

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

CS/HB 181 — Natural Hazards

by Appropriations Committee and Rep. Jacobs (SB 464 by Senators Clemens, Campbell, and Rodriguez)

The bill creates an interagency workgroup to address the impacts of natural hazards in this state. The workgroup is comprised of a liaison from each agency within the executive branch of state government, each water management district, and the Public Service Commission. The director of the Division of Emergency Management, or his or her designee, will serve as the coordinator of the workgroup.

The workgroup is directed to share information on the current and potential impacts of natural hazards throughout the state and collaborate on statewide initiatives to address the impacts of natural hazards. The term “natural hazards” includes, but is not limited to, extreme heat, drought, wildfires, sea-level changes, high tides, storm surge, saltwater intrusion, stormwater runoff, flash floods, inland flooding, and coastal flooding.

The Division of Emergency Management is responsible for preparing an annual progress report on behalf of the workgroup on the implementation of the state’s enhanced hazard mitigation plan as it relates to natural hazards. The annual report is due to the Governor, President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House of Representatives on January 1, 2019, and each year thereafter. Each workgroup liaison is responsible for posting the annual report to their respective agency’s website.

The bill appropriates \$84,738 in recurring funds and \$4,046 in nonrecurring funds from the Grants and Donations Trust Fund to the Division of Emergency Management and authorizes one full-time equivalent position to implement the requirements in the bill.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2017.

Vote: Senate 37-0; House 111-1

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

CS/CS/SB 370 — Florida Wing of the Civil Air Patrol

by Appropriations Committee; Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security Committee; and Senators Stargel and Hukill

The bill provides certain employment protections for members of the Florida Wing of the Civil Air Patrol who are absent from their place of employment due to service or training with the Civil Air Patrol. The Civil Air Patrol is a nonprofit, congressionally chartered corporation that serves as an auxiliary to the U.S. Air Force. The organization is composed of volunteer members who perform homeland security, disaster relief, and drug interdiction missions at the request of federal, state, and local agencies.

The bill requires a public or private employer with 15 or more employees to provide up to 15 days of unpaid leave (Civil Air Patrol leave) annually to an employee who is a senior member of the Florida Wing of the Civil Air Patrol for the purpose of participating in a Civil Air Patrol training or mission. The bill also:

- Prohibits an employer from discharging, reprimanding, or otherwise penalizing an employee for taking Civil Air Patrol leave;
- Prohibits the termination of an employee for a period of one year after the date the employee returns to work from Civil Air Patrol leave, except for cause;
- Entitles an employee returning to work from Civil Air Patrol leave to certain seniority rights; and
- Authorizes a cause of action for a Civil Air Patrol member who is affected by a violation of a provision in the bill.

The bill states that an important state interest is fulfilled by allowing senior members of the Florida Wing of Civil Air Patrol to take authorized Civil Air Patrol leave.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2017.

Vote: Senate 33-0; House 117-0

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

CS/HB 401 — Notaries Public

by Local, Federal and Veterans Affairs Subcommittee and Rep. Abruzzo and others (CS/SB 440 by Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security Committee and Senators Gibson and Torres)

The bill expands the list of forms of identification that a notary public may rely on in notarizing a signature on a document to include a Veteran Health Identification Card issued by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2017.

Vote: Senate 37-0; House 114-0

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

CS/HB 1079 — Pub. Rec. and Meetings/Campus Emergency Response for Public Postsecondary Educational Institutions

by Oversight, Transparency and Administration Subcommittee and Rep. Rommel and others (CS/SB 1224 by Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security Committee and Senators Passidomo and Hutson)

The bill creates an exemption from public record and public meeting requirements for information associated with a campus emergency response of a public postsecondary educational institution. “Campus emergency response” is defined as a public postsecondary educational institution’s response to or plan for responding to an act of terrorism or other public safety crisis or emergency, and it includes information such as threat assessments, response plans, staffing, and identification of students, faculty, and staff.

Under the bill, a campus emergency response held by a public postsecondary educational institution, a state or local law enforcement agency, a county or municipal emergency management agency, the Executive Office of the Governor, the Department of Education, the Board of Governors of the State University System, or the Division of Emergency Management is exempt from public record requirements. Additionally, any portion of a public meeting that would reveal information related to a campus emergency response is exempt from public meeting requirements.

The bill states that a campus emergency response affects the health and safety of students, faculty, staff, and the public at large. If campus emergency responses were made publicly available for inspection or copying, they could be used to hamper or disable the response of a public postsecondary educational institution to an act of terrorism, or other public safety crisis or emergency. The result of which would be an increase in the number of Floridians subjected to fatal injury.

This exemption is subject to the Open Government Sunset Review Act and shall stand repealed on October 2, 2022, unless reviewed and saved from repeal through reenactment by the Legislature.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2017.

Vote: Senate 36-0; House 118-0

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

SB 7008 — Department of Veterans' Affairs Direct-Support Organization

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

The bill (Chapter 2017-6, L.O.F.) saves from repeal the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs' (FDVA) statutory authority to establish a direct-support organization, which was set to expire on October 1, 2017.

In 2008, the Legislature enacted s. 292.055, F.S., authorizing the FDVA to establish a direct-support organization to provide assistance, funding, and support for the FDVA in carrying out its mission. The Florida Veterans Foundation, Inc. (foundation) is the non-profit corporation that has since served as the direct-support organization to the FDVA. The foundation operates pursuant to a written contract with the FDVA. Its primary responsibility is to fund and administer emergency financial assistance grants for veterans during times of serious financial need. The foundation also funds and administers statutorily created programs and projects, such as the Florida Veterans' Walk of Honor, the Florida Veterans' Memorial Garden, and the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame.

These provisions were approved by the Governor and take effect July 1, 2017.

Vote: Senate 38-0; House 114-0

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

SB 7010 — Department of Military Affairs Direct-support Organization

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

The bill (Chapter 2017-7, L.O.F.) saves from repeal the Florida Department of Military Affairs' (DMA) statutory authority to establish a direct-support organization, which was set to expire on October 1, 2017.

In 2000, the Legislature enacted s. 250.115, F.S., authorizing the DMA to establish a direct-support organization to raise funds and make expenditures for the direct or indirect benefit of the DMA or the Florida National Guard. The Florida National Guard Foundation, Inc. (foundation) is the non-profit corporation that has since served as the direct-support organization to the DMA. The foundation operates pursuant to a written contract with the DMA. Its primary responsibility is to fund and administer an emergency financial assistance and scholarship grant program for current members of the Florida National Guard.

These provisions were approved by the Governor and take effect July 1, 2017.

Vote: Senate 37-0; House 113-0