted a number of ad valorem tax exemptions for ex-service members.

\textit{Total Ad Valorem Tax Exemption for Ex-Service Members and Surviving Spouses}

Section 196.081(1), F.S., provides that:

\begin{quote}
Any real estate that is owned and used as a homestead by a veteran who was honorably discharged with a service-connected total and permanent disability and for whom a letter from the United States Government or United States Department of Veterans or its predecessor has been issued certifying that the veteran is totally and permanently disabled is exempt from taxation, [provided] the veteran is a permanent resident of the state on January 1 of the tax year for
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{12}Sebring Airport Auth. v. McIntyre, 783 So. 2d 238, 248 (Fla. 2001); Archer v. Marshall, 355 So. 2d 781, 784. (Fla. 1978); Am Fi Inv. Corp. v. Kinney, 360 So. 2d 415 (Fla. 1978); See also Sparkman v. State, 58 So. 2d 431, 432 (Fla. 1952).

\textsuperscript{13}FLA. CONST. art. VII, s. 3(a)-(f).
which exemption is being claimed or . . . on January 1 of the year the veteran died. If the totally and permanently disabled veteran predeceases his or her spouse…the exemption from taxation carries over to the benefit of the veteran’s spouse until such time as he or she remarries or sells or otherwise disposes of the property.

Section 196.091(1), F.S., further provides that:

Any real estate used and owned as a homestead by an ex-service member who has been honorably discharged with a service-connected total disability and who has a certificate from the United States Government or United States Department of Veterans Affairs or its predecessor, or its successors, certifying that the ex-service member is receiving or has received special pecuniary assistance due to disability requiring specially adapted housing and required to use a wheelchair for his or her transportation is exempt from taxation. In the event the veteran did or shall predecease his or her spouse, the exemption from taxation shall carry over to the benefit of the veteran’s spouse.

**Ad Valorem Tax Exemption for Surviving Spouses of Veterans Who Died from Service-Connected Causes**

Article VII, section 6(f) of the Florida Constitution, allows the Legislature to adopt a general law allowing counties and municipalities to grant a homestead exemption to the surviving spouse of a veteran who died from service-connected causes while on active duty as a member of the United States Armed Forces. Section 196.081(4), F.S., currently provides, under specified conditions, a full exemption from ad valorem taxes on property that is owned and used as a homestead by such spouse. To be eligible for the exemption the surviving spouse must provide a letter from the United States Government or United States Department of Veterans Affairs or its predecessor certifying that the veteran died from service-connected causes while on active duty. Additionally, the veteran must have been a permanent resident of this state on January 1, of the year in which he or she died.

**$5,000 Ad Valorem Tax Exemption for Ex-Service Members**

Section 196.24, F.S., provides a $5,000 property tax exemption to any ex-service member who is a bona fide resident of the state and who has a service-connected disability to a degree of 10 percent or more. This exemption also applies to the un-remarried surviving spouse of a disabled ex-service member who had been married to such ex-service member for at least 5 years on the date of the ex-service member’s death.

**Combat-Related Partial Ad Valorem Tax Exemption (Discount) for Ex-Service Members**

Article VII, section 6(e) of the Florida Constitution, grants a discount on ad valorem taxes owed on homestead property for honorably discharged veterans who are 65 years or older and who are partially or totally disabled. To qualify for the discount, the veteran must submit proof of the veteran’s disability percentage to the county property appraiser and show that the disability is combat-related.
The ad valorem tax discount percentage is equal to the veteran’s percentage of disability, as determined by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.\

In 2014, 6,595 veterans received the combat-disabled ad valorem tax discount which amounted to a statewide property value discount of $336,648,499. There are currently 793,907 veterans over the age of 65 residing in Florida. The U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs indicates that there were 177,664 veterans over the age of 55 in Florida receiving compensation for service-related conditions at the end of Fiscal Year 2013.\

The Florida Constitution does not authorize this ad valorem tax discount to carry over to the surviving spouse a veteran should the veteran predecease the spouse.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

SJR 910 proposes an amendment to Article VII, section 6 of the Florida Constitution to allow the ad valorem tax discount on homestead property for combat-disabled veterans age 65 or older to carry over to the spouse of the veteran if the veteran predeceases his or her spouse. To be eligible for the discount, the spouse must remain unmarried and use the residence as his or her primary residence. The exemption is transferrable to another residence if the spouse remains unmarried and uses the residence as his or her primary residence.

The proposed amendment becomes effective if approved by the voters at the next general election or at an earlier special election specifically authorized by law for that purpose.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

The mandate provisions in Article VII, section 18 of the Florida Constitution, do not apply to joint resolutions.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

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\[14\] The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) assigns a percentage evaluation from 0-percent to 100-percent (in 10-percent increments) for the amount of disability that the USDVA determines the veteran has sustained. The resulting disability percentage rating determines the level of a veteran’s monthly disability compensation. The USDVA does not make a definitive determination if a disability is combat-related.


\[16\] E-mail correspondence with Florida Department of Veterans Affairs staff (March 9, 2015) (on file with Senate Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security Committee).

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. Other Constitutional Issues:

Article XI, section 1 of the Florida Constitution, authorizes the Legislature to propose amendments to the Florida Constitution by joint resolution approved by a three-fifths vote of the membership of each house. The amendment must be placed before the electorate at the next general election held more than 90 days after the proposal has been filed with the Secretary of State or at a special election held for that purpose.

Article XI, section 5(a) of the Florida Constitution, and s. 101.161(1), F.S., require constitutional amendments submitted to the electors to be printed in clear and unambiguous language on the ballot. In determining whether a ballot title and summary are in compliance with the accuracy requirement, Florida courts utilize a two-prong test, asking “first, whether the ballot title and summary ‘fairly inform the voter of the chief purpose of the amendment,’ and second, ‘whether the language of the title and summary, as written, misleads the public.’”

Article XI, section 5(d) of the Florida Constitution, requires proposed amendments or constitutional revisions to be published in a newspaper of general circulation in each county where a newspaper is published. The amendment or revision must be published once in the tenth week and again in the sixth week immediately preceding the week the election is held. The Division of Elections (division) within the Department of State estimates the full publication costs for advertising the proposed amendment to be approximately $135.97 per word, for a total publishing cost of approximately $146,031.78.

Article XI, section 5(e) of the Florida Constitution, requires approval by 60 percent of voters for a constitutional amendment to take effect. The amendment, if approved, becomes effective after the next general election or at an earlier special election specifically authorized by law for that purpose.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

The Revenue Estimating Conference has determined that SJR 910 will reduce local governments’ revenues by $200,000 in Fiscal Year 2018-2019, with a negative $200,000 recurring impact on local governments.

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18 Roberts v. Doyle, 43 So. 3d 654, 659 (Fla. 2010), citing Florida Dep’t of State v. Slough, 992 So. 2d 142, 147 (Fla. 2008).
19 Telephone conversation between Department of State staff and Senate Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security Committee staff (March 9, 2015).
B. Private Sector Impact:

If the proposed amendment is approved by the electorate and implemented by the Legislature, surviving spouses of certain veterans could receive property tax relief.

C. Government Sector Impact:

Article XI, section 5(d) of the State Constitution, requires proposed amendments or constitutional revisions to be published in a newspaper of general circulation in each county where a newspaper is published. The amendment or revision must be published once in the tenth week and again in the sixth week immediately preceding the week the election is held. The Division of Elections (division) within the Department of State estimates the full publication costs for advertising the proposed amendment to be approximately $135.97 per word, for a total publishing cost of approximately $146,031.78.\(^2\)

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This resolution amends Article VII, section 6 of the Florida Constitution.

IX. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.

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This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill’s introducer or the Florida Senate.

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\(^2\) Telephone conversation between Department of State staff and Senate Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security Committee staff (March 9, 2015).
Be It Resolved by the Legislature of the State of Florida:
That the following amendment to Section 6 of Article VII of the State Constitution is agreed to and shall be submitted to the electors of this state for approval or rejection at the next general election or at an earlier special election specifically authorized by law for that purpose:

ARTICLE VII
Finance and Taxation

SECTION 6. Homestead exemptions.—
(a) Every person who has the legal or equitable title to real estate and maintains thereon the permanent residence of the owner, or another legally or naturally dependent upon the owner, shall be exempt from taxation thereon, except assessments for special benefits, up to the assessed valuation of twenty-five thousand dollars and, for all levies other than school district levies, on the assessed valuation greater than fifty thousand dollars, and up to seventy-five thousand dollars, upon establishment of right thereto in the manner prescribed by law. The real estate may be held by legal or equitable title, by the entireties, jointly, in common, as a condominium, or indirectly by stock ownership or membership representing the owner's or member's proprietary interest in a corporation owning a fee or a leasehold initially in excess of ninety-eight years. The exemption shall not apply with respect to any assessment roll until such roll is first determined to be in compliance with the provisions of section 4 by a state agency designated by general law. This exemption is repealed on the effective date of any amendment to this Article which provides for the assessment of homestead property at less than just value.
(b) Not more than one exemption shall be allowed any individual or family unit or with respect to any residential unit. No exemption shall exceed the value of the real estate assessable to the owner or, in case of ownership through stock or membership in a corporation, the value of the proportion which the interest in the corporation bears to the assessed value of the property.
(c) By general law and subject to conditions specified therein, the Legislature may provide to renters, who are permanent residents, ad valorem tax relief on all ad valorem tax levies. Such ad valorem tax relief shall be in the form and amount established by general law.
(d) The legislature may, by general law, allow counties or municipalities, for the purpose of their respective tax levies and subject to the provisions of general law, to grant either or
both of the following additional homestead tax exemptions:

(1) An exemption not exceeding fifty thousand dollars to any person who has the legal or equitable title to real estate and maintains thereon the permanent residence of the owner and who has attained age sixty-five and whose household income, as defined by general law, does not exceed twenty thousand dollars; or

(2) An exemption equal to the assessed value of the property to any person who has the legal or equitable title to real estate with a just value less than two hundred and fifty thousand dollars and who has maintained thereon the permanent residence of the owner for not less than twenty-five years and who has attained age sixty-five and whose household income does not exceed the income limitation prescribed in paragraph (1).

The general law must allow counties and municipalities to grant these additional exemptions, within the limits prescribed in this subsection, by ordinance adopted in the manner prescribed by general law, and must provide for the periodic adjustment of the income limitation prescribed in this subsection for changes in the cost of living.

(e)(1) Each veteran who is age 65 or older who is partially or totally permanently disabled shall receive a discount from the amount of the ad valorem tax otherwise owed on homestead property the veteran owns and resides in if the disability was combat related and the veteran was honorably discharged upon separation from military service. The discount shall be in a percentage equal to the percentage of the veteran’s permanent, service-connected disability as determined by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs stating the percentage of the veteran’s service-connected disability and such evidence that reasonably identifies the disability as combat related and a copy of the veteran’s honorable discharge.

If the property appraiser denies the request for a discount, the appraiser must notify the applicant in writing of the reasons for the denial, and the veteran may reapply. The Legislature may, by general law, waive the annual application requirement in subsequent years. This subsection is self-executing and does not require implementing legislation.

(2) If a partially or totally permanently disabled veteran, as described in paragraph (1), predeceases his or her spouse and if, upon the death of the veteran, the spouse holds the legal or beneficial title to the homestead and permanently resides thereon, the exemption from taxation carries over to the benefit of the veteran’s spouse until he or she remarries or sells or otherwise disposes of the property. If the spouse sells the property, an exemption not to exceed the amount granted from the most recent ad valorem tax roll may be transferred to his or her new residence as long as the residence is used as his or her primary residence and he or she does not remarry.

(f) By general law and subject to conditions and limitations specified therein, the Legislature may provide ad valorem tax relief equal to the total amount or a portion of the ad valorem tax otherwise owed on homestead property to the:

(1) Surviving spouse of a veteran who died from service-
connected causes while on active duty as a member of the United States Armed Forces.

(2) Surviving spouse of a first responder who died in the line of duty.

(3) As used in this subsection and as further defined by general law, the term:

a. "First responder" means a law enforcement officer, a correctional officer, a firefighter, an emergency medical technician, or a paramedic.

b. "In the line of duty" means arising out of and in the actual performance of duty required by employment as a first responder.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the following statement be placed on the ballot:

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT
ARTICLE VII
SECTION 6
TAX EXEMPTION FOR SPOUSES OF DECEASED COMBAT-DISABLED VETERANS.—Proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to authorize the living spouse of a deceased veteran, who upon death was aged 65 or older, partially or totally permanently disabled due to combat, and honorably discharged, to receive a discount on ad valorem taxes assessed on homestead property based on the percentage of the veteran’s disability. The exemption is transferrable to another residence if the spouse remains unmarried and uses it as the primary residence.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Homestead Exemption Living Spouse</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Angela Gray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Title</td>
<td>Property Appraiser Jefferson County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td>480 W Walnut Street Monticello, FL 32344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>997 3356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td><a href="mailto:angela.gray@jeffersonpa.net">angela.gray@jeffersonpa.net</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Speaking:</td>
<td>☑ For ☐ Against ☐ Information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Waive Speaking:</td>
<td>☑ In Support ☐ Against</td>
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<tr>
<td>Representing</td>
<td>Florida Association of Property Appraisers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appear at request of Chair:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lobbyist registered with Legislature:</td>
<td>☑ Yes ☐ No</td>
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While it is a Senate tradition to encourage public testimony, time may not permit all persons wishing to speak to be heard at this meeting. Those who do speak may be asked to limit their remarks so that as many persons as possible can be heard.

*This form is part of the public record for this meeting.*
The Florida Senate
APPEARANCE RECORD

(Deliver BOTH copies of this form to the Senator or Senate Professional Staff conducting the meeting)

3/10/15
Meeting Date

Homestead Exemption
Topic

Michael P. Prendergast
Name

Ex Dir
Job Title

400 S. Monroe St.
Address

Tallahassee, FL 32301
City State Zip

For
Speaking:

Yes
Appearing at request of Chair:

No
Lobbyist registered with Legislature:

While it is a Senate tradition to encourage public testimony, time may not permit all persons wishing to speak to be heard at this meeting. Those who do speak may be asked to limit their remarks so that as many persons as possible can be heard.

This form is part of the public record for this meeting.
The Florida Senate

COMMITTEE VOTE RECORD

COMMITTEE: Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security
ITEM: SJR 910
FINAL ACTION: Favorable
MEETING DATE: Tuesday, March 10, 2015
TIME: 1:30—3:30 p.m.
PLACE: 37 Senate Office Building

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I. Summary:

SB 1296 addresses absentee voting for military personnel, support for student veterans at public colleges and universities, and outreach to veterans. Specifically, the bill:

- Creates the Military and Overseas Voting Assistance Task Force within the Department of State to study issues involving the development and implementation of an online voting system that allows absent military members to electronically submit voted ballots;
- Provides legislative intent regarding academic credit for military training and coursework and collaboration between the State Board of Education and the Board of Governors on student veteran issues; and
- Establishes a voluntary check-off on driver license and identification card applications to allow a veteran to request written information on federal, state, and local veterans benefit services.

II. Present Situation:

Military Absentee Voters

The federal Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) requires each state to permit absent uniformed services voters and overseas voters to use absentee registration procedures and to vote by absentee ballot in general, special, primary, and runoff elections for federal office. Florida law also permits the use of state absentee ballots for all state and local elections, merit retention, and ballot measures. An overseas voter can register to vote and request an absentee ballot at the same time by using the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA). The FPCA can be submitted by mail, e-mail, or fax if the overseas voter is already registered. If the overseas voter is not registered, the FPCA must be submitted by mail. An overseas voter may also obtain an absentee ballot by submitting a request to the supervisor of elections by telephone, mail, fax or e-mail. Absentee ballots are mailed to military and overseas voters no later than 45 days before each election. A voter can also request that the absentee ballot be faxed or e-mailed.
Additionally, the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) is the emergency back-up absentee ballot that allows UOCAVA voters who have not yet received their absentee ballot to vote in any election for federal office and any state or local election involving two or more candidates.¹ UOCAVA voters must submit their voted absentee ballot or the FWAB by mail or fax to their local election office no later than 7:00 p.m. on election day for primary elections and no later than 10 days after election day for presidential preference primaries and general elections.

**College Credit for Military Training and Education**

Section 1004.096, F.S., requires the Board of Governors to adopt regulations and the State Board of Education to adopt rules that enable eligible members of the U.S. Armed Forces to earn academic college credit at public postsecondary educational institutions for college-level training and education acquired in the military.² Accordingly, Board of Governors Regulation 6.013 and Rule 6A-14.0302 of the Florida Administrative Code, require all Florida universities and colleges, respectively, to have an established policy and process in place for evaluating military training and education. Pursuant to both the rule and regulation, such military training and education must be recognized by the American Council on Education (ACE).

**Priority Course Registration for Veterans**

Section 1004.075, F.S., requires each Florida College System institution and state university to provide priority course registration for veterans receiving GI Bill benefits if the institution offers priority course registration for any segment of the student population.³ Additionally, a spouse or dependent child of a veteran to whom GI Bill benefits have been transferred are also entitled to priority course registration until the expiration of their GI Bill benefits.

**Voluntary Contributions**

The voluntary contribution process, also known as voluntary check-offs, provides the opportunity for citizens to make a donation by checking a box on a form when registering a vehicle or renewing a registration, as well as applying for a new or replacement driver license or identification card.⁴

An organization that desires to receive a voluntary contribution must be specifically authorized by Florida Statutes. Section 320.023, F.S., establishes requirements for organizations seeking to establish a voluntary contribution on motor vehicle registration application forms, and

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¹ Section 101.6925, F.S.
² Chapter 2012-169, Laws of Fla.
³ Chapter 2012-159, Laws of Fla.
⁴ Sections 320.02(8), (14), and (15) and 328.72(11) and (16), F.S., provide motor vehicle registration applicants with 26 options for voluntary contributions. Section 322.08(7), F.S., provides driver license applicants with 19 options for voluntary contributions.
s. 322.081, F.S., establishes similar requirements for driver license and identification card applications. Both sections require the following:

- A request for the voluntary contribution being sought, describing the voluntary contribution in general terms;
- An application fee, not to exceed $10,000, to defray the DHSMV’s cost for reviewing the application and developing the voluntary contribution check off, if authorized; and
- A marketing strategy outlining short-term and long-term marketing plans for the contribution, and a financial analysis outlining the anticipated revenues and the planned expenditures of the revenues to be derived from the contributions.

There are three veteran or military-related voluntary contributions authorized for driver license and identification card applications. An applicant may elect to contribute $1 to the State Homes for Veterans Trust Fund, the Disabled American Veterans, and Support Our Troops, Inc.

The Florida Vets Connect Program

In 2010, the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) and the Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs (FDVA) partnered to create the Florida Vets Connect Program to stimulate outreach efforts to veterans in Florida. Through the Florida Vets Connect Program, veterans have the opportunity to voluntarily identify their veteran status when applying for or renewing a Florida driver license or state of Florida identification card. Beginning in 2010, present on each driver license and identification card application is the option for an individual to indicate status as a veteran and interest in receiving information on benefits, services, and support available to veterans. The DHSMV and the FDVA entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to facilitate the sharing of a veteran’s contact information from the DHSMV to the FDVA. The FDVA, through a third party provider, distributes general state of Florida veterans’ benefits information via e-mail to those individuals who request such information on the driver license or identification card application. The FDVA distributed 50,350 e-mails during the 2014 calendar year under the Vets Connect Program. E-mails are distributed on a monthly basis.

County and City Veteran Service Officers

Section 292.11, F.S., authorizes each county and city to employ a county or city veteran service officer to provide a myriad of assistance to veterans including presenting claims for and securing

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5 State funds may not be used to pay the application fee.
6 See Section 322.08(7)(n), (o), and (r), F.S.
8 Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security Committee staff telephone conversation with Steve Murray, Communications Director, Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs. March 6, 2015.
9 According to the FDVA, it is too cost prohibitive to distribute printouts of the veterans’ benefits information via the United States mail.
10 Supra note 9.
11 E-mail correspondence from FDVA staff on March 5, 2015. On file with the Senate Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security Committee.
12 Id.
benefits or privileges to which veterans are or may become entitled by reason of their service in the military. County veteran service officers are county employees, but are certified by the FDVA. Each county currently employs a veteran service officer, however, in some cases, one veteran service officer may service two counties. There are currently no certified city veteran service officers in Florida.

**Direct-Support Organizations**

Florida law provides for the establishment of direct-support organizations as a means to assist state agencies in accomplishing their missions. A direct-support organization is established as a Florida corporation not for profit incorporated under ch. 617, F.S., and approved by the Department of State.

The 2008 Legislature authorized the establishment of the Florida Veterans Foundation, a direct-support organization created to provide assistance, funding, and support for the FDVA in carrying out its mission of veterans’ advocacy. The Florida Veterans Foundation mission is to serve, support, and advocate for Florida veterans to improve their wellbeing.

**III. Effect of Proposed Changes:**

**Section 1** establishes the Military and Overseas Voting Assistance Task Force (Task Force) within the Department of State to study issues involving the development and implementation of an online voting system that allows absent military members to electronically submit voted ballots.

The Task Force consists of the following 20 members:

- The Secretary of State or his or her designee, who shall serve as the chair of the Task Force;
- The Adjutant General or his or her designee;
- The executive director of the Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs, or his or her designee;
- The executive director of the Agency for State Technology or his or her designee;
- One member of the Senate appointed by the President of the Senate;
- One member of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;
- One member of the Senate appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate;
- One member of the House of Representatives appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives;
- One member appointed by the Governor;
- Six supervisors of elections appointed by the Secretary of State;

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13 Section 292.11(4), F.S.
15 E-mail correspondence with FDVA staff on March 6. On file with the Senate Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security Committee.
16 Direct-support organizations perform a variety of services to state agencies including: Raising money; Submitting requests for and receiving government grants; Receiving, holding, investing, and administering property; Assisting an agency in performing its mission; and Making expenditures for the benefit of the supported agency.
17 See s. 292.055, F.S.
• Five individuals appointed by the Secretary of State; and
• Five individuals appointed by the Secretary of State with relevant expertise in computers, the Internet, or other associated technologies.

Members of the Task Force shall serve without compensation, but are entitled to reimbursement for per diem and travel expenses.

The bill directs the Task Force to study and report on the following issues:
• Any factor that limits the ability of absent uniformed services voters to request, receive, and return absentee ballots within the current statutory time period for casting absentee ballots;
• The costs associated with the development and implementation of an online voting system;
• The feasibility of absent uniformed services voters using an online voting system to electronically submit a voted ballot;
• The security of electronically submitting a voted ballot through an online voting system; and
• Procedures adopted by other states to facilitate greater electoral participation among absent uniformed services voters.

The Secretary of State must submit a report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by July 1, 2016, containing the Task Force’s recommendation on whether the state should pursue the development and implementation of an online voting system for absent military voters. If the Task Force recommends an online voting system, the report must include recommended steps for developing and implementing such a system.

The Task Force will expire upon the submission of the Secretary of State’s required report by July 1, 2016.

Additionally, the bill requires the Division of Elections of the Department of State to provide support staff for the Task Force and requires the Agency for State Technology to assist the Task Force upon request.

Section 2 provides legislative intent regarding the provision of college credit for military training and coursework and other services to student veterans. The bill provides that it is the intent of the Legislature that the State Board of Education and the Board of Governors work collaboratively to do the following:
• Establish degree programs that award academic credit for military training and experience, including, but not limited to vocational and technical degrees;
• Appoint and train specific faculty within each degree program at each institution as liaisons and contacts for veterans;
• Coordinate existing disability services on each campus with veteran disability services provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and other federal, state, and private entities;
• Facilitate statewide meetings for campus personnel to discuss and develop best practices, exchange ideas and experiences, and hear presentations by individuals with expertise in the unique needs of veterans; and
• Provide veterans with sufficient courses required for graduation, including but not limited to, giving priority registration for veterans.

Because legislative intent does not expressly mandate an action, section 2 of the bill essentially expresses the Legislature’s desire that the State Board of Education and the Board of Governors work collaboratively to assist student veterans in the ways outlined above.

Section 3 amends s. 322.08, F.S., to provide a voluntary check-off on the application form for an original, renewal, or replacement driver license or identification card to allow honorably discharged military servicemembers to request written information at on federal, state, and local veteran services programs. The written information will be provided at no cost to the veteran by a county or city veteran service officer through a direct-support organization. If a veteran is not under the jurisdiction of a county or city veteran service officer, the information will be provided by the Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs (FDVA). Such written information on veteran services programs must be sent by United States mail.

The Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) and the FDVA will collaborate to administer the voluntary check-off. The DHSMV will report quarterly to the FDVA the identifying information of veterans who requested information via the voluntary check-off and provided a DD Form 214 or other acceptable form. Information provided from the DHSMV to the FDVA includes a veteran’s legal name, sex, date of birth, social security number, and address.

Additionally, the bill requires the FDVA to provide assistance to veterans who select the voluntary check-off with preparing claims for and securing compensation, hospitalization, career training, and other benefits available to veterans. The bill allows the FDVA to apply for and administer any federal veteran services programs and any state and local programs that may be beneficial to the particular interests of veterans.

Section 4 provides an effective date of July 1, 2015.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.
V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The Department of State would be responsible for the reimbursement of per diem and travel expenses for the Military and Overseas Voting Assistance Task Force (Task Force) members. Additionally, the Division of Elections within the Department of State will provide support staff for the Task Force. Depending on the scope of the Task Force’s needs, this may require additional full-time employees.\(^{18}\)

There is no estimate available at this time for the cost to implement the voluntary check-off program. Program expenses may include postage fees, packaging materials, technical and staff support. The bill does not identify a funding source to pay for the implementation of the program and does not specify which entity referenced in the bill is responsible for the costs associated with the program.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

The bill provides that a “direct-support organization,” on behalf of a county or city veteran service officer, will distribute written information on veteran services program to veterans who request such information via the voluntary check-off established in the bill. The bill does not identify which statutorily created direct-support organization will perform this function.

The duties and authorities prescribed to the FDVA on lines 157-172 of the bill appear to be unnecessary because they are consistent with existing FDVA duties and authorities prescribed in s. 292.05, F.S.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends section 322.08 of the Florida Statutes. This bill creates undesignated sections of the Florida Law.

\(^{18}\) Department of State. SB 1296 Agency Bill Analysis. March 6, 2015.
IX. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:
   (Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)
   None.

B. Amendments:
   None.

This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill’s introducer or the Florida Senate.
The Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security (Stargel) recommended the following:

**Senate Amendment (with title amendment)**

Delete lines 109 - 172

and insert:

1. Align existing degree programs, including, but not limited to, vocational and technical degrees, at each state university and Florida College System institution with applicable military training and experience to maximize academic credit award for such training and experience.

2. Appoint and train specific faculty within each degree
The text is a legislative amendment proposing an amendment to Florida Statutes. It includes the following key points:

1. Incorporate outreach services tailored to disabled veterans into existing disability services on the campus of each state university and Florida College System institution to make available to such veterans information on disability services provided by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, other federal and state agencies, and private entities.

2. Facilitate statewide meetings for personnel at state universities and Florida College System institutions who provide student services for veterans to discuss and develop best practices, exchange ideas and experiences, and attend presentations by individuals with expertise in the unique needs of veterans.

3. Make every effort to provide veterans with sufficient courses required for graduation, including, but not limited to, giving priority registration to veterans.

4. To support the carrying out of the duties of the Department of Veterans' Affairs prescribed in s. 292.05 and to facilitate outreach to veterans residing in this state, the application form for an original, renewal, or replacement driver license or identification card must include a voluntary checkoff permitting a veteran of the United States Armed Forces to request written or electronic information on federal, state, and
local benefits and services available to veterans. The veteran may elect to receive requested information through United States mail or by e-mail. A county or city veteran service officer shall deliver the requested information to the veteran through a third-party provider acting on behalf of the Department of Veterans’ Affairs. If the veteran does not have access to a county or city veteran service officer, the Department of Veterans’ Affairs shall deliver the requested information to the veteran through a third-party provider acting on its behalf. (b) The department shall collaborate with the Department of Veterans’ Affairs to administer this subsection. The department shall report monthly to the Department of Veterans’ Affairs the name and mailing address or e-mail address of each veteran who requests information as provided in paragraph (a). Following receipt of the monthly report, the Department of Veterans’ Affairs shall disseminate the contact information for each such veteran to the third-party provider acting on its behalf and the respective county or city veteran service officer. The third-party provider and the county or city veteran service officer shall coordinate delivery of the information requested pursuant to paragraph (a).

And the title is amended as follows:

Delete lines 16 – 31

and insert:

align existing degree programs at state universities and Florida College System institutions, train faculty, incorporate outreach services into existing
disability services, facilitate statewide meetings for personnel, and provide sufficient courses and priority registration to veterans; amending s. 322.08, F.S.; requiring the application form for an original, renewal, or replacement driver license or identification card to include a voluntary checkoff permitting veterans to request written or electronic information on federal, state, and local benefits and services for veterans; requiring a county or city veteran service officer to deliver the requested information; requiring the Department of Veterans’ Affairs to deliver the requested information under certain circumstances; requiring the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles to collaborate with the Department of Veterans’ Affairs in the administration of the voluntary checkoff program; requiring the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles to report monthly to the Department of Veterans’ Affairs the names and mailing or e-mail addresses of veterans who request information; requiring the Department of Veterans’ Affairs to disseminate veteran contact information to the third-party provider and respective county or city veteran service officer; requiring the third-party provider and the county or city veteran service officer to coordinate delivery of the requested information; providing an effective date.
A bill to be entitled 
An act relating to military and veterans affairs; 
creating the Military and Overseas Voting Assistance 
Task Force within the Department of State; specifying 
membership of the task force; authorizing 
reimbursement for per diem and travel expenses; 
prescribing duties of the task force; requiring 
submission of a report to the Governor and the 
Legislature by a specified date; providing for 
expiration of the task force; providing for staffing; 
providing legislative findings regarding continuing 
education for veterans of the United States Armed 
Forces; providing legislative intent for 
the State Board of Education and the Board of Governors of the 
State University System to work collaboratively to 
establish degree programs at state universities and 
Florida College System institutions, train faculty, 
coordinate campus disability services, facilitate 
statewide meetings for personnel, and provide 
sufficient courses and priority registration to 
veterans; amending s. 322.08, F.S.; requiring the 
application form for an original, renewal, or 
replacement driver license or identification card to 
include a voluntary checkoff permitting certain 
veterans to request written information for federal, 
state, and local veteran services programs; directing 
the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles to 
report specified information to the department; 
directing the department to assist veterans with 
preparing certain claims and securing certain 
services; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Military and Overseas Voting Assistance Task 
Force.—The Military and Overseas Voting Assistance Task Force, a 
task force as defined in s. 20.03, Florida Statutes, is created 
within the Department of State. The task force is created for 
the express purpose of studying issues involving the development 
and implementation of an online voting system that allows absent 
uniformed services voters to electronically submit voted 
ballots.

(i) The task force is composed of 20 members, as follows:
(a) The Secretary of State or his or her designee, who 
shall serve as chair of the task force.
(b) The Adjutant General or his or her designee.
(c) The executive director of the Department of Veterans’ 
Affairs or his or her designee.
(d) The executive director of the Agency for State 
Technology or his or her designee.
(e) One member of the Senate appointed by the President of 
the Senate.
(f) One member of the House of Representatives appointed by 
the Speaker of the House of Representatives.
(g) One member of the Senate appointed by the Minority 
Leader of the Senate.
(h) One member of the House of Representatives appointed by 
the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives.
Section 2. The Legislature finds that many veterans of the United States Armed Forces in this state have completed training and coursework during their military service, including overseas deployments, resulting in tangible and quantifiable strides in their pursuit of a postsecondary degree. The Legislature further finds that the State Board of Education and the Board of Governors of the State University System must work together to ensure that military training and coursework are granted academic credit in order to assist veterans in continuing their education. Therefore, it is the intent of the Legislature that the State Board of Education and the Board of Governors work collaboratively to:

(1) Establish degree programs, including, but not limited to, vocational and technical degrees, at each state university and Florida College System institution that awards academic credit for military training and experience.

(2) Appoint and train specific faculty within each degree program at each state university and Florida College System institution as liaisons and contacts for veterans.

(3) Coordinate existing disability services on the campus with relevant expertise in computers, the Internet, or other associated technologies.

(2) Members of the task force shall serve without compensation, but are entitled to reimbursement for per diem and travel expenses pursuant to s. 112.061, Florida Statutes.

(3) The task force, at a minimum, shall study and report on the following issues:

(a) Any factor that limits the ability of absent uniformed services voters to request, receive, and return absentee ballots within the current statutory time period for casting absentee ballots.

(b) The costs associated with the development and implementation of an online voting system.

(c) The feasibility of absent uniformed services voters using an online voting system to electronically submit a voted ballot.

(d) The security of electronically submitting a voted ballot through an online voting system.

(e) Procedures adopted by other states to facilitate greater electoral participation among absent uniformed services voters.

(4) The Secretary of State shall submit a report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by July 1, 2016, containing the task force’s recommendation concerning whether the state should pursue the development and implementation of an online voting system that allows absent uniformed services voters to electronically submit voted ballots. If the task force favorably recommends an online voting system, the report must include recommended steps for developing and implementing such a system. Upon submission of the report, the task force shall expire.

(5) The Division of Elections of the Department of State shall provide support staff for the task force. The Agency for State Technology shall assist the task force upon request.

The Legislature further finds that the State Board of Education and the Board of Governors of the State University System must work together to ensure that military training and coursework are granted academic credit in order to assist veterans in continuing their education. Therefore, it is the intent of the Legislature that the State Board of Education and the Board of Governors work collaboratively to:

(1) Establish degree programs, including, but not limited to, vocational and technical degrees, at each state university and Florida College System institution that awards academic credit for military training and experience.

(2) Appoint and train specific faculty within each degree program at each state university and Florida College System institution as liaisons and contacts for veterans.

(3) Coordinate existing disability services on the campus with relevant expertise in computers, the Internet, or other associated technologies.

(2) Members of the task force shall serve without compensation, but are entitled to reimbursement for per diem and travel expenses pursuant to s. 112.061, Florida Statutes.

(3) The task force, at a minimum, shall study and report on the following issues:

(a) Any factor that limits the ability of absent uniformed services voters to request, receive, and return absentee ballots within the current statutory time period for casting absentee ballots.

(b) The costs associated with the development and implementation of an online voting system.

(c) The feasibility of absent uniformed services voters using an online voting system to electronically submit a voted ballot.

(d) The security of electronically submitting a voted ballot through an online voting system.

(e) Procedures adopted by other states to facilitate greater electoral participation among absent uniformed services voters.

(4) The Secretary of State shall submit a report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by July 1, 2016, containing the task force’s recommendation concerning whether the state should pursue the development and implementation of an online voting system that allows absent uniformed services voters to electronically submit voted ballots. If the task force favorably recommends an online voting system, the report must include recommended steps for developing and implementing such a system. Upon submission of the report, the task force shall expire.

(5) The Division of Elections of the Department of State shall provide support staff for the task force. The Agency for State Technology shall assist the task force upon request.

The Legislature finds that man...
(b) The department shall work with the Department of Veterans' Affairs to administer this subsection. The department shall report quarterly to the Department of Veterans' Affairs the legal name, sex, date of birth, social security number, and address of each honorably discharged member of the United States Armed Forces who provides a DD Form 214 issued by the United States Department of Defense or another acceptable form specified by the Department of Veterans' Affairs and who selects the voluntary checkoff to receive written information for federal, state, and local programs pursuant to paragraph (a). Information for such programs shall be sent by United States mail.

(c) The Department of Veterans' Affairs shall provide assistance to veterans who select the voluntary checkoff pursuant to paragraph (a) with preparing claims for and securing compensation, hospitalization, career training, and other benefits or privileges that such veterans are or may become entitled to under any federal or state law or regulation by reason of their service in the United States Armed Forces. The Department of Veterans' Affairs may apply for and administer any federal veteran services programs and develop and coordinate such state and local programs as may be beneficial to the particular interests of veterans, including, but not limited to, social services, health care, education, employment, and any other areas of determined need. Programs developed, administered, and coordinated pursuant to this subsection are subject to chapters 215 and 216 and services secured pursuant to this subsection shall be without charge to the veteran.

Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2015.
**COMMITTEE VOTE RECORD**

**COMMITTEE:** Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security  
**ITEM:** SB 1296  
**FINAL ACTION:**  
**MEETING DATE:** Tuesday, March 10, 2015  
**TIME:** 1:30 — 3:30 p.m.  
**PLACE:** 37 Senate Office Building

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FINAL VOTE</th>
<th>SENATORS</th>
<th>3/10/2015</th>
<th>Amendment 624704</th>
<th>3/10/2015</th>
<th>Motion to Temporarily Postpone</th>
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<td>Stargel</td>
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<td>Stargel</td>
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<td>Gibson, VICE CHAIR</td>
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<td>Altman, CHAIR</td>
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**TOTALS**  
- TP FAV -  
Yea Nay Yea Nay Yea Nay

**FINAL ACTION:**

**CODES:**  
FAV=Favorable  
UNF=Unfavorable  
-R=Reconsidered  
RCS=Replaced by Committee Substitute  
RE=Replaced by Engrossed Amendment  
RS=Replaced by Substitute Amendment  
TP=Temporarily Postponed  
VA=Vote After Roll Call  
VC=Vote Change After Roll Call  
WD=Withdrawn  
OO=Out of Order  
AV=Abstain from Voting

**REPORTING INSTRUCTION:** Publish S-010 (10/10/09) 03122015.1308 Page 1 of 1
Meeting called to order by Chair Altman
Roll call by Administrative Assistant, Lois Graham
Quorum is present
Comments from Chair Altman
Chair Altman asks that all appearance cards be given to Lois
TAB 1 CS/SB 394 by Senator Brandes presented by Mr. Trent Phillips, Legislative Assistant to Senator Brandes - Public Lodging Establishments
Explanation of CS/SB 394 by Mr. Phillips
Chair Altman asks if there are questions on the bill
Chair Altman states that there is a courtesy Amendment by Senator Stargel, Barcode #209142
Explanation of Amendment by Mr. Phillips
Chair Altman asks for questions on the amendment
Chair Altman asks for debate on the amendment
Chair Altman states that the amendment is adopted
Chair Altman states that we are back on the bill as amended
Chair Altman asks for appearance cards
Col. Mike Prendergast, Florida Department of Veterans Affairs waives in support
Chair Altman asks for debate
Chair Altman asks Mr. Phillips to close on CS/CS/SB 394
Mr. Phillips waives closing
Roll call on CS/SB 394 by Administrative Assistant, Lois Graham
CS/CS/SB 394 passes favorably
TAB 3 - SB 1296 by Senator Bean, Military and Veterans Affairs presented by Ms. Dee Alexander, Legislative Assistant to Senator Bean
Explanation of SB 1296 by Ms. Alexander
Chair Altman asks for questions
Senator Sachs speaking
Chairman Altman called on Senator Gibson for question
Question from Senator Gibson
Response from Ms. Alexander
Chair Altman states that there is an Amendment on the Bill
Ms. Alexander explains Amendment, Barcode #624704
Ms. Alexander explains the Amendment
Chair Altman states that the amendment is courtesy of Senator Stargel
Representative Greg Steube, State Representative speaking regarding the amendment
Chair Altman asks for questions on the amendment
Question from Senator Gibson
Response from Representative Steube
Question from Senator Sachs to Colonel Prendergast
Response from Colonel Prendergast
Chair Altman asks if there are additional questions
1:53:50 PM Question from Senator Gibson
1:54:13 PM Response from Colonel Prendergast
1:55:09 PM Question from Senator Stargel
1:55:18 PM Response from Colonel Prendergast
1:57:11 PM Question from Senator Stargel
1:57:31 PM Response from Colonel Prendergast
1:59:31 PM Question from Chair Altman
1:59:47 PM Response from Colonel Prendergast
2:01:06 PM Additional question from Chair Altman
2:01:20 PM Question from Senator Stargel
2:01:49 PM Response from Representative Steube
2:02:04 PM Additional comments from Representative Steube
2:02:09 PM Question from Senator Sachs
2:02:19 PM Response from Representative Steube
2:02:52 PM Follow-up question from Senator Sachs
2:03:03 PM Response from Representative Steube
2:05:07 PM Chair Altman ask if there are questions
2:05:27 PM Chair Altman ask for debate on the amendment
2:05:37 PM Question from Senator Gibson
2:07:43 PM Statement by Chair Altman
2:07:53 PM Chair Altman ask if there were additional debate
2:08:20 PM Comments from Senator Sachs
2:11:04 PM Chair Altman states that the bill will be TP’d
2:12:04 PM Chair Altman states that the bill is TP’d until next meeting
2:12:22 PM TAB 2 - SJR 910 by Senator Altman - Homestead Exemption/Living Spouse of Deceased Combat-Disabled Veteran
2:13:00 PM Chair passed to Senator Sachs
2:13:12 PM Explanation of SJR 910 by Senator Altman
2:13:54 PM Chair Sachs ask for questions on the bill and ask for appearance cards
2:14:03 PM Mr. Angela Gray, Property Appraiser, Jefferson County waives in support
2:14:17 PM Colonel Mike Prendergast, Executive Director, The Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs waives in support
2:14:26 PM Comments from Chair Sachs
2:14:31 PM Chair Sachs ask Senator Altman to close on bill
2:14:59 PM Senator Altman waives closing
2:15:10 PM Roll call by Administrative Assistant, Lois Graham
2:15:16 PM SJR 910 reported favorably
2:15:25 PM Comments from Chair Altman
2:15:38 PM Senator Stargel introduces Judge Davis the father of her Legislative Assistant
2:16:07 PM Comments from Chair Altman
2:16:12 PM Senator Stargel moves to rise