

Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security

CS/SB 184 — Military and Veterans Affairs

by Appropriations Committee and Senators Bean, Altman, Sachs, and Gaetz

Housing Rental Applications for Military Servicemembers

The bill provides that a landlord is required to process a rental application from a military servicemember within seven days of submission, if the landlord requires an application before residing in a rental unit. Within that seven day period, the landlord must provide to the servicemember a response in writing of the approval or denial of their application and, if denied, the reason for denial. Should the landlord not provide a timely denial of the rental application, the landlord must lease the rental unit to the servicemember if all other terms of the application and lease are met. These provisions also apply in situations in which a servicemember seeks to rent a unit or parcel within the control of a condominium association, cooperative association, or homeowners' association.

Voluntary Check-off to Request Information on Veterans' Benefits and Services

The bill creates a voluntary check-off on the application form for an original, renewal, or replacement driver license or identification card to allow military veterans to request written or electronic information on federal, state, and local benefits and services available to veterans. The veteran may elect to receive the information through the U.S. mail or by e-mail. The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA) will select a non-profit third party provider that has sufficient ability to communicate with veterans throughout the state to distribute the requested information directly to veterans. The Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles and the FDVA will collaborate to administer this voluntary check-off program.

Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame

The bill provides authority for the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame Council to accept nominations for and consider former members of the Florida National Guard for inclusion in the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame.

Credit for Military Experience for Professional Licensure through the Department of Business and Professional Regulation

The bill requires the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) to extend credit to honorably discharged veterans for relevant military training and education towards the requirements for construction and electrical contracting licensure and certification. For construction contracting licenses, the bill allows up to 3 years of relevant active duty service to meet the four year experience requirement for licensure. An additional year of active duty experience as a foreman in the trade may also be applied toward the experience requirements for licensure. For electrical or alarm system contracting licenses, the bill allows 4 years of

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experience as a supervisor in electrical or alarm system work with the military to meet the 4 year experience requirement for licensure.

The DBPR must provide by October 1, 2017 and each year thereafter a report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives on the method used to license and certify honorably discharged veterans in construction and electrical contracting.

Credit for Military Experience for Professional Licensure through the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

The bill requires the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS) to extend credit for relevant military training and education towards the requirement for private security, private investigative, and recovery services licensure. The DACS must provide by October 1, 2017 and each year thereafter a report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives on the methods used to license honorably discharged military veterans in the aforementioned professions.

Florida National Guard Commercial Driver License Testing Pilot Program

The bill directs the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) and the Department of Military Affairs (DMA) to conduct a commercial driver license testing pilot program for members of the Florida National Guard. By June 30, 2017, the DHSMV and the DMA must jointly submit a report on the results of the pilot program to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Military and Overseas Voting Assistance Task Force

Finally, the bill 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 members of the uniformed services to electronically submit voted ballots. The task force consists of the following 11 members:

- The Secretary of State or his or her designee;
- The Adjutant General 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;
- Three supervisors of elections appointed by the Florida State Association of Supervisors of Elections; and
- Three individuals appointed by the Secretary of State with relevant expertise in computers, the Internet, or other associated technologies.

The Secretary of State must submit a report by the task force to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by July 1, 2017, that recommends

whether or not the state should pursue the development and implementation of an online voting system for absent uniformed services voters. If the task force recommends pursuit of an online voting system, the report must include steps for developing and implementing such a system. The task force expires upon submission of the report.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2016.

Vote: Senate 39-0; House 113-0

Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security

CS/CS/CS/HB 1133 — Applicability of Revenue Laws to Out-of-state Businesses During Disaster-Response Periods

by Economic Affairs Committee; Finance and Tax Committee; Economic Development and Tourism Subcommittee; and Rep. Young and others (CS/CS/CS/SB 1262 by Appropriations Committee; Finance and Tax Committee; Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security Committee; and Senator Simpson)

The bill allows certain out-of-state businesses to conduct specific activities in this state immediately preceding or following an emergency or disaster without establishing a level of presence that would require the business to register, file, and remit state or local taxes or fees. The bill provides that such out-of-state businesses are not subject to any of the following:

- Reemployment assistance taxes;
- State or local professional or occupational licensing requirements or related fees;
- Local business taxes;
- Taxes on the operation of commercial motor vehicles;
- Corporate income tax; and
- Tangible personal property tax on specified equipment brought into the state by the out-of-state business.

The exceptions provided in the bill apply to out-of-state businesses that are physically present in this state in anticipation of or immediately following an emergency or disaster to assist with the restoration of communications, electric, natural gas, and water infrastructure systems. Additionally, out-of-state employees working in this state to provide such assistance are not required to comply with state or local occupational licensing requirements, or pay related fees.

Privileges provided in the bill are only valid:

- 10 days before a state of emergency is declared and ending on the 60th day after the state of emergency expires; or
- If no state of emergency is declared, a period of 7 days beginning on the date an out-of-state business enters this state at the request of a Florida communications, electric, or natural gas entity pursuant to a mutual aid agreement.

An out-of-state business or employee that is present in this state outside of the specified time periods is not entitled to the privileges provided in the bill and is subject to the state's normal standards for establishing presence or residency or for doing business in this state.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.

Vote: Senate 37-0; House 115-0

Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security

SB 1202 — Discounts on Public Park Entrance Fees and Transportation Fares

by Senator Abruzzo

The bill requires county and municipal departments of parks and recreation to provide a full or partial discount on park entrance fees to the following individuals:

- Current military service members;
- Honorably discharged veterans;
- Honorably discharged veterans with a service-connected disability;
- The surviving spouse or parents of a military service member who died in combat; and
- The surviving spouse or parent of a law enforcement officer, firefighter, emergency medical technician, or paramedic who died in the line of duty.

A park entrance fee is defined as a fee charged to access lands managed by a county or municipal park or recreation department. The term does not include expanded amenity fees for amenities such as campgrounds, aquatic facilities, stadiums or arenas, facility rentals, special events, boat launching, golf, zoos, museums, gardens, or programs taking place within public lands.

The bill also requires regional transportation authorities to provide disabled veterans with discounts on fares for the use of fixed-route transportation systems operated by the authority.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2016.

Vote: Senate 37-0; House 114-0

Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security

CS/HB 1219 — Veterans' Employment

by Veteran and Military Affairs Subcommittee and Rep. Raburn and others (CS/SB 1538 by Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security Committee and Senator Evers)

The bill requires each state agency and authorizes each political subdivision of the state to develop and implement a written veterans recruitment plan that establishes annual goals for ensuring the full use of veterans in the agency's or political subdivision's workforce. Each veterans' recruitment plan must apply to veterans and their family members who are entitled to veterans' preference in appointment and retention in public employment pursuant to s. 295.07(1), F.S.

The Department of Management Services (DMS) must annually collect and publish on its website and include in its annual workforce report statistical data for each state agency on the following:

- The number of persons who claim veterans' preference;
- The number of persons who are hired through the veterans' preference; and
- The number of persons who are hired as a result of the veterans' recruitment plan.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect October 1, 2016.

Vote: Senate 35-0; House 118-0

Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security

CS/SB 1288 — Emergency Management

by Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security Committee and Senator Richter

The bill defines the term “activate” in ch. 252, F.S., to mean the execution and implementation of the necessary plans and activities required to mitigate, respond to, or recover from an emergency or disaster pursuant to the State Emergency Management Act and the State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan. The definition is intended to allow the Division of Emergency Management (DEM) to provide additional clarity to the Federal Emergency Management Agency when applying for disaster assistance.

The bill also instructs the DEM to implement a statewide certification system to facilitate the transport and distribution of essentials in commerce throughout the state in the event of a declared emergency. The bill describes essentials to mean goods that are consumed or used as a direct result of a declared emergency, or that are consumed or used to preserve, protect, or sustain life, health, safety, or economic well-being. Certification by the DEM will allow those certified to enter or remain in an area in which a curfew has been imposed as a result of a declared emergency for the limited purpose of facilitating the transport or distribution of essentials. The certification is applicable to both pre and post-emergency declarations and is valid for up to one year with the option to renew.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.

Vote: Senate 38-0; House 115-0

Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security

SB 7016 — Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children

by Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security Committee and Senator Gaetz

The bill (Chapter 2016-34, L.O.F.) reenacts provisions of law establishing and implementing the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (compact) and provides for future legislative review and repeal of the compact in 2019.

Participation in the compact enables member states to address educational transition issues faced by military families as they transfer from various states and school districts in accordance with official military orders. States are required to enact the compact into law in order to join the compact, which the Legislature did during the 2008 Regular Session. As of January 2015, all 50 states and the District of Columbia are active members of the compact. Since its enactment in 2008, Florida's compact legislation has included a provision requiring automatic repeal of the compact after a period of time, unless reauthorized by the Legislature. The Legislature last reauthorized the compact in 2013, and provided for its repeal on April 10, 2016.

In addition to reauthorizing the compact and providing for future legislative review and repeal of the law, the bill also codifies in Florida Statutes that compact membership dues must be paid within existing resources by the Department of Education.

These provisions became law upon approval by the Governor on April 9, 2016.

Vote: Senate 40-0; House 113-0