

<b>Tab 1</b>	<b>SM 314</b> by <b>Wright (CO-INTRODUCERS) Collins;</b> Identical to H 04005 Florida National Guard Increased Force Structure
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<b>Tab 2</b>	<b>SB 116</b> by <b>Burgess (CO-INTRODUCERS) Collins;</b> Veterans
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The Florida Senate  
**COMMITTEE MEETING EXPANDED AGENDA**  
**MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS, SPACE, AND**  
**DOMESTIC SECURITY**  
**Senator Wright, Chair**  
**Senator Collins, Vice Chair**

**MEETING DATE:** Tuesday, February 18, 2025

**TIME:** 1:45—3:45 p.m.

**PLACE:** 301 Senate Building

**MEMBERS:** Senator Wright, Chair; Senator Collins, Vice Chair; Senators Burgess, Sharief, and Truenow

TAB	BILL NO. and INTRODUCER	BILL DESCRIPTION and SENATE COMMITTEE ACTIONS	COMMITTEE ACTION
1	<b>SM 314</b> Wright (Identical HM 4005)	Florida National Guard Increased Force Structure; Urging the Congress of the United States to impel the National Guard Bureau to examine the present allocations of the Florida National Guard and allow an increase in its force structure, etc.  MS      02/18/2025 Favorable RC	Favorable Yeas 5 Nays 0
2	<b>SB 116</b> Burgess	Veterans; Requiring the Department of Veterans' Affairs to conduct a study that includes a survey evaluating the extent to which specified persons are aware of certain existing programs or services; requiring the department to ensure coordination to the greatest extent possible with the United States Department of Defense for a specified purpose; revising the purpose of the Veteran Suicide Prevention Training Pilot Program to include specialized mental health training; requiring the Department of Veterans' Affairs to develop a plan to establish adult day health care facilities across this state to serve veterans and their families, etc.  MS      02/18/2025 Favorable AHS RC	Favorable Yeas 5 Nays 0
3	Presentation by the Department of Military Affairs on Mission, Status and Operations		Presented
4	Presentation by the Department of Veterans' Affairs on Veteran Outreach, Benefit Assistance and Status of State Veterans' Homes		Presented
5	Presentation by the Florida Veterans Foundation on Programs, Services and Achievements		Presented
6	Presentation by Veterans Florida on Veteran Workforce Recruitment and Training Programs		Presented

**COMMITTEE MEETING EXPANDED AGENDA**  
Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security  
Tuesday, February 18, 2025, 1:45—3:45 p.m.

BILL DESCRIPTION and SENATE COMMITTEE ACTIONS			
TAB	BILL NO. and INTRODUCER		COMMITTEE ACTION
7	Presentation by CareerSource on Veteran Employment Activities and Programs		Presented
Other Related Meeting Documents			

**The Florida Senate**  
**BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

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Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security

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BILL: SM 314

INTRODUCER: Senator Wright

SUBJECT: Florida National Guard Increased Force Structure

DATE: February 18, 2025

REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1. Ingram	Proctor	MS	<b>Favorable</b>
2. _____	_____	RC	_____

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## I. Summary:

SM 314 is a memorial to the Congress of the United States, urging Congress to impel the National Guard Bureau to examine the present allocations to the Florida National Guard and allow an increase to the state's force structure.

The memorial requires the Secretary of State to dispatch copies to the President of the United States, President of the United States Senate, Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and each member of the Florida delegation to the United States Congress.

A memorial is an official legislative document addressed to Congress, the President of the United States, or some other governmental entity that expresses the will of the Legislature on a matter within the jurisdiction of the recipient. A memorial requires passage by both legislative houses but does not require the Governor's approval nor is it subject to a veto.

## II. Present Situation:

### National Guard and the National Guard Bureau

The National Defense Act of 1916<sup>1</sup> established the National Guard Bureau as a separate unit of the militia division of the federal government.<sup>2</sup> In 1948, the United States Secretary of Defense issued an order designating the National Guard Bureau as a joint bureau of the Departments of the Army and Air Force.<sup>3</sup> Today, the National Guard Bureau oversees each of the 54 National Guards in U.S. states and territories.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> National Defense Act of 1916, Pub. L. 64-85 (June 3, 1916).

<sup>2</sup> National Archives, *Guide to Federal Records, Records of the National Guard Bureau (NGB)*, available at <https://www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/groups/168.html> (last visited Jan. 27, 2025).

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* Section 250.01(13), F.S.

<sup>4</sup> Air Force, *Air National Guard*, available at <https://www.af.mil/About-Us/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/104546/air-national-guard/> (last visited Jan. 27, 2025).



The National Guard is unique among militia in that it serves the country in both the local community and overseas. The dual mission of a National Guard member means that each member serves through both the National Guard of the state and through the U.S. Army or the U.S. Air Force.<sup>5</sup> The collective membership of each National Guard is designated as its force structure. The force structure of each National Guard is allocated by the National Guard Bureau.<sup>6</sup>

### ***Florida National Guard***

The Florida National Guard dates back to 1565, when Spanish founders of St. Augustine organized a company of citizen-soldiers to protect the local community.<sup>7</sup> A member of the Florida National Guard serves either in the state Army National Guard or in the state Air National Guard, considered a reserve component of each of those armed forces.<sup>8</sup> Overseeing the Florida National Guard as a federally-recognized officer, the adjutant general is appointed by the Governor and subject to Senate confirmation.<sup>9</sup> The adjutant general, responsible for training and operations of the National Guard, must have served in the Florida National Guard for the preceding 5 years and attained the rank of colonel or higher.<sup>10</sup> Ranked above adjutant general is the Governor, who serves as commander-in-chief of all militia in the state.<sup>11</sup>

### ***Recent Duties of the Florida National Guard***

Over the past year, Florida National Guard members have been mobilized to multiple overseas deployments and assigned to assist domestically with:

- Hurricanes Debby, Helene, and Milton response;
- Migration support; and
- State corrections support.<sup>12</sup>

Since September 11, 2001, Florida National Guard members have mobilized to respond to out-of-state and overseas operations at a rate of over 28,000 deployments.<sup>13</sup>

### ***Demographics***

The force structure of the Florida National Guard is comprised of more than 12,000 members,<sup>14</sup> while Florida is the third most-populous state,<sup>15</sup> estimated at more than 22 million residents.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> 10 U.S.C. s. 10503(1).

<sup>7</sup> Dep't of Military Affairs, *Home*, available at <https://dma.myflorida.com/> (last visited Jan. 27, 2025).

<sup>8</sup> Section 250.01(3), (6), and (13), F.S.

<sup>9</sup> Section 250.10(1), F.S.

<sup>10</sup> *Id.*

<sup>11</sup> Section 250.06(1), F.S.

<sup>12</sup> Major General John D. Haas, Florida National Guard, Dep't of Military Affairs, PowerPoint, *Florida National Guard, Dep't of Military Affairs, Senate Committee on Military and Veteran Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security*, pp. 6-7 (published Feb. 17, 2025) (on file with the Senate Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security).

<sup>13</sup> Dep't of Military Affairs, *Senate Memorial 314 Agency Legislative Bill Analysis* (Feb. 10, 2025) (on file with the Senate Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security).

<sup>14</sup> Major General John D. Haas, *supra* note 12, at 3.

<sup>15</sup> United States Census Bureau, *Quick Facts, Florida*, available at <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/dashboard/FL,US/PST045222> (last visited Jan. 27, 2025).

<sup>16</sup> *Id.*

This force structure in proportion to the state population ranks last in the nation.<sup>17</sup> In addition to the state's low positioning of Florida National Guard members to current population, the Florida National Guard members are activated an average of 91 days per year, which is more than the national average.<sup>18</sup> In addition to this, Florida's population is expected to grow with the addition of another 1.4 million residents by the end of 2029.<sup>19</sup>

### **Congressional Support for Increased Funding and Allocation**

On March 24, 2021, members of the Florida Congressional Delegation sent a written request to both the United States Secretary of Defense and the Chief of the National Guard Bureau.<sup>20</sup> In their request, Congress members asked for more equitable funding and resource allocation for the Florida National Guard. These members of Congress based their request on the disproportionality between the state population compared to the size of the force structure, along with the state's unique vulnerability to continuing disasters.<sup>21</sup> Specifically, Congressional members specified that if force structure were proportional, the Florida National Guard would have 21,000, rather than 12,000 Guard members.<sup>22</sup>

On June 1, 2021, members of Congress representing California, Texas, and Florida sent a written request to the United States Secretary of Defense for an increased allocation for the National Guard particular to these states.<sup>23</sup> In support, Congressional members cite that California, Texas, and Florida rank at the lowest level of force structure to population and at the top for highest percentage of largest counties in the United States and that these states expect to receive a disproportionate future increase in migration.<sup>24</sup>

### **Memorial**

A memorial is an official legislative document addressed to Congress, the President of the United States, or some other governmental entity that expresses the will of the Legislature on a matter within the jurisdiction of the recipient. A memorial requires passage by both legislative houses but does not require the Governor's approval nor is it subject to a veto.

### **III. Effect of Proposed Changes:**

SM 314 is a memorial to the Congress of the United States, urging Congress to impel the United States National Guard Bureau to examine present allocations to the Florida National Guard and allow an increase to the state's force structure.

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<sup>17</sup> Dep't of Military Affairs, *Senate Memorial 314 Agency Legislative Bill Analysis (Feb. 10, 2025)* (on file with the Senate Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security).

<sup>18</sup> *Id.*

<sup>19</sup> *Id.*

<sup>20</sup> Letter from members of the Florida Congressional Delegation to Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III, U.S. Dep't of Defense and Chief Daniel R. Hokanson, National Guard Bureau, March 24, 2021 (on file with the Senate Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security).

<sup>21</sup> *Id.*

<sup>22</sup> *Id.*

<sup>23</sup> Letter from members of the California, Texas, and Florida Congressional Delegations to Secretary Lloyd Austin, U.S. Dep't of Defense, June 1, 2021 (on file with the Senate Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security).

<sup>24</sup> *Id.*

The memorial requires the Secretary of State to dispatch copies to the President of the United States, President of the United States Senate, Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and each member of the Florida delegation to the United States Congress.

**IV. Constitutional Issues:**

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None identified.

**V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

Because the bill is a memorial, there is no mandated fiscal impact. However, should the state receive an increase in Florida National Guard members, the state may incur an indeterminate initial cost of activating additional Florida National Guard members based on training and equipment costs.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Statutes Affected:**

None.

**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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By Senator Wright

8-00105-25

2025314

Senate Memorial

A memorial to the Congress of the United States, urging Congress to impel the National Guard Bureau to examine the present allocations of the Florida National Guard and allow an increase in its force structure.

WHEREAS, the number of soldiers and airmen allocated to each state's National Guard, known as its "force structure," is determined by the National Guard Bureau in Washington, D.C., and

WHEREAS, with approximately 21 million residents, Florida is the third most populous state in the nation but has a force structure of just over 12,000 Guardsmen, and its ratio of one Guardsman for every 1,833 residents ranks 53rd among the 54 states and territories of the United States which have a National Guard component, and

WHEREAS, due to the unprecedented events of 2020 and 2021, including COVID-19 response, natural disasters, and overseas deployments, the Florida National Guard expended the same number of workdays in 18 months as it had expended during the previous 20 years, and

WHEREAS, the Florida National Guard continues to meet its mission goals; however, the shortage of these invaluable "citizen soldiers," combined with the state's growing population and increased need for National Guard activation and response, has resulted in the repeated redeployment of the same soldiers, which ultimately leads to excessive stress and fatigue and negatively impacts recruitment, retention, and readiness, and

WHEREAS, the National Guard Bureau's report titled "Impact

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**CODING:** Words ~~stricken~~ are deletions; words underlined are additions.

8-00105-25

2025314

of U.S. Population Trends on National Guard Force Structure," released to Congress in April 2021, acknowledges the aforementioned concerns within Florida and other regions, stating that "the National Guard may need to evaluate re-allocating mission sets to other geographic areas to keep pace with changing demographics across the country," NOW, THEREFORE,

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

That the Florida Legislature respectfully urges the United States Congress to impel the National Guard Bureau to examine the present allocations of the Florida National Guard and allow an increase in its force structure.

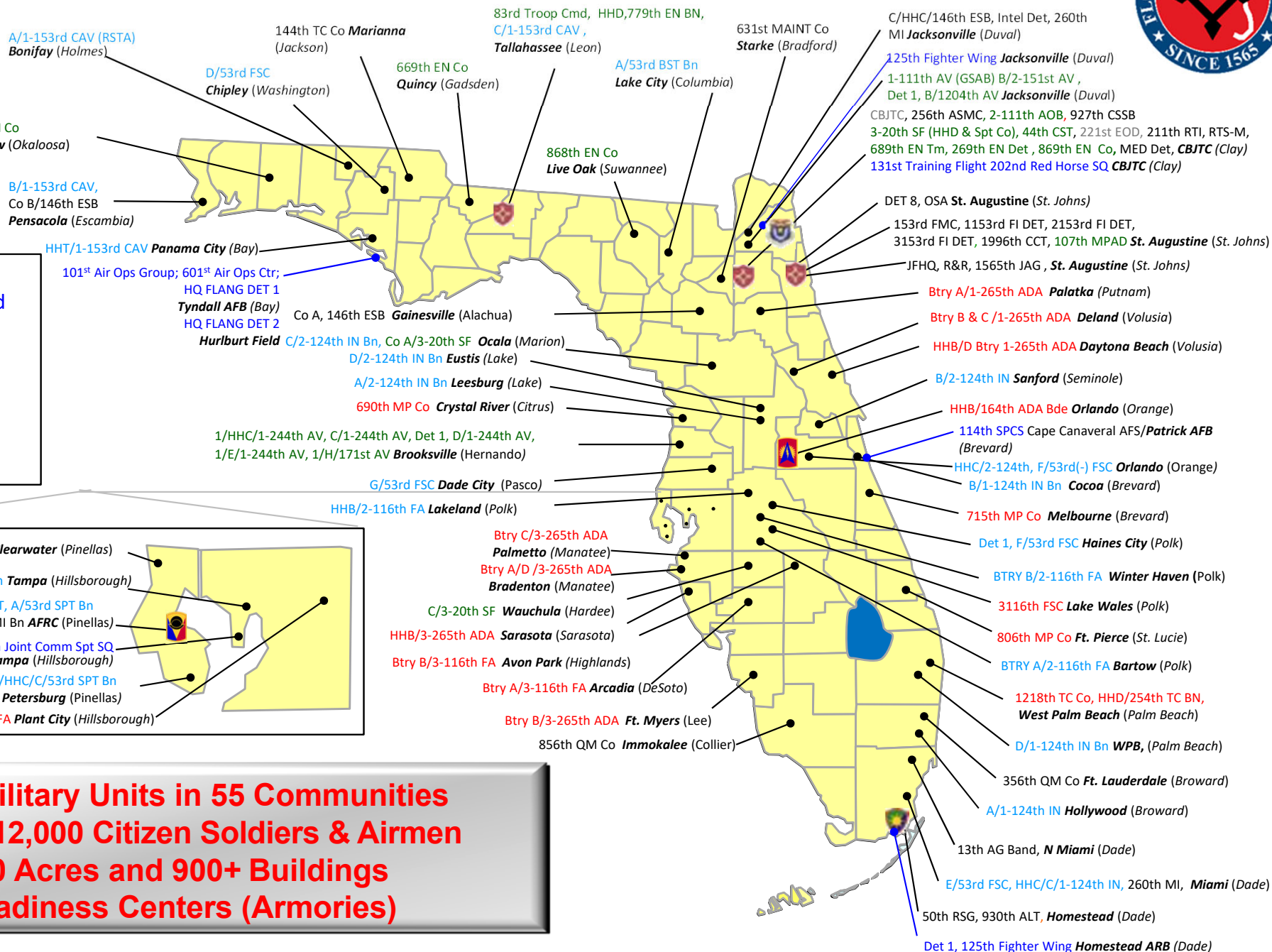
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of State dispatch copies of this memorial to the President of the United States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and each member of the Florida delegation to the United States Congress.

Page 2 of 2

**CODING:** Words ~~stricken~~ are deletions; words underlined are additions.



# Florida National Guard Units



- 128 Military Units in 55 Communities
- Over 12,000 Citizen Soldiers & Airmen
- 82,000 Acres and 900+ Buildings
- 63 Readiness Centers (Armories)

*Right - Ready - Relevant*



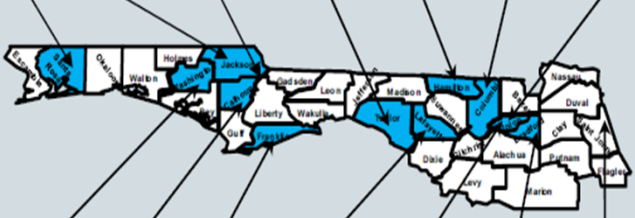
# Florida National Guard

## Current Domestic Support Operations

### Support Efforts:

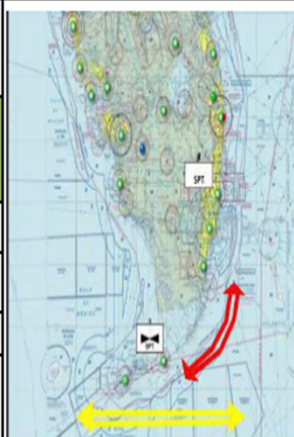
Counter Drug Program – 200 PAX  
Dept of Correction - 263 PAX  
Migration Sup FL – 39 PAX  
Migration Sup TX - 125 PAX



Department of Corrections						
Total Estimated Cost \$64,198,688.61				Facilities 10		
Service Members				Days  861		
Army	Air	Total				
258	5	263				
Santa Rosa 0	Jackson 18	Apalachee 12	Taylor 0	Hamilton 33	Columbia 36	Union 0
						
NW 41	Calhoun 18	Franklin 15	Mayo 20	RMC 46	FSP 15	C2/ARRO 10

Current FL Emergency Orders the FLNG is supporting				
EO Number	Event Description	Date First Issued	Extended (If applicable)	Current End Date
23-03	Illegal Immigration	06JUN2023	Yes (EO 25-29)	07APR2025
22-213	Assist FL DOC	09SEP2022	Yes (EO 24-265)	09JUN2025

Operation Vigilant Sentry Migration Support										
Last 24 Flight Cost	Total Flight Cost		Total Flight Hours		Aircraft (Last 24hrs)		Days		763	
\$0	\$19,528,563.30		3,886		Assigned	4	Reported	Last 24 hrs	Total	
Service Members					Tasked	0	Chugs	0	87	
Army	Air	EMAC	Total	Maintenance	2	Rustics	0	41		
				Standby	2	Migrants	0	454		
37	2	0	39	Total Sorties	1,903	Haitian Freighters	0	4		

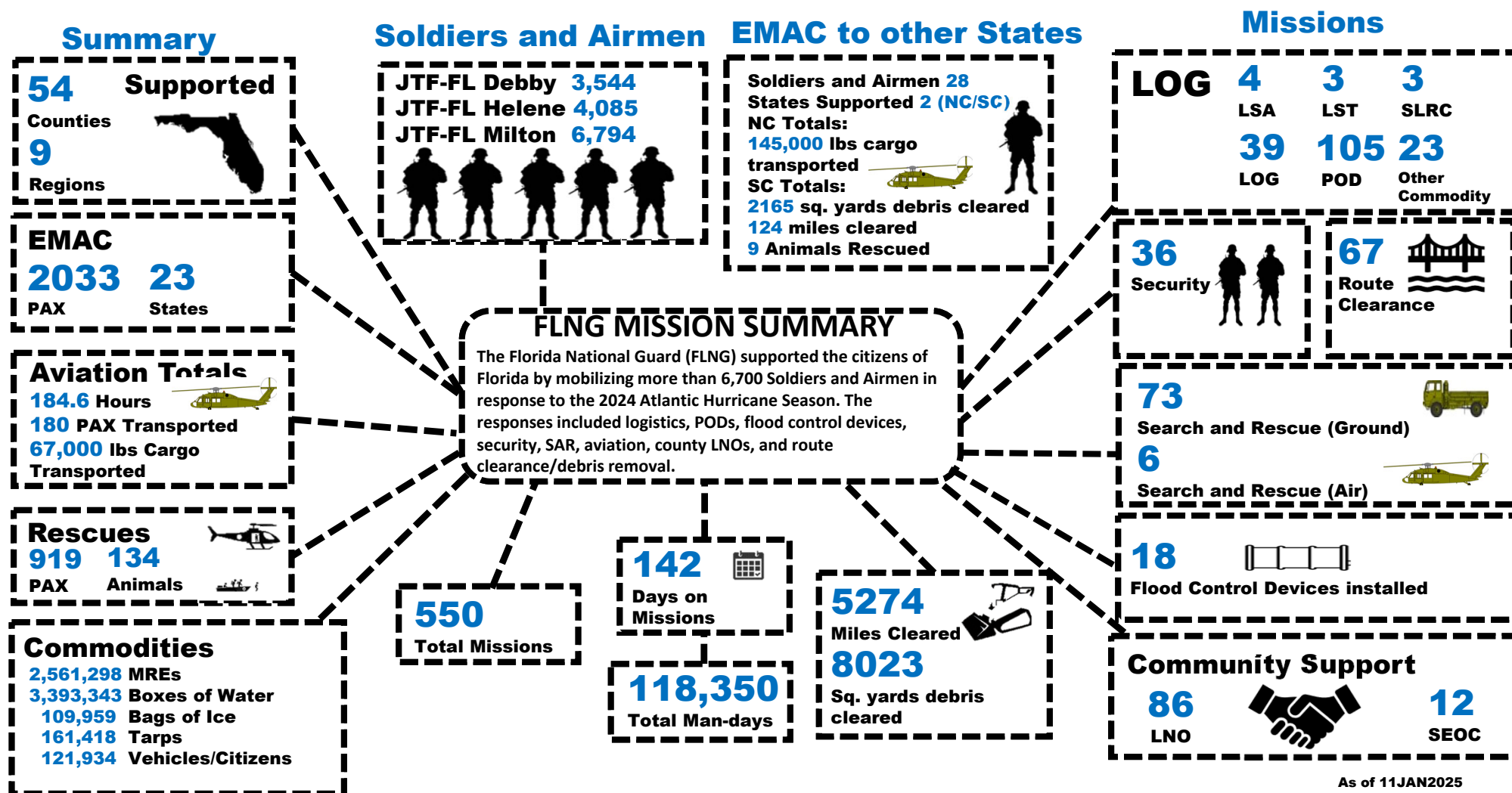
	
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# Florida National Guard

## 2024 Hurricane Season Overview



**FLNG Total Expenditure: \$ 38,605,955.04**

*Right - Ready - Relevant*





## 2025 AGENCY LEGISLATIVE BILL ANALYSIS

**AGENCY: Department of Military Affairs**

### BILL INFORMATION

<b>BILL NUMBER:</b>	SM 0314
<b>BILL TITLE:</b>	Florida National Guard Increased Force Structure
<b>BILL SPONSOR:</b>	Senator Tom Wright
<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b>	July 1, 2025

### COMMITTEES OF REFERENCE

1) Rules
2) Click or tap here to enter text.
3) Click or tap here to enter text.
4) Click or tap here to enter text.
5) Click or tap here to enter text.

### CURRENT COMMITTEE

Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security
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### SIMILAR BILLS

<b>BILL NUMBER:</b>	Click or tap here to enter text.
<b>SPONSOR:</b>	Click or tap here to enter text.

### PREVIOUS LEGISLATION

<b>BILL NUMBER:</b>	SM 826
<b>SPONSOR:</b>	Senator Wright
<b>YEAR:</b>	2024
<b>LAST ACTION:</b>	Click or tap here to enter text.

### IDENTICAL BILLS

<b>BILL NUMBER:</b>	HB 4005
<b>SPONSOR:</b>	Representative Daley

### Is this bill part of an agency package?

No

### BILL ANALYSIS INFORMATION

<b>DATE OF ANALYSIS:</b>	FEB 10, 2025
<b>LEAD AGENCY ANALYST:</b>	Alexander Kerr
<b>ADDITIONAL ANALYST(S):</b>	
<b>LEGAL ANALYST:</b>	Click or tap here to enter text.

**FISCAL ANALYST:**

Click or tap here to enter text.

**POLICY ANALYSIS****1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This memorial advocates for the National Guard Bureau to provide additional Units and Troops to be allocated to the Florida National Guard (FLNG). This would assist the FLNG in its efforts to support the citizens of Florida in times of need and alleviate the stress experienced by current FLNG members and families.

**2. SUBSTANTIVE BILL ANALYSIS****1. PRESENT SITUATION:**

Currently, the strength of Florida's National Guard (FLNG) has not kept pace with the state's population. As the nation's fastest-growing state, Florida has nearly doubled in population since 1990 and is projected to add another 1.4 million residents by the end of the decade. However, the FLNG with 12,253 Guardsmen, ranks last in the nation in terms of Guardsmen per citizen, with a ratio of 1.7 per 100,000 residents - significantly lower than the national average of 2.3. States like Texas and Ohio, with similar populations, have a force allocation of approximately 17,900.

FLNG members are shouldering a disproportionate burden, with an average of 91 days of activation per year - more than twice the national average of 39 days. This increase is driven by the state's susceptibility to natural disasters and the growing demand for federal missions. In 2024 alone, the FLNG responded to three direct hurricane impacts, and contributed an additional 551 guardsmen to support the Department of Corrections, Operation Lone Star and Operation Vigilant Sentry missions.

Since 9/11, the FLNG has deployed over 28,000 personnel and accumulated over two million workdays supporting disaster response. In 2024, FLNG members supported 550 mission sets, totaling 118,350 man-days. To alleviate the pressure on current members, their families, and employers, we urge Congress to increase the allocation of guardsmen to the FLNG. This growth is essential to ensure the FLNG can continue to meet the unique challenges facing Florida's citizens during times of need.

**2. EFFECT OF THE BILL:**

The memorial advocates on behalf of the state of Florida to encourage Congress and the federal National Guard Bureau to increase Florida's force allocation. To increase the allocation to Florida, the National Guard Bureau could either:

- Re-allocate guardsmen currently assigned to other states not maintaining their authorized force allocation, and/or
- Receive additional allocations due to a federal increase in the number of guardsmen nationwide, following a vote by Congress.

**3. DOES THE BILL DIRECT OR ALLOW THE AGENCY/BOARD/COMMISSION/DEPARTMENT TO DEVELOP, ADOPT, OR ELIMINATE RULES, REGULATIONS, POLICIES, OR PROCEDURES? Y ☐ N ☒**

If yes, explain:	
Is the change consistent with the agency's core mission?	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
Rule(s) impacted (provide references to F.A.C., etc.):	

**4. WHAT IS THE POSITION OF AFFECTED CITIZENS OR STAKEHOLDER GROUPS?**

Proponents and summary of position:	The Florida National Guard is a strong proponent of the proposed memorial as it would advocate an increase to its force allocation, improving readiness.
Opponents and summary of position:	

**5. ARE THERE ANY REPORTS OR STUDIES REQUIRED BY THIS BILL?**Y ☐ N ☒

If yes, provide a description:	
Date Due:	
Bill Section Number(s):	

**6. ARE THERE ANY NEW GUBERNATORIAL APPOINTMENTS OR CHANGES TO EXISTING BOARDS, TASK FORCES, COUNCILS, COMMISSIONS, ETC. REQUIRED BY THIS BILL?**Y ☐ N ☒

Board:	
Board Purpose:	
Who Appoints:	
Changes:	
Bill Section Number(s):	

**FISCAL ANALYSIS****1. DOES THE BILL HAVE A FISCAL IMPACT TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT?**Y ☐ N ☒

Revenues:	
Expenditures:	
Does the legislation increase local taxes or fees? If yes, explain.	
If yes, does the legislation provide for a local referendum or local governing body public vote prior to implementation of the tax or fee increase?	

**2. DOES THE BILL HAVE A FISCAL IMPACT TO STATE GOVERNMENT?**Y ☒ N ☐

Revenues:	
Expenditures:	Activating additional Guardsmen may increase the initial cost to the State due to training and equipment costs. However, once a national disaster has been declared by the Governor, the federal government may declare an emergency, and FEMA will reimburse a portion of activation and supply costs assessed by the State.
Does the legislation contain a State Government appropriation?	No.
If yes, was this appropriated last year?	N/A

**3. DOES THE BILL HAVE A FISCAL IMPACT TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR?**Y ☐ N ☒

Revenues:	
Expenditures:	
Other:	

**4. DOES THE BILL INCREASE OR DECREASE TAXES, FEES, OR FINES?**Y ☐ N ☒

If yes, explain impact.	
Bill Section Number:	

**TECHNOLOGY IMPACT**

1. DOES THE BILL IMPACT THE AGENCY'S TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS (I.E. IT SUPPORT, LICENSING SOFTWARE, DATA STORAGE, ETC.)? Y ☐ N ☒

If yes, describe the anticipated impact to the agency including any fiscal impact.

**FEDERAL IMPACT**

1. DOES THE BILL HAVE A FEDERAL IMPACT (I.E. FEDERAL COMPLIANCE, FEDERAL FUNDING, FEDERAL AGENCY INVOLVEMENT, ETC.)? Y ☒ N ☐

If yes, describe the anticipated impact including any fiscal impact.

If approved by Congress and the National Guard Bureau (NGB), the memorial will result in an action by both parties to re-allocate guardsmen currently assigned to other states and/or receive additional allocations due to a federal increase in the number of guardsmen nationwide. This may require a vote in Congress or a decision by the NGB.

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS****LEGAL - GENERAL COUNSEL'S OFFICE REVIEW**

Issues/concerns/comments:

KAT CAMMACK  
3RD DISTRICT, FLORIDA

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY  
RANKING MEMBER, SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS,  
RESPONSE & RECOVERY

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMODITY EXCHANGES,  
ENERGY, AND CREDIT

SUBCOMMITTEE ON BIOTECHNOLOGY,  
HORTICULTURE, AND RESEARCH

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NUTRITION, OVERSIGHT, AND  
DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS

CAMMACK.HOUSE.GOV

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-0903**

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PHONE: (352) 505-0838  
FAX: (352) 505-3511

ORANGE PARK OFFICE:  
35 KNIGHT BOXX ROAD  
SUITE 1  
ORANGE PARK, FL 32065  
PHONE: (904) 276-9626  
FAX: (904) 276-9336

March 24, 2021

Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III  
U.S. Department of Defense (DOD)  
1300 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301

General Daniel R. Hokanson  
National Guard Bureau  
111 S. George Mason Dr.  
Arlington, VA 22204

Dear Secretary Austin,

We write to request more equitable funding and resource allocation for the Florida National Guard in the Defense Budget for FY2022. We appreciate the hard work of the Florida National Guard to help keep the U.S. Capitol Complex safe following the tragic events of January 6, 2021. The personal sacrifice these men and women made for our safety will always be remembered.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the Florida National Guard has played a pivotal role to support Florida's pandemic response and vaccine rollout. Their hard work has included operational and logistical support for the state's Community Based Testing Sites (CBTS), Community Vaccination Sites, and Mobile Testing Teams. Our guardsmen have also been supporting the statewide delivery of vaccines, food distribution, and augmenting airport security and screening. Thanks to their hard work and support, over 5 million Floridians have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, and that number rises every day.

While we have a deep appreciation for these accomplishments during an unprecedented time, we are concerned with the Florida National Guard's lack of proportionate force structure allocation. Florida is our nation's 3<sup>rd</sup> most populous state yet when compared among other states our Guardsman to citizen ratio places Florida at 53 of 54. Florida's population is expected to grow by five million in the next decade. Our state's National Guard can no longer lag behind future population growth.

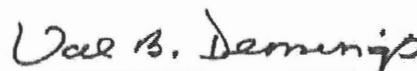
Florida is the nation's fourth most disaster-prone State and as a result our National Guard has experienced one of the highest Operation Tempos (OPTEMPO) with over 22,000 National Guardsmen deployed since 9/11 and over 1.1 million workdays supporting state disaster response. If force structure were proportional, the Florida National Guard would have a force of as many as 21,000 Guardsmen, rather than the current number of 12,000 Guardsmen.

We will forever be grateful for the service of Florida's National Guard in our state, at the Capitol, and around the world. We ask that you carefully review the Force Structure Proportionality study required in the 2021 National Defense Authorization Act and ensure that the Florida National Guard has the force structure and resources necessary to continue keeping the State of Florida safe and secure.

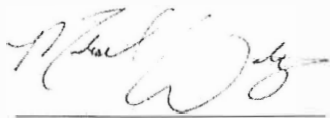
Sincerely,



Kat Cammack  
Member of Congress



Val Demings  
Member of Congress



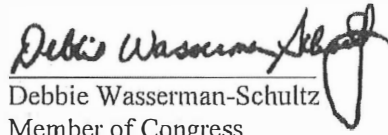
Michael Waltz  
Member of Congress



Charlie Crist  
Member of Congress



Stephanie Murphy  
Member of Congress



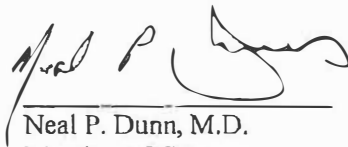
Debbie Wasserman-Schultz  
Member of Congress



Brian Mast  
Member of Congress



Matt Gaetz  
Member of Congress



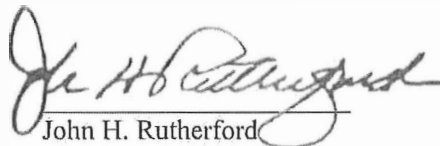
Neal P. Dunn, M.D.  
Member of Congress



Al Lawson  
Member of Congress



Mario Diaz-Balart  
Member of Congress



John H. Rutherford  
Member of Congress



Daniel Webster  
Member of Congress



Darren Soto  
Member of Congress

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 1, 2021

The Honorable Lloyd Austin  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington DC 20301-1000

Dear Mr. Secretary,

We appreciate the hard work of the brave volunteers that make up the National Guard. They have served our nation honorably, both at home and abroad. After the unprecedented events of the past year that included COVID-19 response and civil unrest in addition to natural disasters and overseas deployments, we owe the National Guard a debt of gratitude. However, strain on the National Guard has been building for years as hurricane response in Florida, winter storm and flood rescue in Texas, and combatting wildfires in California has been persistent.

As you may know, 15 of the nation's top 25 most populous counties are located within California, Florida, and Texas. As elected representatives from the nation's three most populous states, we have an obligation to ensure that these civilian warriors, and our state bureaus, have the resources they need to fulfill the full range of missions we task them with, including defense support for civil authorities and domestic missions in support of Governors.

However, with our current and growing population levels, our states have the lowest Guardsmen-to-civilian ratios in the country, with California at 54<sup>th</sup>, Florida at 53<sup>rd</sup>, and Texas at 52<sup>nd</sup>. The extraordinary circumstances of the past year have highlighted the strain on our Guard units have been under for too long, potentially hurting recruitment, retention, and readiness. The limited resources allocated to our states has affected our Guard bureaus' ability to rotate personnel, putting greater demands on Guard families.

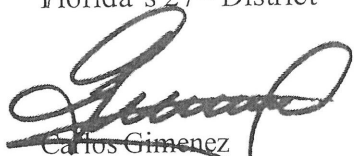
We appreciate that the Department has recognized this concern. In its implementation guidance for the National Defense Strategy, the Department said: "Demographic and economic trends within the U.S. will challenge our ability to recruit and retain quality Guardsmen over the next several years. Meeting this challenge is fundamental to our long-term success."

Furthermore, among the recommendations in the National Guard Bureau's "*Impact of U.S. Population Trends on National Guard Force Structure*" Report to Congress released in April 2021, the Bureau says: "as the U.S. population continues to shift from North and North Central regions of the country to the South and West, the National Guard may need to evaluate re-allocating mission sets to other geographic areas to keep pace with changing demographics across the country."





Maria Elvira Salazar  
Florida's 27<sup>th</sup> District



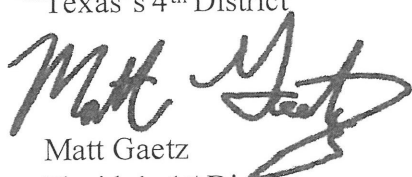
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Florida's 26<sup>th</sup> District



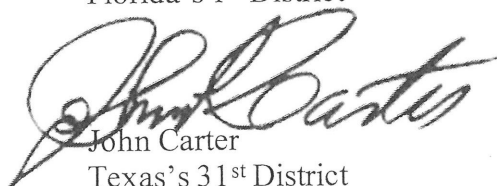
Louie Gohmert  
Texas's 1<sup>st</sup> District



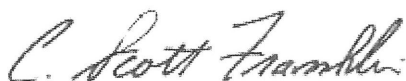
Pat Fallon  
Texas's 4<sup>th</sup> District



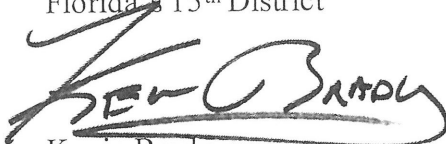
Matt Gaetz  
Florida's 1<sup>st</sup> District



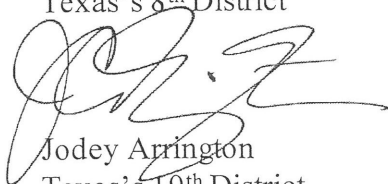
John Carter  
Texas's 31<sup>st</sup> District



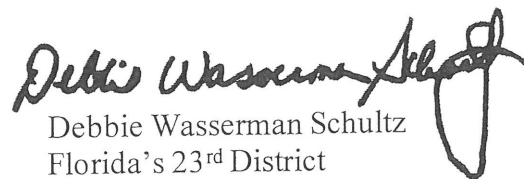
Scott Franklin  
Florida's 15<sup>th</sup> District



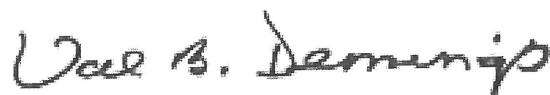
Kevin Brady  
Texas's 8<sup>th</sup> District



Jodey Arrington  
Texas's 19<sup>th</sup> District



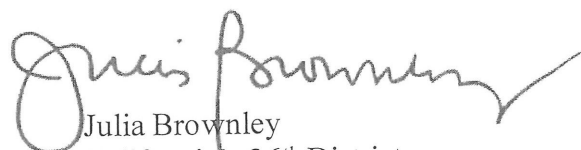
Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Florida's 23<sup>rd</sup> District



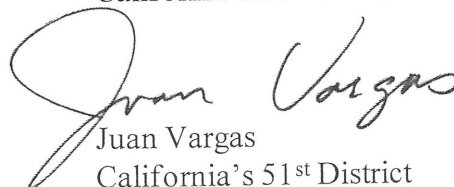
Val Demings  
Florida's 5<sup>th</sup> District



Al Lawson  
Florida's 5<sup>th</sup> District



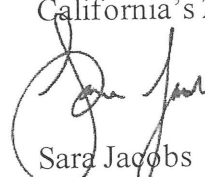
Julia Brownley  
California's 26<sup>th</sup> District



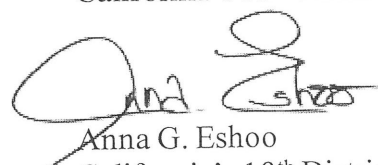
Juan Vargas  
California's 51<sup>st</sup> District



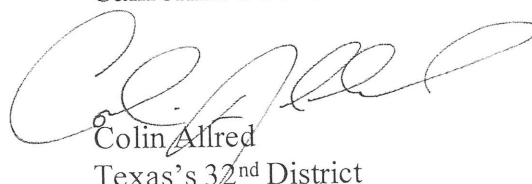
Mike Garcia  
California's 25<sup>th</sup> District



Sara Jacobs  
California's 53<sup>rd</sup> District



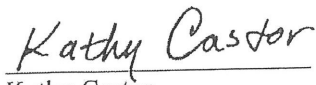
Anna G. Eshoo  
California's 18<sup>th</sup> District



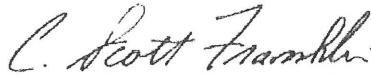
Colin Allred  
Texas's 32<sup>nd</sup> District



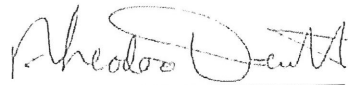
Gus M. Bilirakis  
Member of Congress



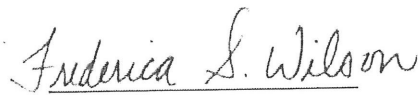
Kathy Castor  
Member of Congress



Scott Franklin  
Member of Congress



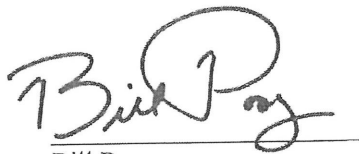
Ted Deutch  
Member of Congress



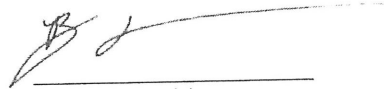
Frederica S. Wilson  
Member of Congress



Maria Elvira Salazar  
Member of Congress




Bill Posey  
Member of Congress



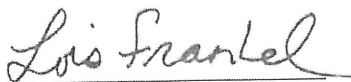
Byron Donalds  
Member of Congress



W. Gregory Steube  
Member of Congress



Alcee L. Hastings  
Member of Congress



Lois Frankel  
Member of Congress



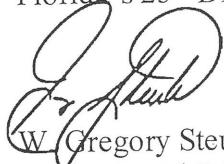
Vern Buchanan  
Member of Congress



Carlos A. Gimenez  
Member of Congress



Mario Diaz-Balart  
Florida's 25<sup>th</sup> District



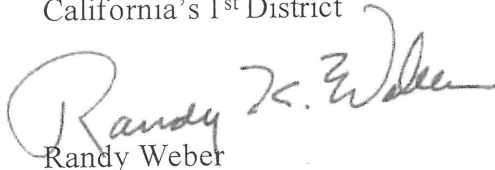
W. Gregory Steube  
Florida's 17<sup>th</sup> District



Roger Williams  
Texas's 25<sup>th</sup> District



Doug LaMalfa  
California's 1<sup>st</sup> District



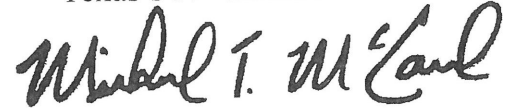
Randy Weber  
Texas's 14<sup>th</sup> District



Beth Van Duyne  
Texas's 24<sup>th</sup> District



Pete Sessions  
Texas's 17<sup>th</sup> District



Michael T. McCaul  
Texas's 10<sup>th</sup> District



Gus Bilirakis  
Florida's 12<sup>th</sup> District

The Florida Senate

APPEARANCE RECORD

Deliver both copies of this form to  
Senate professional staff conducting the meeting

18 FEB 2025

Meeting Date

SM 314

Bill Number or Topic

Military + Veterans Affairs

Committee

Amendment Barcode (if applicable)

Name COC Jason Hunt

Phone

Address 84 Marine Street

Street

Email

St Augustine

City

FL

State

32084

Zip

Speaking: ☐ For ☐ Against ☐ Information

OR

Waive Speaking: ☒ In Support ☐ Against

PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

☐ I am appearing without  
compensation or sponsorship.

☐ I am a registered lobbyist,  
representing:

☐ I am not a lobbyist, but received  
something of value for my appearance  
(travel, meals, lodging, etc.),  
sponsored by:

FL Dept of Military Affairs

While it is a tradition to encourage public testimony, time may not permit all persons wishing to speak to be heard at this hearing. Those who do speak may be asked to limit their remarks so that as many persons as possible can be heard. If you have questions about registering to lobby please see Fla. Stat. §11.045 and Joint Rule 1. [2020-2022 Joint Rules.pdf \(flsenate.gov\)](#)

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

S-001 (08/10/2021)

**The Florida Senate**  
**BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

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Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security

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BILL: SB 116

INTRODUCER: Senator Burgess

SUBJECT: Veterans

DATE: February 18, 2025

REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1. Ingram	Proctor	MS	<b>Favorable</b>
2. _____	_____	AHS	_____
3. _____	_____	RC	_____

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**I. Summary:**

SB 116 amends multiple provisions regarding veterans. The bill:

- Reduces the maximum number of nominees the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame Council may transmit to the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA) for submission to the Governor and the Cabinet for induction into the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame from 20 to 5.
- Requires the FDVA to evaluate the extent to which veterans and their spouses and dependents are aware of programs and services and to also make recommendations on increasing such public awareness.
- Requires the FDVA to ensure coordination to the greatest extent possible with the United States Department of Defense to engage servicemembers relating to reentry into civilian life and authorizes the FDVA to engage county and city veteran service officers for assistance. The FDVA is to include in its annual report the actions taken to implement this engagement.
- Requires the FDVA to submit an evaluation of veterans' health literacy in this state.
- Requires the Veteran Suicide Prevention Training Pilot Program to include specialized mental health training to recognize indicators of elevated mental health conditions.
- Corrects a reference to United States Code for purposes of veterans' education and training.
- Expands the duties of Florida is for Veterans, Inc., to include advising the FDVA on problems or needs of veterans and their spouses and dependents.
- Removes an obsolete reference to the Florida Defense Support Task Force.
- Requires the FDVA to develop a statewide plan to establish adult day health care facilities across the state to serve veterans and their families.
- Authorizes that a percentage of the proceeds from the sale of the Gadsden Flag specialty license plate be used for administrative costs.

This bill may have a negative fiscal impact on FDVA. See Section V. Fiscal Impact Statement.

The bill takes effect on July 1, 2025.

## II. Present Situation:

### Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame

Administered by the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA), the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame (FVHF) was established by the Florida Legislature<sup>1</sup> to honor military veterans who, through their works and lives during or after their military service, have made noteworthy contributions to the state.<sup>2</sup> An inductee into the FVHF is commemorated with his or her name placed on a plaque that is displayed in a designated area of the State Capitol Building.<sup>3</sup> During the 2012 Legislative Session, the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame Council (Council) was created as an advisory council<sup>4</sup> to oversee the FVHF.<sup>5</sup> The Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Attorney General, the Chief Financial Officer, the Commissioner of Agriculture, and the executive director of the FDVA each appoint one member to the seven-member Council which is comprised of honorably discharged veterans.<sup>6</sup>

The Council is directed to annually accept nominations and transmit up to 20 nominees to the FDVA for submission to the Governor and cabinet, who then select the nominees to be inducted into the FVHF.<sup>7</sup> The Council gives preference to veterans born in Florida or who adopted Florida as their home state and who have made a significant contribution to the state in civic, business, public service, or other pursuits.<sup>8</sup> The Council is authorized to establish criteria and timeframes regarding the nominating process and induction ceremony.<sup>9</sup>

The Council established the following criteria, in order to be nominated a candidate must:

- Meet the definition of "Veteran" as defined by s. 1.01, F.S., as determined by the U.S. Department of Defense documentation, such as a DD Form 214, or proof of service from the Florida National Guard with a NGB Form 22.
- Have received an honorable discharge from the U.S. Armed Forces and can provide official documentation verifying discharge status.
- Have exhibited good moral character.<sup>10</sup>

In addition, posthumous nominations are accepted as long as a veteran's records documenting his or her military service are provided. If the veteran's DD Form 214 or NGB Form 22 is not available, then other documentation including discharge papers, news articles, affidavits, official letters of service from a branch of service, the U.S. Department of Defense, or the Florida

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<sup>1</sup> Ch. 2011-168, s. 1, Laws of Fla.

<sup>2</sup> Florida Veterans Hall of Fame, *Honoring Florida's Veterans*, <https://floridaveteranshalloffame.org/> (last visited February 7, 2025).

<sup>3</sup> Section 265.003(2)(b), F.S.

<sup>4</sup> Under s. 20.03(7), F.S., "council" or "advisory council" is defined as an advisory body created by specific statutory enactment and appointed to function on a continuing basis for the study of the problems arising in a specified functional or program area of state government and to provide recommendations and policy alternatives

<sup>5</sup> Ch. 2012-159, s. 5, Laws of Fla. See also s. 265.003(4)(a), F.S.

<sup>6</sup> Section 265.003(3)(a), F.S.

<sup>7</sup> Section 265.003(4)(a), F.S.

<sup>8</sup> Section 265.003(4)(b), F.S.

<sup>9</sup> Section 265.003(5), F.S.

<sup>10</sup> Florida Veterans Hall of Fame, Nomination Process, available at [https://floridaveteranshalloffame.org/?page\\_id=3249](https://floridaveteranshalloffame.org/?page_id=3249) (last visited Feb. 13, 2025).

National Guard, or other documentation that can be verified may be accepted.<sup>11</sup> Employees of the Governor's staff, all elected or appointed officials in the State of Florida, members of County Veteran Service Offices, and members of the FDVA, its Foundation and the Council are ineligible for induction until 2 years after they have left their position. The Council may recommend a waiver of the 2-year requirement for nominees over the age of 70.<sup>12</sup>

### **Department of Veterans' Affairs**

The FDVA was created to provide assistance to all former, present, and future members of the Armed Forces of the United States and their spouses and dependents in preparing claims for and securing compensation, hospitalization, career training, and other benefits or privileges to which they are, or may become entitled to under federal or state law or regulation by reason of their service in the Armed Forces of the United States.<sup>13</sup> There are about 1.4 million veterans living in Florida, making the state's veteran population the third largest nationally.<sup>14</sup>

The FDVA is authorized to apply for and accept funds, grants, gifts, and services from the state, federal government or any of its agencies, or any other public or private source and may use funds derived from these sources to defray clerical and administrative costs as may be necessary for carrying out its duties.<sup>15</sup>

One of the duties of the FDVA is to conduct an ongoing study on the problems and needs of veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States and their spouses and dependents who reside in Florida. The study must include a survey of:

- Existing state and federal programs available for resident veterans and their spouses and dependents that specify the extent to which the programs are being implemented, with recommendations for the improved implementation, extension, or improvement of the programs.
- The needs of resident veterans and their spouses and dependents in the areas of social services, health care, education, and employment, and any other areas of determined need, with recommendations regarding federal, state, and community services that would meet those needs.
- Federal, state, public, and private moneys available that could be used to defray the costs of state or community services needed for resident veterans and their spouses and dependents.<sup>16</sup>

The FDVA is directed to annually submit a written report to the Governor, the Cabinet, and the Legislature which describes expenses incurred in veteran service work; cases handled by the FDVA and by county and city veteran service officers of the state;<sup>17</sup> benefits obtained for veterans; and information regarding certified veteran service officers.<sup>18</sup> The report must also

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<sup>11</sup> *Id.*

<sup>12</sup> *Id.*

<sup>13</sup> Section 292.05(1), F.S.

<sup>14</sup> Florida Dep't of Veterans' Affairs, *Our Veterans*, available at <https://floridavets.org/our-veterans/> (last visited Feb. 13, 2025).

<sup>15</sup> Section 292.05(4), F.S.

<sup>16</sup> Section 292.05(5), F.S.

<sup>17</sup> Section 292.11, F.S.

<sup>18</sup> Section 292.05(6)(a), F.S.

describe departmental actions taken by the FDVA and include other information and departmental recommendations as it relates to its duties and responsibilities.<sup>19</sup> In addition, the report must also include the current status of the FDVA's domiciliary and nursing homes.<sup>20</sup>

### ***County and City Veteran Service Officers and Agency Claims Examiners***

County and city veteran service officers are responsible for assisting veterans and their dependents in securing all entitled benefits earned through honorable military service and to advocate for veterans' interest in their community.<sup>21</sup> Current law authorizes each board of county commissioners to employ a county veteran service officer.<sup>22</sup> Likewise, the governing body of a city may employ a city veteran service officer.<sup>23</sup> FDVA's claim examiners, set up to assist veterans with claims, are co-located with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Regional Office in Bay Pine, each VA Medical Center, and many VA Outpatient Clinics.<sup>24</sup>

The FDVA provides the training program for county and city veteran service officers.<sup>25</sup> Every county or city veteran service officer must attend the training and successfully complete a test administered by the FDVA. The FDVA is required to further establish periodic training refresher courses, which must be completed as a condition of continued employment.<sup>26</sup>

### ***Transition Assistance***

The FDVA through Florida is for Veterans, Inc., (Veterans Florida) supports servicemembers with the transition into civilian life in many ways including, but not limited to, engaging servicemembers through the SkillBridge program, by hosting job fairs, and by briefing servicemembers while they are participating in the United States Armed Forces' Transition Assistance Programs.<sup>27,28</sup> SkillBridge is a program under the U.S. Department of Defense that connects transitioning servicemembers to occupational training.<sup>29</sup> The program provides opportunities for a servicemember to participate in industry training programs as he or she prepares to transition back into his or her civilian life.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> *Id.*

<sup>20</sup> Section 292.05(6)(b), F.S.

<sup>21</sup> Leon County Government, Veterans Services, available at <https://cms.leoncountyfl.gov/Home/Departments/Office-of-Human-Services-and-Community-Partnership/Veterans-Services> (last visited Feb. 10, 2025).

<sup>22</sup> Section 292.11(1), F.S.

<sup>23</sup> *Id.*

<sup>24</sup> Veteran Help Group, *Benefits and Services-Claims*, available at <https://www.veteranhelpgroup.com/claims> (last visited Feb. 10, 2025).

<sup>25</sup> Section 292.11(4), F.S.

<sup>26</sup> *Id.*

<sup>27</sup> Florida Dep't of Veterans' Affairs, *Senate Bill 116 Agency Legislative Bill Analysis* (Feb. 10, 2025) (on file with the Senate Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security).

<sup>28</sup> As established under 10 U.S.C. 1144 (2022), the program furnishes counseling, assistance in identifying employment and training opportunities, help in obtaining such employment and training, and other related information and services to members of the armed forces.

<sup>29</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *DOD Skillbridge Program Brochure*, available at <https://skillbridge.osd.mil/docs/SkillBridge-Program-Brochure.pdf> (Feb. 10, 2025).

<sup>30</sup> *Id.*



## **Veteran's Mental Health and Suicide Prevention**

### ***Population and Mental Health***

As of 2023, the VA reported that there were 19.1 million veterans living in the United States and of that about 1,430,000 veterans resided in Florida.<sup>31</sup> Of the Florida veterans:

- 1.1 million are wartime veterans;
- 330,000 are peacetime veterans;
- 11,000 are World War II veterans;
- 75,000 are Korean War veterans;
- 462,000 are Vietnam-era veterans; and
- 421,000 are Gulf War veterans including post-9/11.<sup>32</sup>

The FDVA is responsible for serving the third largest veteran population in the United States.<sup>33</sup>

Veterans are known to have higher levels of mental distress than nonveterans. In a 2014 study, almost 1 in 4 veterans showed symptoms of mental illness.<sup>34</sup> Predominant mental health diagnoses among veterans are:

- Posttraumatic Stress Disorder at a rate of 15 times that of the general population;
- Depression at a rate of five times that of the general population; and
- Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).<sup>35</sup>

Veterans who have a diagnosable mental health illness are at a much higher risk of suicide than veterans without mental illness. A 2017 study of Veterans Health Administration patients shows a more than double rate of suicide among veterans with a mental health or substance use disorder than persons without these diagnoses.<sup>36</sup>

An estimated 30,177 active duty servicemembers and veterans of the post 9/11 wars have died by suicide, significantly more than the 7,057 service members that died in the post 9/11 war operations.<sup>37</sup> Identified causes vary. As many as 20 percent of post 9/11 servicemembers have experienced a TBI, many of which have been exposed to repetitive damage.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Florida Dep't of Veterans' Affairs, Our Veterans-Fast Facts, available at <https://www.floridavets.org/our-veterans/profilefast-facts/> (last visited Feb. 12, 2025).

<sup>32</sup> *Id.*

<sup>33</sup> *Id.*

<sup>34</sup> National Institute on Mental Illness (NAMI), *Veterans & Active Duty-Mental Health Concerns*, available at <https://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Veterans-Active-Duty> (last visited Feb. 10, 2025).

<sup>35</sup> *Id.*

<sup>36</sup> The rate of suicide among Veterans Health Administration patients with mental health illness at the time of the study was 57 patients per 100,000. Rand Corporation, *Suicide Among Veterans/Veterans' Issues in Focus*, (July 15, 2021) available at <https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PEA1363-1.html> (last visited Feb. 10, 2025).

<sup>37</sup> Thomas Howard Suitt, III, Watson Institute, International & Public Affairs, Brown University, *High Suicide Rates among United States Service Members and Veterans of the Post-9/11 Wars*, available at [https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2021/Suitt\\_Suicides\\_Costs%20of%20War\\_June%2021%202021.pdf](https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2021/Suitt_Suicides_Costs%20of%20War_June%2021%202021.pdf) (June 21, 2021) (pgs. 1, 3).

<sup>38</sup> *Id.* at 3-4.

### ***Federal Programs***

In 2018, the VA implemented a 10-year strategy for preventing veteran suicide.<sup>39</sup> This approach to suicide prevention involves a veteran's family, peers, and community and includes specific outreach to veterans who do not access services of the VA.<sup>40</sup>

VA suicide prevention initiatives include:

- Enhancing mental health services for veterans who are women.
- Broadening telehealth.
- Developing free-of-charge mobile applications for veterans and their families.
- Improving access to mental health care.
- Assisting families of veterans by telephone.<sup>41</sup>

In implementing a suicide prevention strategy, the VA partners with other government agencies and organizations at both the national and local level to share information and training on suicide prevention.<sup>42</sup> One of the ways the VA has addressed state-level suicide prevention is through the "Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families," the VA's ongoing collaboration with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.<sup>43</sup> The "Mayor's Challenges to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families" is an analogous collaboration at the local level for communities across the nation.<sup>44</sup> The goal of these initiatives is to expand and implement state-wide best practices for preventing and reducing suicide.<sup>45</sup> All 50 states and five territories are involved in the Governor's Challenge and 14 community teams are still actively engaged in the "Mayor's Challenge."<sup>46</sup>

### ***State Programs***

In 2021, the FDVA was authorized to establish the Florida Veterans' Care Coordination (FVCC) Program.<sup>47</sup> To provide services, the FDVA may contract with a nonprofit, accredited entity to provide dedicated behavioral health care referral services, through the state's 211 Network.<sup>48</sup> The FVCC program objectives are to prevent veteran suicide, increase veteran use of programs and services provided by the VA, and to increase veteran usage of community-based programs and services.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> U.S. Dep't of Veterans Affairs, *National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide, 2018-2028*, available at [https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide\\_prevention/docs/Office-of-Mental-Health-and-Suicide-Prevention-National-Strategy-for-Preventing-Veterans-Suicide.pdf](https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention/docs/Office-of-Mental-Health-and-Suicide-Prevention-National-Strategy-for-Preventing-Veterans-Suicide.pdf).

<sup>40</sup> *Id.* at 1.

<sup>41</sup> *Id.* at 11.

<sup>42</sup> *Id.*

<sup>43</sup> U.S. Dep't of Veterans Affairs, Office of Suicide Prevention, *2024 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Report*, available at [https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/data-sheets/2024/2024-Annual-Report-Part-1-of-2\\_508.pdf](https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/data-sheets/2024/2024-Annual-Report-Part-1-of-2_508.pdf) (Dec. 2024) (pg. 34).

<sup>44</sup> SAMHSA, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Service Members, Veterans, and their Families Technical Assistance, *Governor's and Mayor's Challenges*, available at <https://www.samhsa.gov/technical-assistance/smvf/challenges> (last visited Feb. 10, 2025).

<sup>45</sup> *Id.*

<sup>46</sup> *Id.*

<sup>47</sup> Chapter 2021-198, Laws of Fla.; s. 394.9087, F.S.

<sup>48</sup> Section 394.9087(1), F.S. The Florida 211 network, established in s. 408.918, F.S., operates as the single point of coordination for information and referral of health and human services (s. 408.918(1), F.S.).

<sup>49</sup> Section 394.9087(2), F.S.

The FDVA established the Veteran Suicide Prevention Training Pilot program to offer the FDVA's claims examiner and each county and city veteran service officer specialized training and certification in the prevention of veteran suicide.<sup>50</sup> To provide training curriculum, the FDVA contracts with an organization established in developing and implementing veteran-relevant and evidence-based suicide prevention training.<sup>51</sup>

Pilot program participants must be trained in identifying indicators of elevated suicide risk and providing emergency crisis referrals for veterans in emotional or psychological distress.<sup>52</sup> The FDVA is directed to adopt rules regarding the implementation of the pilot program.<sup>53</sup> The FDVA must also submit an annual report to the Legislature each year that includes information on the program and recommendations on whether changes should be made to increase the effectiveness of the pilot program.<sup>54</sup> The FDVA will recommend whether the pilot program should be continued in its June 30, 2026, report.<sup>55</sup>

### **State Approving Agency for Veterans' Education and Training**

The FDVA is the designated state approving agency for purposes of veteran's education and training in accordance with federal law and the annual contract between the state of Florida and the federal government.<sup>56</sup>

### **Florida is For Veterans, Inc.**

Veterans Florida is a nonprofit corporation within the FDVA created to promote Florida as a veteran-friendly state.<sup>57</sup> Veterans Florida encourages and assists retired and recently separated military personnel to keep or make Florida their permanent residence. Veterans Florida also assists veterans and their spouses with employment opportunities and encourages the hiring of veterans and their spouses by the business community which lends to its mission in assisting veterans fully transition to civilian life.<sup>58,59</sup> Veterans Florida also counsels the FDVA on the needs and difficulties of veterans and their spouses.<sup>60</sup>

### **Veterans Employment and Training Services Program**

Created within the FDVA, the Veterans Employment and Training Services (VETS) program assists in connecting servicemembers, veterans, or their spouses in search of employment with businesses seeking to hire dedicated, well-trained workers for employment.<sup>61</sup> The purpose of the

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<sup>50</sup> Ch. 2022-39, Laws of Fla. See s. 292.115, F.S.

<sup>51</sup> Section 292.115(2), F.S.

<sup>52</sup> *Id.*

<sup>53</sup> Section 292.115(2), F.S.

<sup>54</sup> Section 292.115(4), F.S.

<sup>55</sup> *Id.*

<sup>56</sup> Ch. 88-29, s. 24, Laws of Fla. See s. 295.124, F.S.

<sup>57</sup> Ch. 2014-1, s. 12, Laws of Fla. See s. 295.21(1) and (2), F.S.

<sup>58</sup> Florida is for Veterans, Inc., Candid, available at <https://www.guidestar.org/profile/47-2327385> (last visited Feb. 10, 2025).

<sup>59</sup> Section 295.21(2), F.S.

<sup>60</sup> Florida Dep't of Veterans' Affairs, *supra* note 27.

<sup>61</sup> Section 295.22(3) and (4), F.S.

program is to meet the workforce demands of businesses in the state by facilitating access to training and education in high-demand fields and to inspire the growth of veteran owned small businesses.<sup>62</sup> Veterans Florida administers the VETS program and performs many functions including, but not limited to:

- Conducting marketing and recruiting efforts.
- Assisting individuals in the target market who reside in or relocate to Florida and who seek employment with the target industry or secondary target industry business.
- Offering skills assessments and assisting in establishing employment goals.
- Assisting Florida target industry and secondary industry businesses in recruiting and hiring individuals in the target market. Veterans Florida provides services to Florida businesses to meet their hiring needs by connecting businesses with suitable applicants for employment. Suitable applicants include veterans or veterans' spouses who have appropriate job skills or may need additional training to meet the specific needs of a business.
- Providing information about the state and federal benefits of hiring veterans.
- Creating a grant program to provide funding to assist individuals in the target market in meeting the workforce-skill needs of target industry and secondary industry businesses seeking to hire, promote, or generally improve specialized skills of veterans, establish criteria for approval of requests for funding, and maximize the use of funding for this program.
- Contracting with entities to administer an entrepreneur initiative program for individuals in the target market in Florida which connects business leaders in the state with such individuals seeking to become entrepreneurs.
- Administering a SkillBridge<sup>63</sup> initiative for target industry and secondary industry businesses in this state and for eligible individuals in the target market who reside in, or who wish to reside in, this state.<sup>64</sup>

Under the VETS program, Veterans Florida may assist state agencies and entities with recruiting veteran talent into their workforces.<sup>65</sup> Veterans Florida may collaborate with other state agencies and entities for outreach, information exchange, marketing, and referrals regarding programs and initiatives.<sup>66</sup> One of the entities that Veterans Florida collaborates with under s. 295.22(5), F.S., is the Department of Commerce and efforts of the now defunct Florida Defense Support Task Force which was replaced by a direct-support organization in 2024.<sup>67</sup>

### **Veterans' Adult Day Health Care**

Adult day care centers provide therapeutic services and activities for adults in a noninstitutional setting.<sup>68</sup> Participants may utilize a variety of services offered during any part of a day totaling less than 24 hours.<sup>69</sup> Basic services provided by adult day care centers include leisure activities,

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<sup>62</sup> Section 295.22(3), F.S.

<sup>63</sup> See U.S. Dep't of Defense, DOD Skillbridge, Program Overview-What is Skillbridge, available at <https://skillbridge.osd.mil/program-overview.htm> (Feb. 10, 2025).

<sup>64</sup> Section 295.22(4), F.S.

<sup>65</sup> Section 295.22(5), F.S.

<sup>66</sup> *Id.*

<sup>67</sup> Ch. 2024-234, Laws of Fla.

<sup>68</sup> Section 429.901(3), F.S.

<sup>69</sup> *Id.* and s. 429.905(2), F.S.

self-care training, nutritional services, and respite care.<sup>70</sup> These facilities are licensed by the Agency for Health Care Administration.<sup>71</sup> However, facilities that operate under the federal government or any agency thereof are exempt from current state law on adult day care centers.<sup>72</sup>

The VA Adult Day Health Care Program (Program) was established by the VA with the goal of allowing veterans to have a place during the day for social activities, peer support, companionship, and recreation.<sup>73</sup> The Program is intended for veterans who need help with activities of daily living, those who are isolated, or whose caregiver is experiencing burden.<sup>74</sup> Health services such as care from nurses, therapists, social workers, and others may also be provided.<sup>75</sup> The Program may be provided at VA medical centers, state Veterans Homes, or through community organizations.<sup>76</sup> To receive a federal grant or grant funding for an adult day health care program, a state must meet the following specific federal requirements:

- If an adult day health care program is located within a nursing home, domiciliary, or other care facility, the adult health care program must have its own separate designated space during operational hours.
- The indoor space for the adult day health care program must be at least 100 sq. ft. per participant including office space for staff and must be 60 sq. ft. per participant excluding office space for staff.
- Each program will need to design and partition its space to meet its own needs but must make available certain federally mandated functional areas.<sup>77</sup>
- Furnishings must be available for all participants, including functional furniture suitable to the participants' needs.<sup>78</sup>

The FDVA operates nine State Veterans' Homes, which have 1,102 skilled nursing and assisted living beds, and is in the process of adding a tenth home.<sup>79</sup> In 2023, the Legislature created the Veterans' Adult Day Health Care of Florida Act to provide for the establishment of basic standards for the operation of veterans' adult day health care programs for eligible veterans in need of such services.<sup>80</sup> A program under this act is a licensed facility operated by the FDVA as an adult day care center.<sup>81</sup> However, the FDVA does not currently operate or manage any adult day health care facilities in the state.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Section 429.901(1) and (3), F.S.

<sup>71</sup> Section 429.903, F.S.

<sup>72</sup> Section 429.905, F.S.

<sup>73</sup> U.S. Dep't. of Veterans Affairs, *What is Adult Day Health Care*, available at [https://www.va.gov/geriatrics/pages/Adult\\_Day\\_Health\\_Care.asp](https://www.va.gov/geriatrics/pages/Adult_Day_Health_Care.asp) (last visited Feb. 10, 2025).

<sup>74</sup> *Id.*

<sup>75</sup> *Id.*

<sup>76</sup> *Id.*

<sup>77</sup> For the list of federally mandated functional areas, see 38 C.F.R. s. 59.160(c)(1)-(11).

<sup>78</sup> 38 C.F.R. s. 59.160.

<sup>79</sup> Florida Dep't of Veterans Affairs, News, *Governor DeSantis Signs Legislation to Support Florida Veterans and Their Families, June 4, 2024*, available at <https://floridavets.org/governor-desantis-signs-legislation-to-support-florida-veterans-and-their-families/> (last visited Feb. 10, 2025).

<sup>80</sup> Ch. 2023-162, s. 3, Laws of Fla.

<sup>81</sup> Sections 296.44(6) and 429.901(1), F.S.

<sup>82</sup> Florida Dep't of Veterans' Affairs, *supra* note 27.

The FDVA determines the eligibility of applicants for admission to the program. The program is available to a veteran as defined in s. 1.01(14), F.S., or a veteran who served in eligible peacetime service, and who must:

- Be in need of adult day health care;
- Be a resident of the state at the time of application;
- Not owe money to the FDVA for services rendered during a previous stay at a FDVA facility;
- Have applied for all financial assistance reasonably available through governmental resources; and
- Have been approved as eligible for care and treatment by the VA.<sup>83</sup>

The residency requirement may be waived for an applicant only if the veteran is a disaster evacuee of a state under a declared state of emergency and who otherwise qualifies.<sup>84</sup> Admittance priority given to eligible veterans is established in state law.<sup>85</sup>

### **Gadsden Flag License Plates**

As of December 2024, there are over 130 specialty license plates approved by the Legislature and of these, 114 are authorized for issuance and 22 are in the presale process.<sup>86</sup> Specialty license plates are available to an owner or lessee of a motor vehicle who is willing to pay an annual use fee, ranging from \$15 to \$25, paid in addition to required license taxes and service fees.<sup>87</sup> The annual use fees are distributed to an organization or organizations in support of a particular cause or charity signified on the plate's design and designated in statute.<sup>88</sup>

In order to establish a specialty license plate and after the plate is approved by law, s. 320.08053, F.S., requires the following actions within certain timelines:

- Within 60 days, the organization must submit an art design for the plate, in a medium prescribed by the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV);
- Within 120 days, the DHSMV must establish a method to issue presale vouchers for the specialty license plate; and
- Within 24 months after the presale vouchers are established, the organization must obtain a minimum of 3,000 voucher sales before manufacturing of the plate may begin.<sup>89</sup>

If the minimum sales requirement has not been met by the end of the 24-month presale period, then the DHSMV will discontinue the plate and issuance of presale vouchers. Upon discontinuation, a purchaser of a presale voucher may use the annual use fee as a credit towards any other specialty license plate or apply for a refund with the DHSMV.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Section 296.47(1), F.S.

<sup>84</sup> Section 296.47(2), F.S.

<sup>85</sup> Section 296.47(3), F.S., establishes an order of priority given to veterans for admittance into the program.

<sup>86</sup> Dep't of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicle, *HB 49 Agency Legislative Bill Analysis* (Dec. 16, 2024) (on file with the Senate Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security).

<sup>87</sup> Section 320.08056, F.S.

<sup>88</sup> Section 320.08058, F.S.

<sup>89</sup> Chapter 2022-189, Laws of Fla., extended the presale by an additional 24 months for an approved specialty license plate organization that, as of June 15, 2022, is in the presale period but has not recorded 3,000 voucher sales.

<sup>90</sup> Section 320.08053(2)(b), F.S.

The annual use fees collected by an organization and any interest earned from the fees may be expended only for use in this state unless the annual use fee is derived from the sale of specified United States Armed Forces and veterans-related specialty plates.<sup>91</sup> Additionally, organizations must adhere to certain accountability requirements, including an annual audit or attestation document affirming that funds received have been spent in accordance with applicable statutes.<sup>92</sup>

The 2020 Legislature created the Gadsden Flag specialty license plate.<sup>93</sup> The license plate bears the DHSMV-approved colors and design. The word “Florida” appears at the top of the plate and “Don’t Tread on Me” appears at the bottom of the plate.<sup>94</sup>

The annual use fees from the specialty license plate are to be distributed to the Florida Veterans Foundation, a direct-support organization of the FDVA and used to benefit veterans. Up to 10 percent of the proceeds may be used for continuing promotion and marketing of the plate.<sup>95</sup>

### **III. Effect of Proposed Changes:**

#### **Florida Veterans’ Hall of Fame**

SB 116 amends s. 265.003, F.S., to reduce the number of persons the Council may transmit to the Governor and the Cabinet to be considered for induction into the FVHF. Currently up to 20 nominees may be transmitted by the Council. The bill reduces that number to up to five nominees.

#### **Department of Veterans’ Affairs Duties**

The bill amends s. 292.05, F.S., revising the duties of the FDVA by expanding the scope of an ongoing study on the needs of Florida residents who are veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States and their spouses and dependents. The bill requires that the survey evaluates the extent to which the resident veterans and their spouses and dependents are aware of existing federal, state, or local programs or services that meet their areas of needs. The bill also requires the FDVA to include recommendations regarding increasing public awareness using administrative or legislative options.

The bill directs the FDVA to ensure coordination with the U.S. Department of Defense to directly engage servicemembers who are returning home to Florida, whether those servicemembers are remaining in or moving to the state, following their service and during reentry into civilian life.<sup>96</sup> Such engagement includes connecting those servicemembers with Veterans Florida and other resources which may support with the reintegration process. The bill

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<sup>91</sup> Section 320.08056(10)(a), F.S.

<sup>92</sup> Section 320.08062, F.S.

<sup>93</sup> Ch. 2020-181, Laws of Fla.

<sup>94</sup> Section 320.08058(92)(a), F.S.

<sup>95</sup> Section 320.08058(92)(b), F.S.

<sup>96</sup> The Florida Dep’t of Veterans’ Affairs currently connects transitioning servicemembers with the U.S. Dep’t of Defense through programs like SkillBridge, utilizing Florida is for Veterans, Inc., as a means for this engagement. See Florida Dep’t of Veterans Affairs, *supra* note 27, at 2 and 5.

authorizes the FDVA to engage county and city veteran service officers<sup>97</sup> for assistance in connecting servicemembers with reintegration resources. The FDVA is directed to include actions taken to implement its engagement with the servicemembers in the annual report to the Governor, the Cabinet, and the Legislature.

In the annual report to the Governor, the Cabinet, and the Legislature, due on December 31, 2025, the FDVA is required to:

- Include its evaluation of health literacy among Florida veterans; and
- Make recommendations to increase veteran knowledge of available programs and services and to maximize veteran use of those resources.

### **Veteran Suicide Prevention Training Pilot Program**

The bill amends s. 292.115, F.S., expanding the type of training to be provided to the FDVA claims examiners and county and city veteran service officers<sup>98</sup> under the Veteran Suicide Prevention Training Pilot Program. The bill requires that participants in the pilot program be trained to recognize indicators of elevated mental health conditions.

The bill requires the FDVA to contract with an organization with a proven practice of veteran-relevant mental health training to develop the curriculum for the training under the pilot program.

### **State Approving Agency for Veterans' Education and Training**

The bill amends s. 295.124, F.S., to update the federal law reference for the designation of the state approving agency for purposes of veterans' education and training. The updated reference is 38 U.S.C. s. 3671.<sup>99</sup>

### **Florida is for Veterans, Inc.**

The bill amends s. 295.21, F.S., expanding the duties of Veterans Florida to include advising the FDVA on the difficulties or needs of retired or recently separated military personnel and their spouses which Veterans Florida has knowledge of and which may be under the purview of the FDVA.<sup>100</sup>

### **Florida Defense Support**

The bill amends s. 295.22, F.S., removing obsolete language by correcting a provisional cross-reference. The bill removes the reference to the Florida Defense Support Task Force and revises

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<sup>97</sup> Section 292.11, F.S., describes county and city veteran service officers.

<sup>98</sup> Section 292.11, F.S.

<sup>99</sup> 38 U.S.C. s. 3671 (2021). See United States Code available at <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid:USC-prelim-title38-section1771&num=0&edition=prelim> (last visited Feb. 9, 2025).

<sup>100</sup> See s. 295.21 (2), F.S. According to the Florida Dep't of Veterans' Affairs, the bill codifies into law the Florida is for Veterans, Inc., advisory role, *supra* note 29 at 2.



Veterans Florida's collaborators of the Veterans Employment and Training Services Program<sup>101</sup> to include the direct-support organization established by the Department of Commerce.<sup>102</sup>

### **Veterans' Adult Day Health Care**

The bill amends s. 296.43, F.S., requiring the FDVA to develop a statewide plan to establish adult day health care facilities across Florida to serve veterans and their families. The bill requires the FDVA to include in the plan:

- Recommendations for locations that will have the greatest impact on veteran populations. In making such recommendations the FDVA must provide an evaluation of data, including, but not limited to, veteran population and veteran population demographics, in addition to providing an assessment of anticipated veteran needs.
- Potential state and federal participation.
- Estimates for the daily cost of running the facilities.
- Estimates for the daily cost of maintenance and general upkeep of the facilities.
- Location of existing potential infrastructure.
- Potential construction costs.

The bill directs the FDVA to provide a report detailing the plan to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by November 1, 2025.

### **Gadsden Flag License Plate**

The bill amends s. 320.08058, F.S., to authorize that up to 10 percent of the proceeds from the sale of the Gadsden Flag license plate may be used by the Florida Veterans Foundation for administrative costs in addition to the promotion and marketing of the specialty license plate.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2025.

## **IV. Constitutional Issues:**

### **A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:**

None.

### **B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:**

None.

### **C. Trust Funds Restrictions:**

None.

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<sup>101</sup> See s. 292.22(1), F.S.

<sup>102</sup> Section 288.987, F.S.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None Identified.

**V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The FDVA estimates that expanding the scope of the survey of the needs of veterans and their spouses and dependents in the areas of social services, health care, education, and employment, and any other areas of determined need by evaluating the extent to which such persons are aware of existing federal, state, or community programs or services that meet their areas of need may require an additional \$50,000 in funding.<sup>103</sup>

The FDVA estimates that continuing to implement the Veteran Suicide Prevention Training Pilot Program, with specialized mental health training to recognize indicators of elevated mental health conditions, may require \$300,000 in recurring funding.<sup>104</sup>

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Statutes Affected:**

This bill substantially amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 265.003, 292.05, 292.115, 295.124, 295.21, 295.22, 296.43, and 320.08058.

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<sup>103</sup> Email from Roy Clark, Director of Cabinet and Legislative Affairs, Florida Dep't of Veterans' Affairs, to Jay Howard, Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services, Florida Senate (February 12, 2025) (on file with the Senate Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security).

<sup>104</sup> *Id.*

**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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By Senator Burgess

23-00938-25

2025116\_\_

1 A bill to be entitled  
 2 An act relating to veterans; amending s. 265.003,  
 3 F.S.; revising the maximum number of nominees for the  
 4 Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame submitted by the  
 5 Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame Council to the  
 6 Department of Veterans' Affairs for submission to the  
 7 Governor and the Cabinet; amending s. 292.05, F.S.;  
 8 requiring the Department of Veterans' Affairs to  
 9 conduct a study that includes a survey evaluating the  
 10 extent to which specified persons are aware of certain  
 11 existing programs or services; requiring that such  
 12 survey also include specified recommendations;  
 13 requiring that a certain report include additional  
 14 actions taken by the Department of Veterans' Affairs  
 15 and other information and recommendations as the  
 16 department determines are necessary; requiring that a  
 17 specified report include an evaluation of the health  
 18 literacy of veterans in this state and recommendations  
 19 on how to increase knowledge of programs and services  
 20 available to such veterans; requiring the department  
 21 to ensure coordination to the greatest extent possible  
 22 with the United States Department of Defense for a  
 23 specified purpose; authorizing the Department of  
 24 Veterans' Affairs to engage county and city veteran  
 25 service officers for assistance; amending s. 292.115,  
 26 F.S.; revising the purpose of the Veteran Suicide  
 27 Prevention Training Pilot Program to include  
 28 specialized mental health training; requiring  
 29 individuals electing to participate in the pilot

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**CODING:** Words ~~stricken~~ are deletions; words underlined are additions.

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30 program to be trained to identify indicators of  
 31 elevated mental health risk; requiring the department  
 32 to contract with an organization developing and  
 33 implementing veteran-relevant and evidence-based  
 34 mental health training; amending s. 295.124, F.S.;  
 35 revising a reference to the United States Code;  
 36 amending s. 295.21, F.S.; requiring Florida Is For  
 37 Veterans, Inc., to advise the Department of Veterans'  
 38 Affairs on specified problems or needs of certain  
 39 military personnel and their spouses; amending s.  
 40 295.22, F.S.; revising the collaborators of the  
 41 Veterans Employment and Training Services Program to  
 42 include a specified direct-support organization;  
 43 amending s. 296.43, F.S.; requiring the Department of  
 44 Veterans' Affairs to develop a plan to establish adult  
 45 day health care facilities across this state to serve  
 46 veterans and their families; requiring that such plans  
 47 include specified information; requiring the  
 48 department to provide a specified report to the  
 49 Legislature by a specified date; amending s.  
 50 320.08058, F.S.; authorizing the use of a specified  
 51 percentage of proceeds from the sale of a specified  
 52 specialty license plate for the promotion and  
 53 administrative costs of the plate; providing an  
 54 effective date.

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

58 Section 1. Paragraph (a) of subsection (4) of section

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**CODING:** Words ~~stricken~~ are deletions; words underlined are additions.

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265.003, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

265.003 Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame.—

(4)(a) The Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame Council shall annually accept nominations of persons to be considered for induction into the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame and shall transmit a list of up to 5 ~~20~~ nominees to the Department of Veterans' Affairs for submission to the Governor and the Cabinet, who will select the nominees to be inducted.

Section 2. Paragraph (b) of subsection (5) and subsection (6) of section 292.05, Florida Statutes, are amended, and subsection (8) is added to that section, to read:

292.05 Duties of Department of Veterans' Affairs.—

(5) The department shall conduct an ongoing study on the problems and needs of those residents of this state who are veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States and the problems and needs of their spouses and dependents. The study shall include, but not be limited to:

(b) A survey of the needs of such persons in the areas of social services, health care, education, and employment, and any other areas of determined need, with recommendations regarding federal, state, and community services that would meet those needs. The survey must also evaluate the extent to which such persons are aware of existing federal, state, or community programs or services that meet their areas of need, with recommendations regarding increasing public awareness using administrative or legislative options.

(6) The department shall, by December 31 of each year, submit an annual written report to the Governor, the Cabinet, and the Legislature which describes:

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(a) The expenses incurred in veteran service work in the state; the number, nature, and kind of cases handled by the department and by county and city veteran service officers of the state; the amounts of benefits obtained for veterans; the names and addresses of all certified veteran service officers, including county and city veteran service officers.

(b) The report must ~~also~~ describe the actions taken by the department in implementing subsections (4), (5), ~~and~~ (7), and (8) and include other information and recommendations as the department determines are necessary to provide information on its annual activities requires.

(c) ~~(b)~~ The current status of the department's domiciliary and nursing homes established pursuant to chapter 296, including all receipts and expenditures, the condition of the homes, the number of residents received and discharged during the preceding year, occupancy rates, staffing, and any other information necessary to provide an understanding of the management, conduct, and operation of the homes.

(d) For the report due on December 31, 2025, an evaluation by the department among veterans in this state on the level of health literacy and any recommendations to increase veteran knowledge of available programs and services and maximize their use of such resources.

(8) The department shall ensure coordination to the greatest extent possible with the United States Department of Defense to directly engage all servicemembers returning home to, or electing to remain in or move to, this state following their service and during re-entry into civilian life, including connecting them with Florida Is For Veterans, Inc., and other

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relevant resources. The department may engage county and city veteran service officers for assistance with fulfilling this duty.

Section 3. Subsections (1) and (2) of section 292.115, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

292.115 Veteran Suicide Prevention Training Pilot Program.—

(1) The Department of Veterans' Affairs shall establish the Veteran Suicide Prevention Training Pilot Program. The purpose of the pilot program is to offer to each Department of Veterans' Affairs claims examiner and each county and city veteran service officer, as described in s. 292.11, specialized mental health training and certification in the prevention of veteran suicide.

(2) Individuals electing to participate in the pilot program must be trained to identify indicators of elevated mental health or suicide risk and provide emergency crisis referrals for veterans expressing or exhibiting symptoms of emotional or psychological distress. The Department of Veterans' Affairs shall contract with an organization having proven experience developing and implementing veteran-relevant and evidence-based mental health and suicide prevention training to develop the curriculum for such training. The department shall establish and oversee the process for certifying program participants who successfully complete such training.

Section 4. Section 295.124, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

295.124 State approving agency for veterans' education and training.—The Department of Veterans' Affairs shall act as the state approving agency for purposes of veterans' education and training, in accordance with 38 U.S.C. s. 3671 ~~38 U.S.C. s. 1771~~

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and the applicable annual contract between the state and the Federal Government.

Section 5. Paragraph (h) is added to subsection (3) of section 295.21, Florida Statutes, to read:

295.21 Florida Is For Veterans, Inc.—

(3) DUTIES.—The corporation shall:

(h) Advise the Department of Veterans' Affairs on any problems or needs of retired and recently separated military personnel of this state and any problems or needs of their spouses which the corporation has knowledge of and which may be within the purview of the department in fulfilling its duties.

Section 6. Paragraph (c) of subsection (5) of section 295.22, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

295.22 Veterans Employment and Training Services Program.—

(5) COLLABORATION.—

(c) The corporation may collaborate with other state agencies and entities for outreach, information exchange, marketing, and referrals regarding programs and initiatives that include, but are not limited to, the program created by this section and those within any of the following:

1. The Department of Veterans' Affairs:

a. Access to benefits and assistance programs.

b. Hope Navigators Program.

2. The Department of Commerce:

a. The Disabled Veteran Outreach Program and local veteran employment representatives.

b. CareerSource Florida, Inc., and local workforce boards employment and recruitment services.

c. The Quick-Response Training Program.

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175 d. Efforts of the direct-support organization Florida  
 176 ~~Defense Support Task Force~~ created under s. 288.987, the Florida  
 177 Small Business Development Center Network, and the direct  
 178 support organization established in s. 288.012(6).

179 3. The Department of Business and Professional Regulation,  
 180 reciprocity and the availability of certain license and fee  
 181 waivers.

182 4. The Department of Education:

183 a. CAPE industry certifications under s. 1008.44.

184 b. Information related to earning postsecondary credit at  
 185 public postsecondary educational institutions for college-level  
 186 training and education acquired in the military under s.  
 187 1004.096.

188 5. The Department of Health:

189 a. The Office of Veteran Licensure Services.

190 b. The Florida Veterans Application for Licensure Online  
 191 Response expedited licensing.

192 6. The Office of Reimagining Education and Career Help.

193 Section 7. Section 296.43, Florida Statutes, is amended to  
 194 read:

195 296.43 Purpose and statewide plan.—

196 (1) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this part is to provide for the  
 197 establishment of basic standards for the operation of veterans'  
 198 adult day health care programs for eligible veterans in need of  
 199 such services.

200 (2) STATEWIDE PLAN.—The department shall develop a plan to  
 201 establish adult day health care facilities across this state to  
 202 serve veterans and their families.

203 (a) The plan must include:

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204 1. Recommendations for locations that will have the most  
 205 impact on the veteran population. In making such  
 206 recommendations, the department shall:

207 a. Provide an evaluation of data, including, but not  
 208 limited to, veteran population and veteran population  
 209 demographics.

210 b. Provide an assessment of anticipated veteran needs.

211 2. Potential state and federal participation.

212 3. Estimates for the daily cost of running the facilities.

213 4. Estimates for the daily cost of maintenance and general  
 214 upkeep of the facilities.

215 5. Location of existing potential infrastructure.

216 6. Potential construction costs.

217 (b) The department shall provide a report detailing the  
 218 plan required by this subsection to the President of the Senate  
 219 and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by November 1,  
 220 2025.

221 Section 8. Subsection (92) of section 320.08058, Florida  
 222 Statutes, is amended to read:

223 320.08058 Specialty license plates.—

224 (92) GADSDEN FLAG LICENSE PLATES.—

225 (a) The department shall develop a Gadsden Flag license  
 226 plate as provided in this section and s. 320.08053. The design  
 227 of the license plate must replicate the color, layout, and  
 228 design of the Gadsden Flag. The word "Florida" must appear at  
 229 the top of the plate, and the words "Don't Tread on Me" must  
 230 appear at the bottom of the plate.

231 (b) The annual use fees shall be distributed to the Florida  
 232 Veterans Foundation, a direct-support organization of the

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233 Department of Veterans' Affairs, and must be used to benefit  
234 veterans. Up to 10 percent of the proceeds may be used for  
235 ~~continuing~~ promotion and marketing of the license plate and for  
236 administrative costs.

237 Section 9. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.



2/18/25

Meeting Date

Military & Veterans Affairs

Committee

The Florida Senate

## APPEARANCE RECORD

Deliver both copies of this form to  
Senate professional staff conducting the meeting

116

Bill Number or Topic

Amendment Barcode (if applicable)

Name **Dan Hendrickson**

Phone **850/570-1967**

Address **319 E Park Ave**

Email **danbhendrickson@comcast.net**

Street

**Tallahassee**

**FL**

**32302**

City

State

Zip

Speaking: ☒ For ☐ Against ☐ Information **OR** Waive Speaking: ☐ In Support ☐ Against

### PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

☒ I am appearing without  
compensation or sponsorship.

☐ I am a registered lobbyist,  
representing:

☐ I am not a lobbyist, but received  
something of value for my appearance  
(travel, meals, lodging, etc.),  
sponsored by:

*While it is a tradition to encourage public testimony, time may not permit all persons wishing to speak to be heard at this hearing. Those who do speak may be asked to limit their remarks so that as many persons as possible can be heard. If you have questions about registering to lobby please see Fla. Stat. §11.045 and Joint Rule 1. [2020-2022 Joint Rules.pdf \(flsenate.gov\)](#)*

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

S-001 (08/10/2021)

2/18/25

Meeting Date

Military and Veteran Affairs

Committee

Name **Karen C. Murillo**

Address **215 S. Monroe St., Ste. 603**

Street

**Tallahassee**

City

**FL**

State

**32301**

Zip

The Florida Senate  
**APPEARANCE RECORD**

Deliver both copies of this form to  
Senate professional staff conducting the meeting

**SB 116 - Veterans**

Bill Number or Topic

Amendment Barcode (if applicable)

Phone **850-567-0414**

Email **kmurillo@aarp.org**

Speaking: ☐ For ☐ Against ☐ Information **OR** Waive Speaking: ☒ In Support ☐ Against

**PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:**

☐ I am appearing without  
compensation or sponsorship.

☒ I am a registered lobbyist,  
representing:

**AARP Florida**

☐ I am not a lobbyist, but received  
something of value for my appearance  
(travel, meals, lodging, etc.),  
sponsored by:

While it is a tradition to encourage public testimony, time may not permit all persons wishing to speak to be heard at this hearing. Those who do speak may be asked to limit their remarks so that as many persons as possible can be heard. If you have questions about registering to lobby please see Fla. Stat. §11.045 and Joint Rule 1. [2020-2022 Joint Rules.pdf \(flsenate.gov\)](#)

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

S-001 (08/10/2021)

2/18/2025

Meeting Date  
**Military and Veterans Affairs**

Committee  
**Jorge Morales**

Name

Address **6363 De Zavala Road**

Street

**San Antonio**

City

**TX**

State

**78249**

Zip

The Florida Senate  
**APPEARANCE RECORD**

Deliver both copies of this form to  
Senate professional staff conducting the meeting

116

Bill Number or Topic

Amendment Barcode (if applicable)

**407-487-2362**

Phone

**jmorales@endeavors.org**

Email

**Reset Form**

Speaking: ☒ For ☐ Against ☐ Information **OR** Waive Speaking: ☐ In Support ☐ Against

**PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:**

☐ I am appearing without  
compensation or sponsorship.

☐ I am a registered lobbyist,  
representing:

☒ I am not a lobbyist, but received  
something of value for my appearance  
(travel, meals, lodging, etc.),  
sponsored by:

**Endeavors**

While it is a tradition to encourage public testimony, time may not permit all persons wishing to speak to be heard at this hearing. Those who do speak may be asked to limit their remarks so that as many persons as possible can be heard. If you have questions about registering to lobby please see Fla. Stat. §11.045 and Joint Rule 1. [2020-2022JointRules.pdf \(flsenate.gov\)](#)

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

S-001 (08/10/2021)

**APPEARANCE RECORD**

SB 116

Meeting Date

Deliver both copies of this form to

Bill Number or Topic

Senate professional staff conducting the meeting

Committee

Amendment Barcode (if applicable)

Name

Phone

Address

Email

Street

City

State

Zip

Speaking:

☐ For☐ Against☒ Information**OR**

Waive Speaking:

☐ In Support☐ Against**PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:**

I am appearing without compensation or sponsorship.



I am a registered lobbyist, representing:



I am not a lobbyist, but received something of value for my appearance (travel, meals, lodging, etc.), sponsored by:

While it is a tradition to encourage public testimony, time may not permit all persons wishing to speak to be heard at this hearing. Those who do speak may be asked to limit their remarks so that as many persons as possible can be heard. If you have questions about registering to lobby please see Fla. Stat. §11.045 and Joint Rule 1. [2020-2022 Joint Rules.pdf \(flsenate.gov\)](#)



The Florida Senate

## Committee Agenda Request

**To:** Senator Tom Wright, Chair  
Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security

**Subject:** Committee Agenda Request

**Date:** February 10, 2025

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I respectfully request that **Senate Bill #116**, relating to Veterans, be placed on the:

- ☐ committee agenda at your earliest possible convenience.
- ☒ next committee agenda.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Danny", is written over a horizontal line.

Senator Danny Burgess  
Florida Senate, District 23

CC: Tim Proctor, Staff Director  
CC: Lois Graham, Committee Administrative Assistant





## 2025 AGENCY LEGISLATIVE BILL ANALYSIS

### AGENCY: Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles

<u>BILL INFORMATION</u>	
BILL NUMBER:	HB 49
BILL TITLE:	<u>Specialty License Plates</u>
BILL SPONSOR:	McFarland
EFFECTIVE DATE:	October 1, 2025

<u>COMMITTEES OF REFERENCE</u>
1)
2)
3)
4)
5)

<u>PREVIOUS LEGISLATION</u>	
BILL NUMBER:	
SPONSOR:	
YEAR:	
LAST ACTION:	

<u>CURRENT COMMITTEE</u>

<u>SIMILAR BILLS</u>	
BILL NUMBER:	
SPONSOR:	

<u>IDENTICAL BILLS</u>	
BILL NUMBER:	
SPONSOR:	

Is this bill part of an agency package?

<u>BILL ANALYSIS INFORMATION</u>	
Date of Analysis:	12/16/2025
Division Director/Designee MS	<i>Rolyn R. Kypel</i>
Division Director/Designee FHP	
Bureau Chief(s):	Victor Miller, Chief, Bureau of Issuance Oversight
Additional Analyst(s):	12/16/24: Kenny Zimmerman/Stam Kirkland -Strategic Management Office 12/16/2024, Paula Stanfield, Bureau of Issuance Oversight
Legal Analyst:	Dan Biggins-OGC
Fiscal Analyst:	1/14/2025 – Steve Burch, CFO
Office of Legislative Affairs:	<i>[Signature]</i> 1/30/25

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## POLICY ANALYSIS

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### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

House Bill 49 ("bill") directs the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles ("Department") to develop a United States Naval Academy specialty license plate. Provides for distribution to the organization Jacksonville Chapter of the Naval Academy Alumni Association for the distribution of the annual use fees received from the sale of the license plate.

If passed the bill becomes effective October 1, 2025.

### 1. SUBSTANTIVE BILL ANALYSIS

#### 2. PRESENT SITUATION:

The Florida Legislature has the authority to grant approval for the issuance of specialty license plates. Specialty license plates may be purchased and issued to anyone who agrees to pay the license plate fees. There are currently 136 specialty license plates approved by the Legislature. Of these, 114 are authorized for issuance and 22 are in the "pre-sale" process.

Section 320.00853(3)(b), F.S., limited the number of specialty license plates to 135.

The money raised from the sale of a specialty license plate goes directly to the sponsoring organization or another entity for uses as determined by law.

#### Design Process:

If a specialty license plate requested by an organization is approved by law, the organization must submit the proposed art design for the specialty license plate to the Department, in a medium prescribed by the Department, no later than 60 days after the legislation authorizing the plate becomes law. The design must match the parameters laid out in the authorizing statute. Within 120 days after legislation authorizing a specialty license plate becomes law, the Department establishes a method to issue a specialty license plate voucher to allow for the presale of the specialty license plate.<sup>1</sup> The applicant for a specialty license plate voucher pays the processing fee (\$5) prescribed in s. 320.08056, F.S., the service charge (\$2.50) and branch fee (\$0.50) prescribed in s. 320.04, F.S., and the annual use fee (ranging from \$15-\$25 depending on the plate) prescribed in s. 320.08056, F.S. All other applicable statutory fees are charged at the time of issuance of the specialty license plate.

#### Pre-sale Process:

Within 24 months after a presale specialty license plate voucher is established, the approved specialty license plate organization must record with the Department a minimum of 3,000 voucher sales for all plates. If the specialty license plate was in pre-sale as of June 15, 2022, and the organization has not recorded at least 3,000 voucher sales during the pre-sale period, the Department was required to grant a 24-month extension to the presale period. If the specialty license plate organization has not recorded at least 3,000 voucher sales during the pre-sale period, the Department shall grant a 24-month extension to the presale

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<sup>1</sup> Section 320.08053, F.S.

period. If, at the conclusion of the presale period, the minimum voucher sale requirement has not been met, the Department must de-authorize the specialty plate, discontinue development of the license plate, and discontinue issuance of the presale vouchers. If a plate does not meet the presale requirements, a purchaser of a license plate voucher may use the annual use fee paid as a credit towards any other specialty license plate or apply for a refund from the Department.<sup>2</sup>

The same applies if the specialty license plate meets the pre-sale requirements but the customer chooses not to be issued the license plate, the purchaser of the license plate voucher may use the annual use fee paid as a credit towards any other specialty license plate or apply for a refund from the Department.

Authorization:

Once authorized, specialty license plates may be purchased and issued to anyone who agrees to pay the license plate fees. The annual use fee collected for a specialty license plate, or any interest earned from the fee, may not be used for commercial activities, for-profit activities, or general or administrative expenses unless authorized by s. 320.08058, F.S. Annual use fees and the interest thereon may be used to pay the cost of the audit or report required by s. 320.08062(1), F.S. Annual use fees and interest earned from such fees may be expended only in Florida unless the annual use fees are derived from the sale of United States Armed Forces and veterans-related specialty license plates.<sup>3</sup>

Likewise, an annual use fee from the sale of a specialty license plate and the interest earned on a fee may not be used for the purpose of marketing to, lobbying, entertaining, or rewarding an employee of a governmental agency that is responsible for the sale and distribution of specialty license plates, or an elected member or employee of the legislature.<sup>4</sup>

Deauthorization:

The department must discontinue the issuance of an approved specialty license plate if the number of valid specialty plate registrations falls below 3,000 (4,000 for out-of-state college or university license plates), for at least 12 consecutive months and must mail a warning letter to the sponsoring organization following the first month in which the total number of valid specialty plate registrations is below the minimum number of plates.<sup>5</sup>

The Department is authorized by s. 320.08056(8), F.S., to discontinue the issuance of a specialty license plate and distribution of associated annual use fee proceeds if the organization designated to receive the annual proceeds no longer exists, has stopped providing services that are authorized to be funded from the annual use fee proceeds, does not meet the presale requirements as prescribed in s. 320.08053, F.S., or requests the specialty plate be discontinued or the distribution of proceeds be halted.

<sup>2</sup> Section 320.08053, F.S.

<sup>3</sup> Section 320.08056(1)(a), F.S.

<sup>4</sup> Section 320.08056(11), F.S.

<sup>5</sup> Section 320.08056(8)(a), F.S. These requirements do not apply to: a) in-state collegiate license plates established under s. [320.08058\(3\)](#); b) license plates of institutions in and entities of the State University System; c) specialty license plates that have statutory eligibility limitations for purchase; d) specialty license plates for which annual use fees are distributed by a foundation for student and teacher leadership programs and teacher recruitment and retention; or d) Florida Professional Sports Team license plates established under s. [320.08058\(9\)](#).



The Department is required by s. 320.08056(8)(f), F.S., on January 1 of each year, to discontinue the specialty license plate with the fewest number of plates in circulation, including license plates exempt from a statutory sales requirement. The only exception to this form of deauthorization is for collegiate plates.

### 3. EFFECT OF THE BILL:

#### United States Naval Academy License Plate:

The bill creates s. 320.08058(136), F.S., which requires the Department to develop a United States Naval Academy specialty license plate and that proceeds from the sale of the plate be distributed to the Jacksonville Chapter of the Naval Academy Alumni Association, to be used as follows:

- A maximum of 10% of the fees for administration, promotion, and marketing of the specialty license plate.
- The remaining annual use fees must be distributed to the Jacksonville Chapter of the Naval Academy Alumni Association., to be used to provide grants to charitable organizations in Florida that support veterans and their families by providing food or shelter, providing service animals or support animals to wounded veterans and supporting children of servicemembers killed in the line of duty.

The Jacksonville Chapter of the Naval Academy Alumni Association is not registered to do business in Florida, according to on the Department of State's SunBiz.org website.

If the bill passes, several existing motor vehicle procedures would need to be updated to incorporate the changes related to the new specialty license plate. If the license plate passes the presale requirement threshold, then existing forms, along with the specialty license brochure, website, and related Department procedures will need to be updated.

### 4. DOES THE BILL DIRECT OR ALLOW THE AGENCY/BOARD/COMMISSION/DEPARTMENT TO DEVELOP, ADOPT, OR ELIMINATE RULES, REGULATIONS, POLICIES, OR PROCEDURES? Y ☐ N ☒

If yes, explain:	
Is the change consistent with the agency's core mission?	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
Rule(s) impacted (provide references to F.A.C., etc.):	

### 5. WHAT IS THE POSITION OF AFFECTED CITIZENS OR STAKEHOLDER GROUPS?

Proponents and summary of position:	Proponents may be individuals interested in purchasing the proposed plate.
Opponents and summary of position:	There are no known opponents.

### 6. ARE THERE ANY REPORTS OR STUDIES REQUIRED BY THIS BILL? Y ☐ N ☒

If yes, provide a description:	
Date Due:	
Bill Section Number(s):	

**7. ARE THERE ANY NEW GUBERNATORIAL APPOINTMENTS OR CHANGES TO EXISTING BOARDS, TASK FORCES, COUNCILS, COMMISSIONS, ETC. REQUIRED BY THIS BILL?**
Y ☐ N ☒

Board:	
Board Purpose:	
Who Appoints:	
Changes:	
Bill Section Number(s):	

**FISCAL ANALYSIS**
**1. DOES THE BILL HAVE A FISCAL IMPACT TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT?**
Y ☐ N ☒

Revenues:	None
Expenditures:	None
Does the legislation increase local taxes or fees? If yes, explain.	No
If yes, does the legislation provide for a local referendum or local governing body public vote prior to implementation of the tax or fee increase?	N/A

**2. DOES THE BILL HAVE A FISCAL IMPACT TO STATE GOVERNMENT?**
Y ☒ N ☐

Revenues:	Indeterminate
Expenditures:	See Technology Impact Below
Does the legislation contain a State Government appropriation?	No
If yes, was this appropriated last year?	N/A

**3. DOES THE BILL HAVE A FISCAL IMPACT TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR?**
Y ☐ N ☒

Revenues:	None
Expenditures:	None
Other:	N/A

**4. DOES THE BILL INCREASE OR DECREASE TAXES, FEES, OR FINES?**
Y ☐ N ☒

If yes, explain impact.	No
Bill Section Number:	N/A

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**TECHNOLOGY IMPACT**


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**1. DOES THE BILL IMPACT THE AGENCY'S TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS (I.E. IT SUPPORT, LICENSING SOFTWARE, DATA STORAGE, ETC.)?**
Y ☒ N ☐

If yes, describe the anticipated impact to the agency including any fiscal impact.

The Department estimates that 216 hours will be required for programming and implementation.

These hours are estimated to have a fiscal impact to the Department of \$8,280 in FTE resources. (Development: 132 hours @ \$40/hour + 12 hour @ 100/hour and Testing: 72 hours @ \$25/hour)

Programming will be required initially to allow the department to accept vouchers.

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**FEDERAL IMPACT**


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**1. DOES THE BILL HAVE A FEDERAL IMPACT (I.E. FEDERAL COMPLIANCE, FEDERAL FUNDING, FEDERAL AGENCY INVOLVEMENT, ETC.)?**
Y ☐ N ☒

If yes, describe the anticipated impact including any fiscal impact.

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**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**


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The Jacksonville Chapter of the Naval Academy Alumni Association is not registered to do business in Florida, according to on the Department of State's SunBiz.org website, this should be rectified.

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**LEGAL - GENERAL COUNSEL'S OFFICE REVIEW**


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Issues/concerns/comments:

The intent of the bill seems to be to limit the use of the funds to support veterans and families in Florida. However, the current wording of SB 49 leaves ambiguity as it restricts use of the proceeds from the specialty license plate to "grants to charitable organizations in this state that directly support veterans and their families" for certain purposes, rather than how and where the proceeds ultimately actually are used for those purposes.



# 2025 AGENCY LEGISLATIVE BILL ANALYSIS

AGENCY:

<u>BILL INFORMATION</u>	
BILL NUMBER:	116
BILL TITLE:	Veterans
BILL SPONSOR:	Burgess
EFFECTIVE DATE:	7/1/2025

<u>COMMITTEES OF REFERENCE</u>
1) Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security
2) Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services
3) Rules
4)
5)

<u>CURRENT COMMITTEE</u>
NA

<u>SIMILAR BILLS</u>	
BILL NUMBER:	NA
SPONSOR:	NA

<u>PREVIOUS LEGISLATION</u>	
BILL NUMBER:	NA
SPONSOR:	NA
YEAR:	NA
LAST ACTION:	NA

<u>IDENTICAL BILLS</u>	
BILL NUMBER:	NA
SPONSOR:	NA

<u>Is this bill part of an agency package?</u>
No

<u>BILL ANALYSIS INFORMATION</u>	
DATE OF ANALYSIS:	2/10/2025
LEAD AGENCY ANALYST:	Mitchell McCombs
ADDITIONAL ANALYST(S):	Roy Clark
LEGAL ANALYST:	Andy Benard
FISCAL ANALYST:	Jeff Obos

## POLICY ANALYSIS

### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 2. SUBSTANTIVE BILL ANALYSIS

## 1. PRESENT SITUATION:

Senate Bill 116 adds needed changes to or expands portions of the Department's statutes.

Section 1. Currently the Florida Hall of Fame Council may induct up to 20 veterans into the Florida Veterans Hall of Fame. The bill changes that number to 5.

Section 2. The bill requires the Department to conduct a formal survey of veterans in the state as to how the United States Department of Veterans Affairs is meeting the needs of our veterans in specific areas. Currently, we do not survey the veteran population as to their satisfaction of services provided by the VA.

Section 2. This bill expands the information to be included in the Department's Annual Report to the Governor and Cabinet. It will include an evaluation by the department of the level of health literacy of our veterans. Currently, we submit an annual report on activities and accomplishments of the department. We will simply add this to that report

Section 2. Requires the Department to ensure coordination to the greatest extent possible with the Department of Defense to directly engage all service members returning home to or electing to stay in the state following their term of service. Currently, Veterans Florida does this through engaging servicemembers through the SkillBridge program, hosting job fairs and briefing service members during the services' Transition Assistance Programs.

Section 3. The bill expands the Veteran Suicide Prevention Training Pilot Program to include specialized mental health training and certification in the prevention of veteran suicide. Currently, the training program of our Veteran Service officers and those at the county were trained in how to recognize suicide ideation. This will take that training to the next level.

Section 4. The bill changes the reference of a federal statute for veterans' education and training. Currently, our state references an incorrect Federal Statute.

Section 5. The Bill expands the duties of the Florida is for Veterans, Inc. to include advising the Florida Department on any problems or needs of retired or recently separated military personnel and their spouses. Currently, Florida is for Veterans, Inc already does this with the Department. This bill would codify the action.

Section 6. Deletes the Florida Defense Task Force as an organization.

Section 7. The bill requires the Department to develop a plan to establish adult day healthcare facilities around the state. Currently, the department does not operate or manage any adult day healthcare facilities.

Section 8. Amends section 320.08058 Florida Statutes to allow the Florida Veterans Foundation to use part of the 10% authorized for promotion and marketing to include administration costs. Currently, we are not authorized to cover administrative cost.

## 2. EFFECT OF THE BILL:

- Changes the number of nominees the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame Council can submit, reducing the maximum from 20 to 5.
- Mandates the Department of Veterans' Affairs to conduct a study that includes surveying awareness of existing programs among veterans, with recommendations to improve public awareness.
- Expands the annual veterans' affairs report to include additional actions taken by the department and an evaluation of health literacy among veterans.
- Enhances coordination with the U.S. Department of Defense to assist servicemembers transitioning to civilian life.
- Modifies the Veteran Suicide Prevention Training Pilot Program to include mental health training and identifying indicators of elevated mental health risk.
- Revises references in statutes to align with updated U.S. Code sections and roles of various organizations in veterans' programs.
- Develops a plan for establishing adult day health care facilities statewide for veterans, detailing the strategic locations and potential costs.

- Allocates up to 10% of proceeds from the Gadsden Flag license plates for promotional and administrative costs.

**3. DOES THE BILL DIRECT OR ALLOW THE AGENCY/BOARD/COMMISSION/DEPARTMENT TO DEVELOP, ADOPT, OR ELIMINATE RULES, REGULATIONS, POLICIES, OR PROCEDURES?** Y ☐ N ☒

If yes, explain:	
Is the change consistent with the agency's core mission?	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
Rule(s) impacted (provide references to F.A.C., etc.):	

**4. WHAT IS THE POSITION OF AFFECTED CITIZENS OR STAKEHOLDER GROUPS?**

Proponents and summary of position:	Veterans.
Opponents and summary of position:	Unknown at this time.

**5. ARE THERE ANY REPORTS OR STUDIES REQUIRED BY THIS BILL?** Y ☐ N ☐

If yes, provide a description:	Surveying awareness of existing programs among veterans, with recommendations to improve public awareness.
Date Due:	Ongoing
Bill Section Number(s):	2

**6. ARE THERE ANY NEW GUBERNATORIAL APPOINTMENTS OR CHANGES TO EXISTING BOARDS, TASK FORCES, COUNCILS, COMMISSIONS, ETC. REQUIRED BY THIS BILL?** Y ☐ N ☒

Board:	
Board Purpose:	
Who Appoints:	
Changes:	
Bill Section Number(s):	

## FISCAL ANALYSIS

**1. DOES THIS BILL HAVE A FISCAL IMPACT TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT?** Y ☐ N ☒

Revenues:	
Expenditures:	
Does the legislation increase local taxes or fees? If yes, explain.	
If yes, does the legislation provide for a local referendum or local governing body public vote prior to implementation of the tax or fee increase?	

**2. DOES THE BILL HAVE A FISCAL IMPACT TO STATE GOVERNMENT?** Y ☐ N ☐

Revenues:	0
Expenditures:	Unknown at this time.
Does the legislation contain a State Government appropriation?	No.
If yes, was this appropriated last year?	No.

**3. DOES THE BILL HAVE A FISCAL IMPACT TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR?**Y ☐ N ☒

Revenues:	
Expenditures:	
Other:	

**4. DOES THE BILL INCREASE OR DECREASE TAXES, FEES, OR FINES?**Y ☐ N ☒

If yes, explain impact.	
Bill Section Number:	

**TECHNOLOGY IMPACT****1. DOES THE BILL IMPACT THE AGENCY'S TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS (I.E. IT SUPPORT, LICENSING SOFTWARE, DATA STORAGE, ETC.)?**Y ☐ N ☒

If yes, describe the anticipated impact to the agency including any fiscal impact.	
--	--

**FEDERAL IMPACT****1. DOES THE BILL HAVE A FEDERAL IMPACT (I.E. FEDERAL COMPLIANCE, FEDERAL FUNDING, FEDERAL AGENCY INVOLVEMENT, ETC.)?**Y ☐ N ☒

If, yes, describe the anticipated impact including any fiscal impact.	
---	--

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

Both the requirement to conduct the survey and conduct the mental health training will require an additional appropriation for the agency to be able to comply.

**LEGAL – GENERAL COUNSEL'S OFFICE REVIEW****Legal Analysis of Senate Bill 116 (Florida)****Section 1 – Reduction in Hall of Fame Inductees**

- **Current Law:** The Florida Veterans Hall of Fame Council may induct up to 20 veterans per year.
- **Proposed Change:** The bill reduces the maximum number of inductees to 5.

- **Legal Implication:** This legislative change does not appear to conflict with any constitutional or statutory provisions. However, reducing the number of inductees could raise concerns about limiting recognition for veterans. There may also be procedural changes needed to update the criteria for selection.

## Section 2 – Veteran Survey Requirement

- **Current Law:** The Department does not currently survey veterans regarding their satisfaction with VA services.
- **Proposed Change:** The Department is required to conduct a formal survey assessing the VA's performance in meeting veterans' needs.
- **Legal Implication:** This provision mandates the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) to conduct surveys, potentially impacting budget allocations and administrative resources. The Department must ensure compliance with data privacy laws when collecting and handling survey responses.

## Section 2 – Expansion of Annual Report

- **Current Law:** The Department submits an annual report on its activities and accomplishments.
- **Proposed Change:** The annual report will now include an evaluation of veterans' health literacy.
- **Legal Implication:** Expanding the report's scope requires the Department to collect and analyze additional data. There are no apparent conflicts with Florida law, but resource allocation may be necessary to meet this requirement effectively.

## Section 2 – Coordination with the Department of Defense

- **Current Law:** Veterans Florida engages with service members through programs like SkillBridge.
- **Proposed Change:** The Department must enhance coordination with the Department of Defense (DoD) for transitioning service members.
- **Legal Implication:** This provision strengthens interagency cooperation. However, it may require additional agreements or memoranda of understanding (MOUs) between Florida's DVA and the DoD to ensure compliance with federal regulations.

## Section 3 – Expansion of Veteran Suicide Prevention Training

- **Current Law:** Training is currently focused on recognizing suicide ideation.
- **Proposed Change:** The bill expands training to include mental health certification and advanced suicide prevention strategies.
- **Legal Implication:** This change aligns with Florida's efforts to reduce veteran suicide rates but may necessitate additional funding and certification procedures. The Department must ensure that any mental health training complies with licensing and accreditation requirements.

## Section 4 – Correction of Federal Statutory Reference

- **Current Law:** The state references an incorrect federal statute related to veterans' education and training.
- **Proposed Change:** The bill corrects this reference.
- **Legal Implication:** This is a technical correction that ensures statutory consistency and avoids legal misinterpretation.



## Section 5 – Expansion of Florida is for Veterans, Inc. Duties

- **Current Law:** Florida is for Veterans, Inc. already advises the Department informally.
- **Proposed Change:** The bill codifies this advisory role into law.
- **Legal Implication:** This ensures formal recognition of Florida is for Veterans, Inc.’s role in advising the Department, reinforcing its duties while requiring no significant structural changes.

## Section 6 – Elimination of the Florida Defense Task Force

- **Current Law:** The Florida Defense Task Force is an existing organization.
- **Proposed Change:** The bill dissolves the Florida Defense Task Force.
- **Legal Implication:** The legislature will need to assess whether they want the functions of the Task Force either reassigned- to avoid gaps in defense-related policymaking- or deemed unnecessary.

## Section 7 – Establishment of Adult Day Healthcare Facilities

- **Current Law:** The Department does not operate adult day healthcare facilities.
- **Proposed Change:** The bill requires the Department to develop a plan for such facilities.
- **Legal Implication:** This provision mandates new program development, which may require legislative appropriations. The Department must comply with Florida’s healthcare regulations when planning such facilities.

## Section 8 – Amendment to Florida Veterans Foundation Fund Usage

- **Current Law:** The Florida Veterans Foundation is restricted in how it uses funds from specialty license plates.
- **Proposed Change:** The bill allows a portion of these funds to be used for administrative costs.
- **Legal Implication:** This change provides financial flexibility to the Foundation but must be carefully implemented to ensure that funds are still primarily used for their intended purpose (promotion and marketing).

## Overall Legal Impact

Senate Bill 116 appears legally sound.

Nonetheless, SB 116 introduces several substantive and administrative changes to Florida’s veterans’ programs, which require additional budgetary considerations, regulatory compliance measures, and interagency coordination to ensure successful implementation.

Issues/concerns/comments:	
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## Ingram, Michele

---

**From:** Proctor, Tim  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 12, 2025 2:58 PM  
**To:** Ingram, Michele  
**Subject:** FW: SB 116 Veterans bill

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

FYI

---

**From:** Clark, Roy <Roy.Clark@FDVA.FL.GOV>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 12, 2025 1:52 PM  
**To:** Howard, Jay <Jay.Howard@LASPBS.STATE.FL.US>  
**Cc:** Asztalos, Bob <Bob.Asztalos@FDVA.FL.GOV>; McCombs, Mitchell <Mitchell.McCombs@FDVA.FL.GOV>; Till, Jonathan <TILL.JONATHAN@flsenate.gov>; Proctor, Tim <PROCTOR.TIM@flsenate.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: SB 116 Veterans bill

Jay,  
We estimate that the survey portion of the bill will need \$50,000 to complete. The mental health portion will require \$300,00.00 annually. That was the cost of the pilot program we did two years ago. You can send anything you need to me, and I can get it to the right person.  
Very respectfully,  
Roy

Roy L. Clark III  
Director of Cabinet and Legislative Affairs  
Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs  
2601 Blair Stone Road Suite C-300  
Tallahassee, FL 32399  
Office: (850) 782-4304  
Cell: (850) 728-2349

---

**From:** Howard, Jay <[Jay.Howard@LASPBS.STATE.FL.US](mailto:Jay.Howard@LASPBS.STATE.FL.US)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 12, 2025 12:39 PM  
**To:** Clark, Roy <[Roy.Clark@FDVA.FL.GOV](mailto:Roy.Clark@FDVA.FL.GOV)>  
**Subject:** SB 116 Veterans bill

Do you have a fiscal analysis showing whether there is a fiscal impact on DVA for SB 116?

I see it is on the Military Affairs agenda for 2/18/25 and I would like to know if there is fiscal impact on DVA and if there is, can you let me know what that is.

Let me know if you or someone else will be my best contact for bill review this Session.

Thanks,

Jay Howard

Florida Senate

Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services

850-487-5330

Please note: Florida has a very broad public records law. Most written communications to or from state officials regarding state business are public records available to the public and media upon request. Your e-mail communications may therefore be subject to public disclosure.



# **Florida National Guard Department of Military Affairs**

## **Florida National Guard Overview Brief**

**MG John D. Haas**

The Adjutant General

*Right - Ready - Relevant*



# Florida National Guard

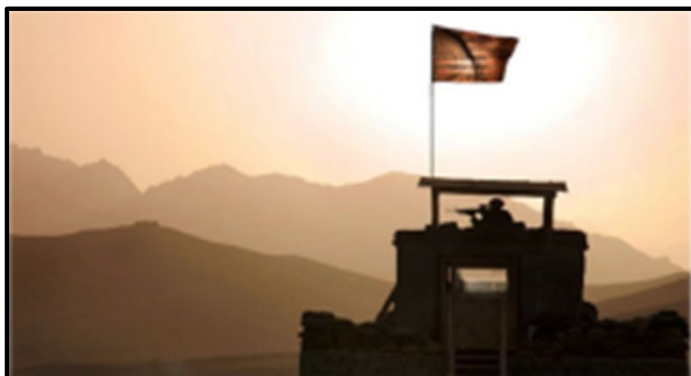
## Missions



**FEDERAL:** Maintain highly trained, equipped and ready units and Soldiers capable of executing all assigned missions and able to mobilize in support of the national military strategy in order to fight and win our nation's wars.

**STATE:** Provide organized, trained, equipped and ready joint forces to protect life and property, and to preserve peace, order and public safety when ordered by the governor.

- Our dual mission is part of what makes us unique



- Federal Mission
  - Fight and win our nation's wars

- State Mission
  - Protect life and property and provide Defense Support to Civil Authorities

*Right - Ready - Relevant*

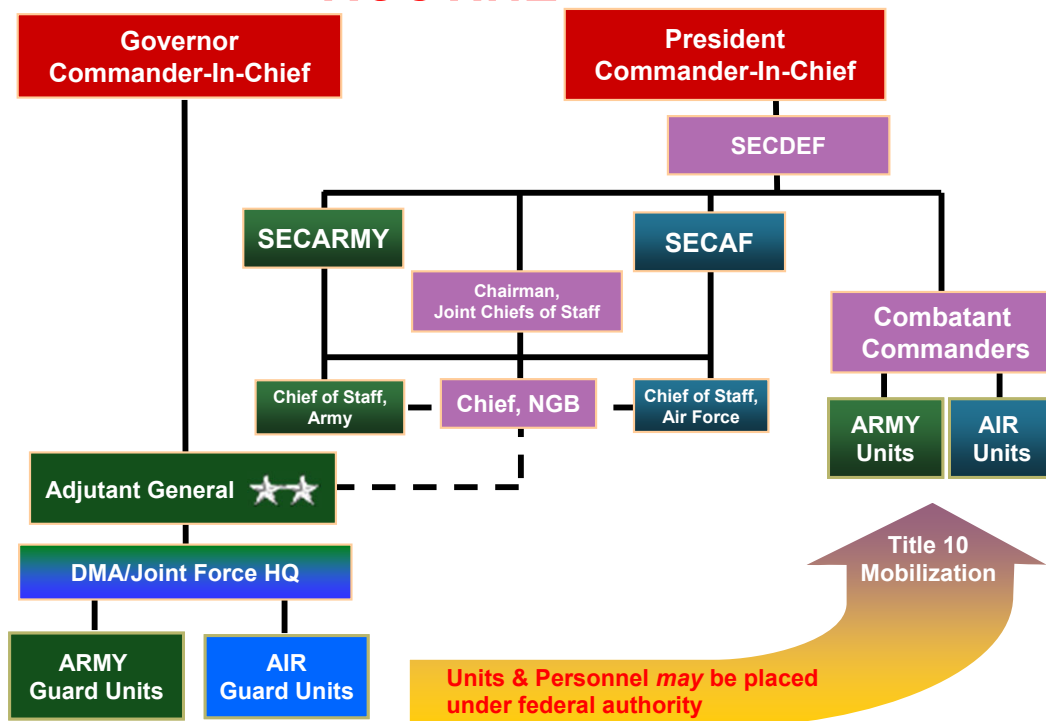


# Chain of Command

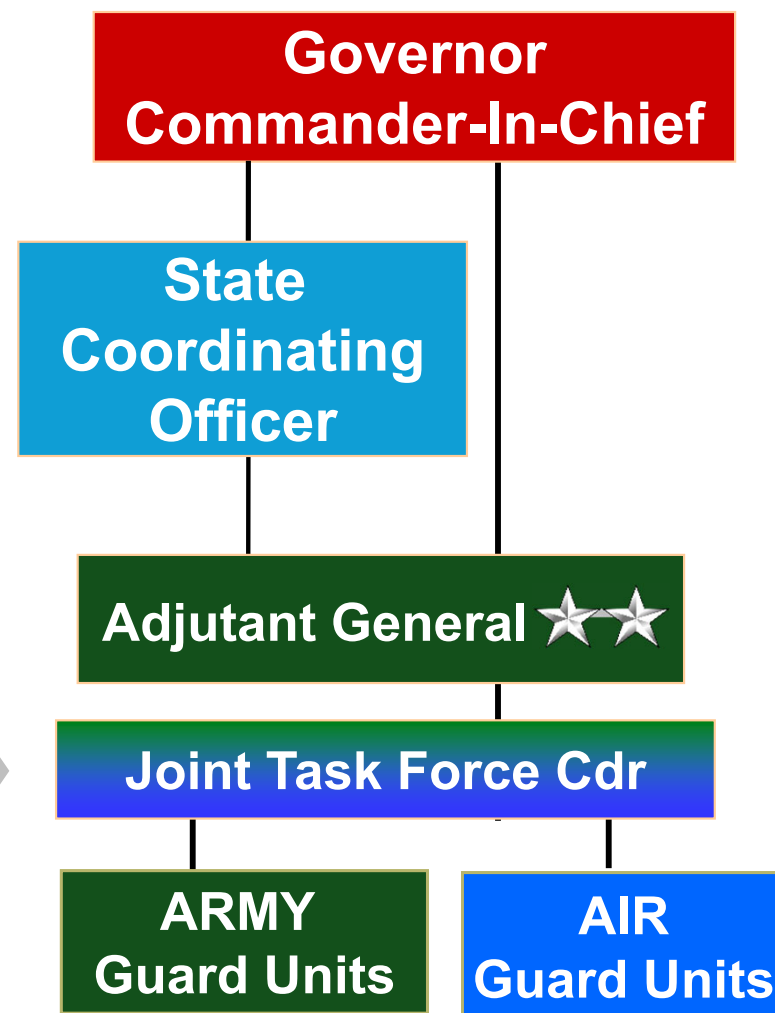
## Routine *and* Emergent



### ROUTINE



### EMERGENT



### FLORIDA STATUTE § 250.06:

#### As the Commander of the Guard, the Governor:

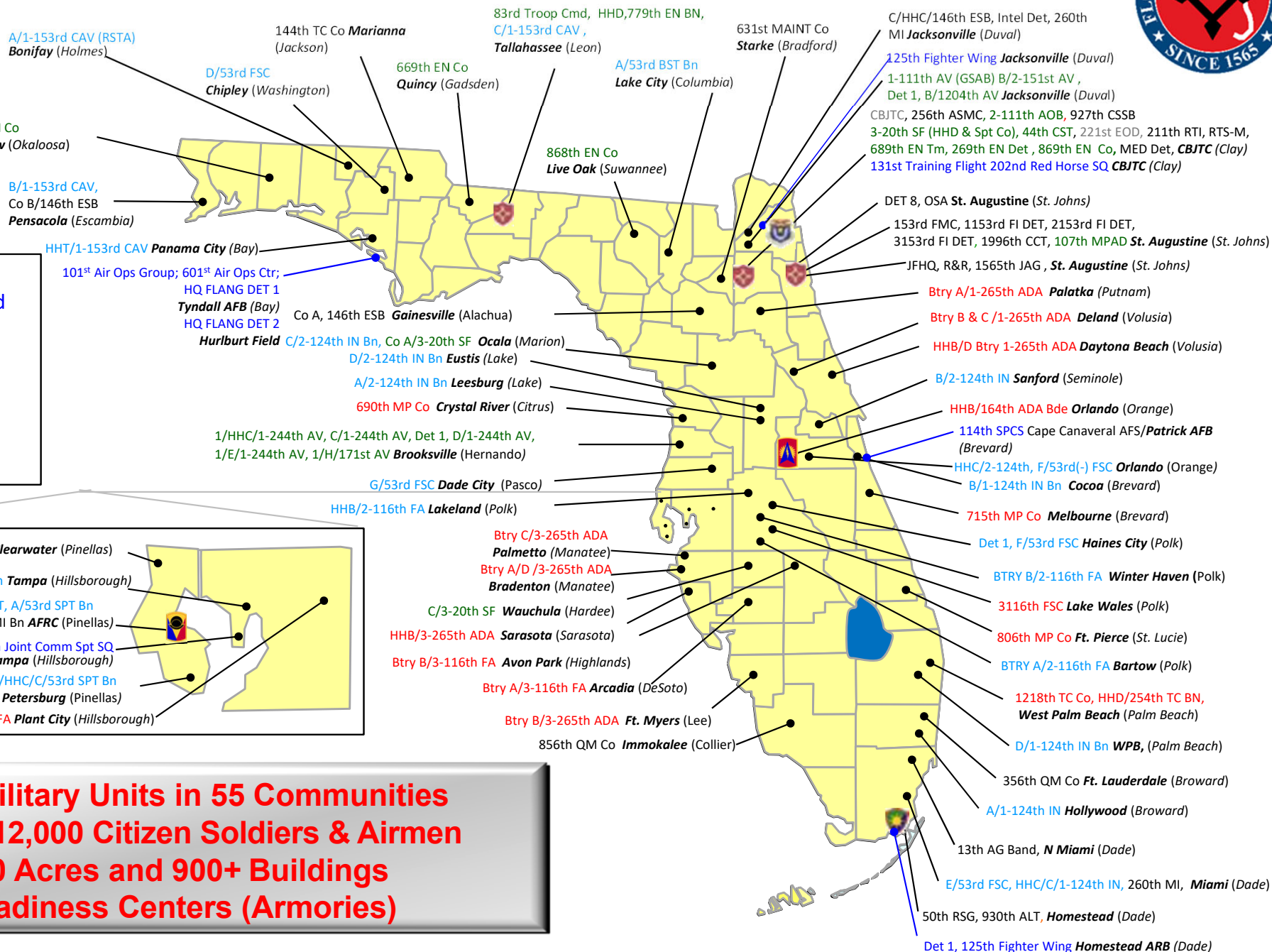
- ✓ Declares an emergency through an Executive Order
- ✓ Designates the "State Coordinating Officer"
- ✓ Orders the Guard to State Active Duty for emergency aid
- ✓ Initiates Emergency Management Assistance Compact with other Governors as required

*Right - Ready - Relevant*





# Florida National Guard Units



- 128 Military Units in 55 Communities
- Over 12,000 Citizen Soldiers & Airmen
- 82,000 Acres and 900+ Buildings
- 63 Readiness Centers (Armories)

*Right - Ready - Relevant*

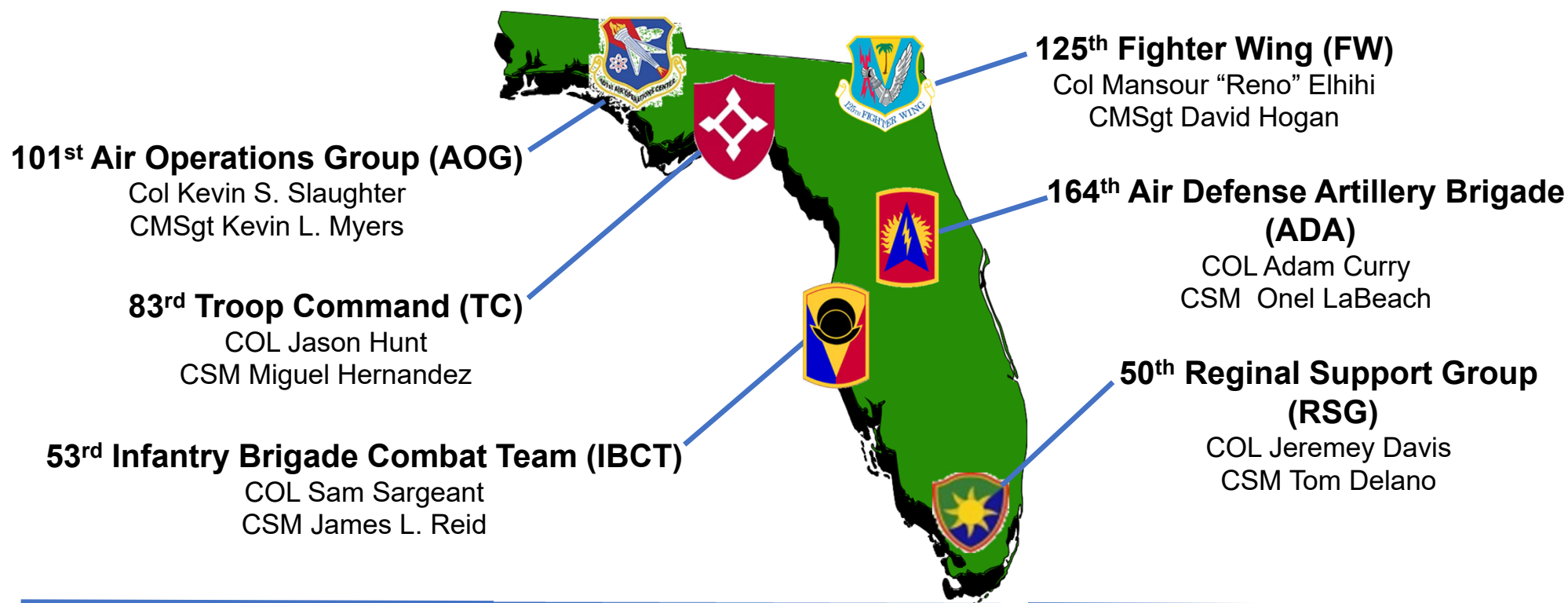


# Florida National Guard

## Major Subordinate Commands (MSCs)

FLNG is organized around 6 MSCs, (4 Army / 2 Air)

- 2 Combat Arms Brigades (BDE)
- Combat Service Support (CSS) Group
- Command and Control (C2) Headquarters
- Fighter Wing (FW)
- Air Operations Group (AOG)



*Right - Ready - Relevant*



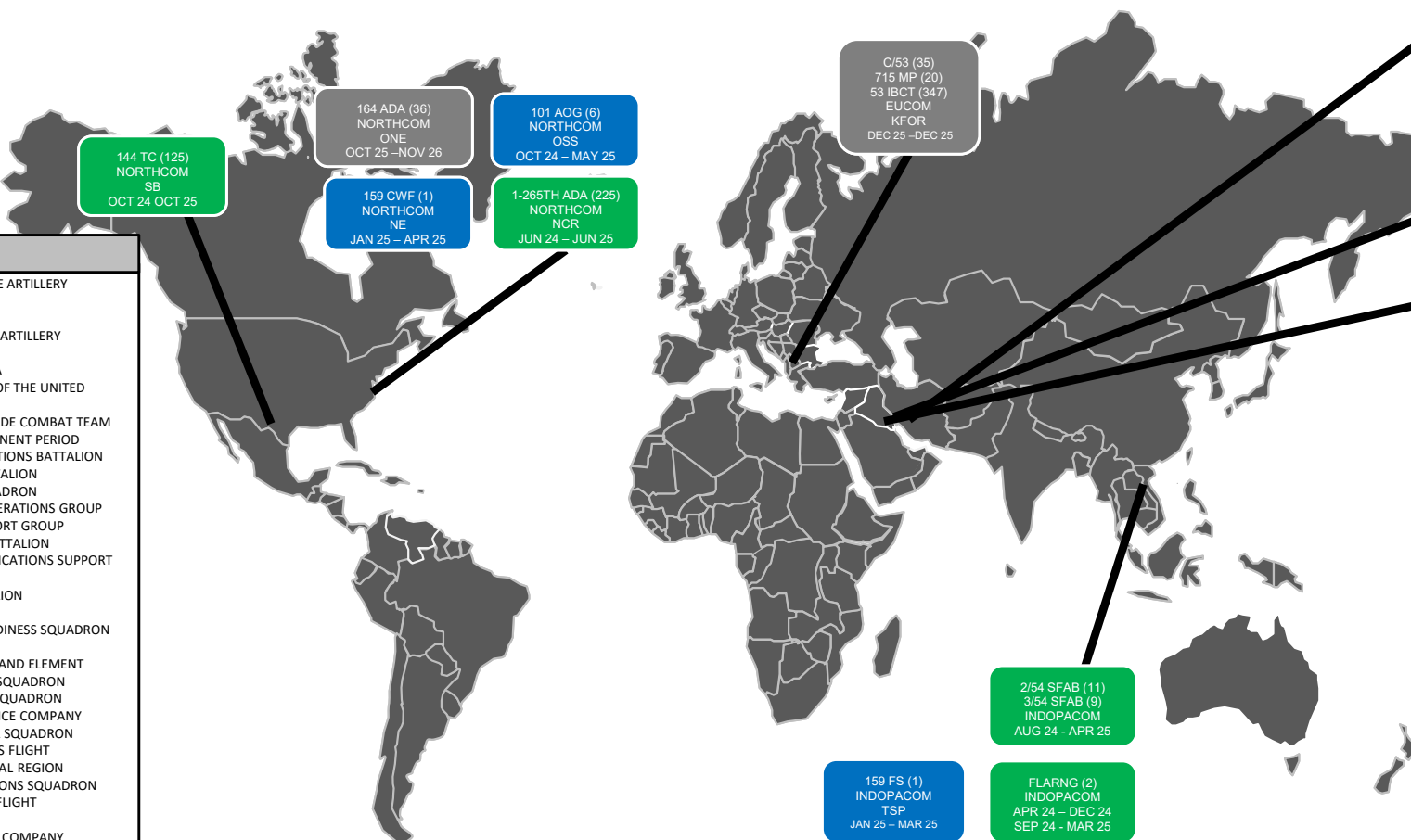


# Florida National Guard

## Federal Mobilization Status

### FLORIDA NATIONAL GUARD DEPLOYMENTS

Total Soldiers & Airmen Currently Deployed as of 10 FEB 25:	<b>454</b>
Total Soldiers & Airmen Scheduled for Deployment Through 10 FEB 26:	<b>1171</b>



#### FLNG NAMES

ADA BDE: AIR DEFENSE ARTILLERY BRIGADE  
FW: FIGHTER WING  
ADA BN: AIR DEFENSE ARTILLERY BATTALION  
HOA: HORN OF AFRICA  
POTUS: PROTECTION OF THE UNITED STATES  
IBCT: INFANTRY BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM  
RCP: RESERVE COMPONENT PERIOD  
AOB: AIRFIELD OPERATIONS BATTALION  
IN BN: INFANTRY BATTALION  
RHS: RED HORSE SQUADRON  
AOG: AIR & SPACE OPERATIONS GROUP  
RSG: REGIONAL SUPPORT GROUP  
AVN BN: AVIATION BATTALION  
JCSS: JOINT COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT SQUADRON  
SC BN: SIGNAL BATTALION  
CAV: CAVALRY  
LRS: LOGISTICS & READINESS SQUADRON  
SF: SPECIAL FORCES  
MCE: MISSION COMMAND ELEMENT  
SFS: SECURITY FORCE SQUADRON  
CES: CIVIL ENGINEER SQUADRON  
MP CO: MILITARY POLICE COMPANY  
SPCS: SPACE CONTROL SQUADRON  
CF: COMMUNICATIONS FLIGHT  
NCR: NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION  
SOS: SPECIAL OPERATIONS SQUADRON  
CPTF: COMPTROLLER FLIGHT  
DET: DETACHMENT  
TC: TRANSPORTATION COMPANY  
EOD: EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE DISPOSAL  
TSP: THEATER SUPPORT PACKAGE  
TF - TASK FORCE  
FI DET - FINANCE DETACHMENT

#### OPERATION NAMES

EDI - European Deterrence Initiative  
HOA - Horn of Africa  
MFO - Multinational Force & Observers  
NCR - National Capital Region  
OAR - Operation Atlantic Resolve  
OEF - Operation Enduring Freedom  
OFS - Operation Freedom Sentinel  
OIR - Operation Inherent Resolve  
ONE - Operation Noble Eagle  
OSS - Operation Spartan Shield  
SB - Southern Border  
TE - Toledo Express

#### GEOGRAPHIC COMBATANT COMMANDS

AFRICOM - Africa Command  
CENTCOM - Central Command  
EUCOM - European Command  
INDOPACOM - Indo-Pacific Command  
NORTHCOM - Northern Command  
SOUTHCOM - Southern Command  
SPACECOM - Space Command  
UN - United Nations

**Mobilized over 28,000 since September 11, 2001**

\*Gray-Future mob  
\*Green-FLARNG mob  
\*Blue-FLANG mob

*Right - Ready - Relevant*



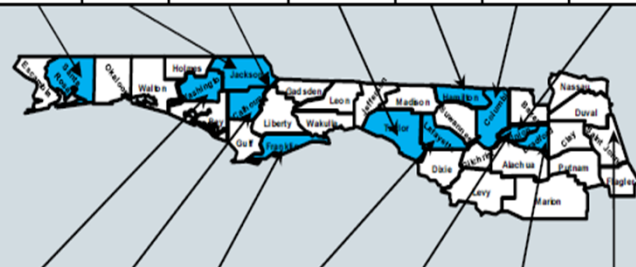
# Florida National Guard

## Current Domestic Support Operations

### Support Efforts:


Counter Drug Program – 200 PAX  
Dept of Correction - 263 PAX  
Migration Sup FL – 39 PAX  
Migration Sup TX - 125 PAX



Department of Corrections						
Total Estimated Cost \$64,198,688.61				Facilities 10		
Service Members				Days		
Army	Air		Total	861		
258	5		263			
Santa Rosa 0	Jackson 18	Apalachee 12	Taylor 0	Hamilton 33	Columbia 36	Union 0
						
NW 41	Calhoun 16	Franklin 15	Mayo 20	RMC 46	FSP 15	C2/ARRO 10

Current FL Emergency Orders the FLNG is supporting				
EO Number	Event Description	Date First Issued	Extended (If applicable)	Current End Date
23-03	Illegal Immigration	06JUN2023	Yes (EO 25-29)	07APR2025
22-213	Assist FL DOC	09SEP2022	Yes (EO 24-265)	09JUN2025

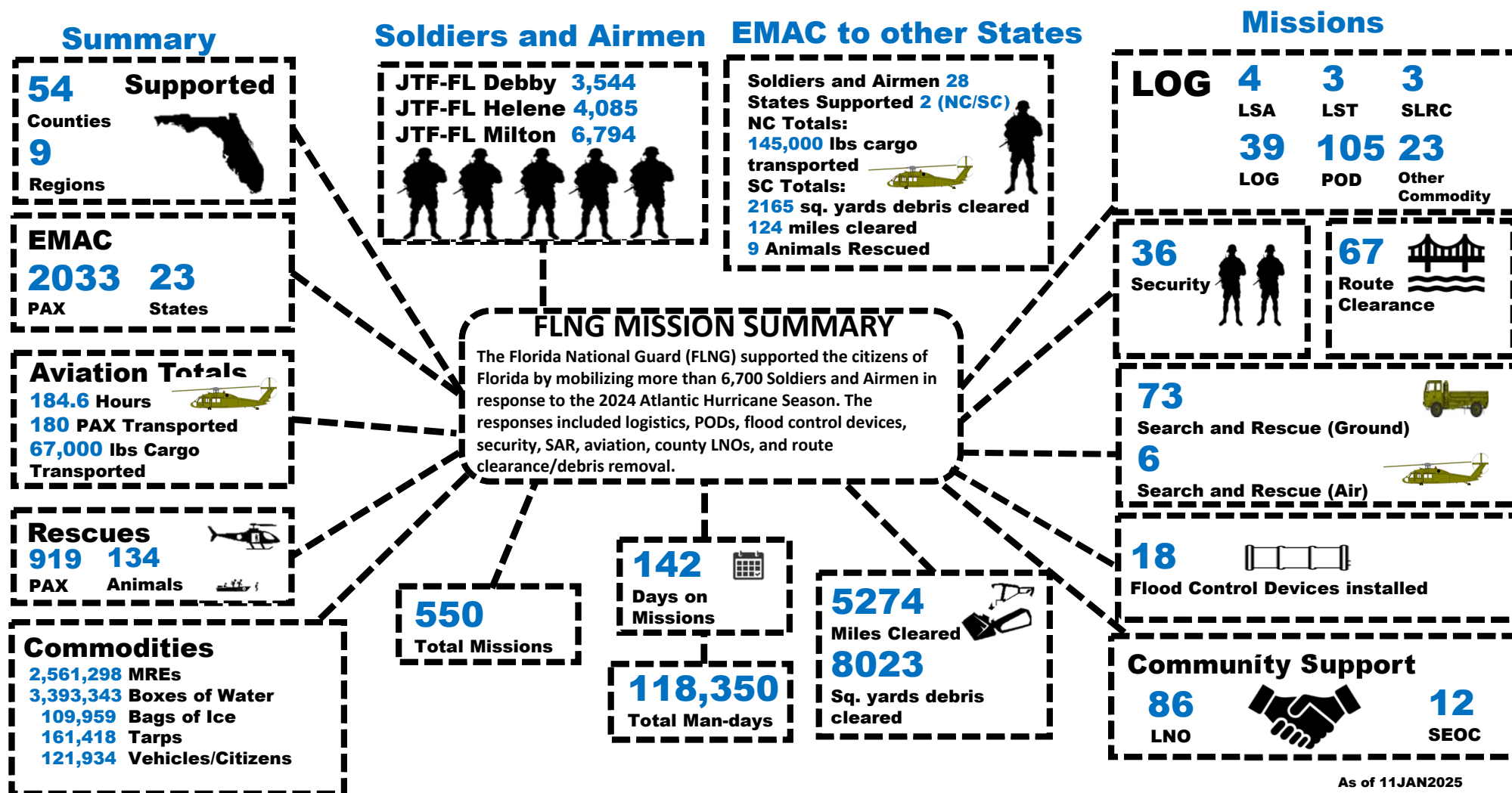
Operation Vigilant Sentry Migration Support							
Last 24 Flight Cost	Total Flight Cost	Total Flight Hours	Aircraft (Last 24hrs)		Days	763	
\$0	\$19,528,563.30	3,886	Assigned	4	Reported	Last 24 hrs	Total
Service Members			Tasked	0	Chugs	0	87
Army	Air	EMAC	Total	Maintenance	2	Rustics	0
				Standby	2	Migrants	0
37	2	0	39	Total Sorties	1,903	Haitian Freighters	0

							
---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--



# Florida National Guard

## 2024 Hurricane Season Overview



**FLNG Total Expenditure: \$ 38,605,955.04**

*Right - Ready - Relevant*





# Strategic Environment

## Fastest Growing State



### FLNG Manning



#### FLNG

12,253/101% of FSA

- Army and Air are over 100% Strength 1 of only 3 States at or above 100%
- State funded facilities are essential to continued growth
- Florida is postured for growth beyond 14,000 to better support our Citizens



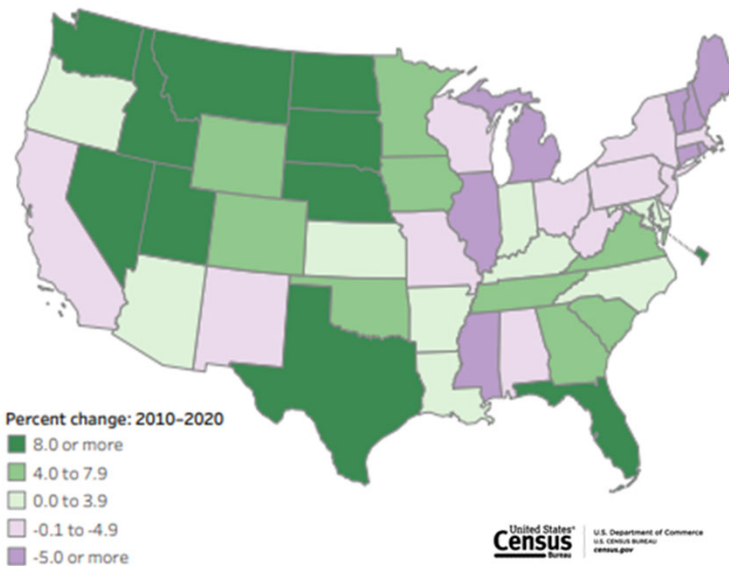
#### Recruiting Success



Over 142% of Mission FY24 YTD

FL currently #2 of 10 of mission (Large States)

### ...and Growing Younger



- 8.2% Increase in Ages 5-17 from 2010 to 2020
- 4.6 Million Residents Under 20 Years Old
- FLNG Achieved End Strength Objective in FY23
- FY24:
  - Assigned Strength: 12,253
  - FSA: 11,930
  - ESO: 12,523

### Florida Demographics

3rd Largest State in Nation

22.5 Million Residents

25M Projected by 2025

#### Big and getting bigger

Florida's population growth from 2012-2022 is larger than the population of 18 states.

Florida's growth	3,170,389
Arkansas	3,045,637
Mississippi	2,940,057
Kansas	2,937,150
New Mexico	2,113,344
Nebraska	1,967,923
Idaho	1,939,033
West Virginia	1,775,156
Hawaii	1,440,196
New Hampshire	1,395,231
Maine	1,385,340
Montana	1,122,867
Rhode Island	1,093,734
Delaware	1,018,396
South Dakota	909,824
North Dakota	779,261
Alaska	733,583
Vermont	647,064
Wyoming	581,381

*Right - Ready - Relevant*





# The Oldest National Guard

## "The Muster" 1565



*Right - Ready - Relevant*





# Discussions / Questions



*Right - Ready - Relevant*

The Florida Senate

APPEARANCE RECORD

Deliver both copies of this form to  
Senate professional staff conducting the meeting

Bill Number or Topic

Amendment Barcode (if applicable)

Meeting Date

18 FEB 2025

Committee

Military and Veteran Affairs

Name

COL Jason Hunt

Phone

Address

84 Marine Street

Email

Street

St Augustine

City

FL

State

32084

Zip

Speaking:

☐

For

☐

Against

☒

Information

OR

Waive Speaking:

☐

In Support

☐

Against

PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

☐

I am appearing without  
compensation or sponsorship.

☐

I am a registered lobbyist,  
representing:

☐

I am not a lobbyist, but received  
something of value for my appearance  
(travel, meals, lodging, etc.),  
sponsored by:

FL Dept of Military Affairs

While it is a tradition to encourage public testimony, time may not permit all persons wishing to speak to be heard at this hearing. Those who do speak may be asked to limit their remarks so that as many persons as possible can be heard. If you have questions about registering to lobby please see Fla. Stat. §11.045 and Joint Rule 1. [2020-2022 Joint Rules.pdf \(flsenate.gov\)](#)

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

S-001 (08/10/2021)



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

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*Honoring those who served U.S.*

# Department Update

February 18, 2025

***Major General James S. Hartsell, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret)***  
***Executive Director***



# Why We Serve



***1.4 Million Veterans, including  
169,000 Women Veterans!***

- **Nation's 2nd largest Veteran population**
  - 697,000 Veterans over 65 years of age
  - 473,000 service-connected disabled Veterans
  - 5,500 World War II
  - 45,000 Korean War
  - 423,000 Vietnam War
  - 664,000 Gulf War Era to include Post-9/11

# Our Mission & Vision

***Mission:*** To advocate with purpose and passion for Florida Veterans and link them to superior services, benefits & support.

***Vision:*** FDVA is premier point of entry for Florida Veterans to access earned services, benefits & support.

***Did you know?*** FDVA celebrated its 35th anniversary in 2024.



# State Veterans' Homes

## FDVA STATE VETERANS' HOMES

- 
- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>1</b> ROBERT H. JENKINS JR.<br>LAKE CITY           | <b>6</b> DOUGLAS T. JACOBSON<br>PORT CHARLOTTE |
| <b>2</b> EMORY L. BENNETT<br>DAYTONA BEACH            | <b>7</b> CLYDE E. LASSEN<br>ST. AUGUSTINE      |
| <b>3</b> BALDOMERO LOPEZ<br>LAND O' LAKES             | <b>8</b> ARDIE R. COPAS<br>PORT ST. LUCIE      |
| <b>4</b> ALEXANDER "SANDY" NININGER<br>PEMBROKE PINES | <b>9</b> ALWYN C. CASHE<br>ORLANDO             |
| <b>5</b> CLIFFORD C. SIMS<br>PANAMA CITY              | <b>10. Collier County</b>                      |
- FUTURE LOCATION**

## FDVA OFFICES

- |                                     |  |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>A</b> FDVA TALLAHASSEE<br>OFFICE | <b>B</b> FDVA HEADQUARTERS<br>& EXECUTIVE OFFICES<br>LARGO | <b>C</b> FDVA BENEFITS &<br>ASSISTANCE DIVISION<br>BAY PINES |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|



# Veterans' Homes Program

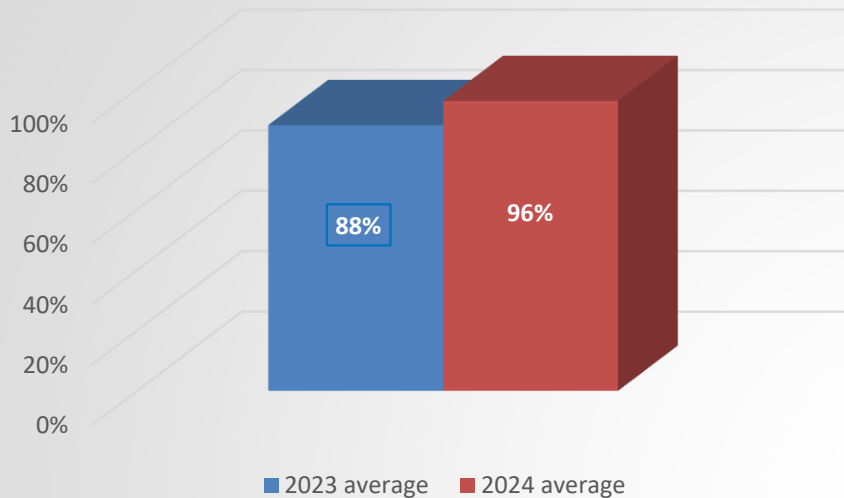


*Eight State Veterans' Nursing Homes & one State Veterans' Domiciliary Home (ALF)*

- Providing 1,102 skilled nursing and assisted living beds
- 1,390 Veterans' Home Staff members providing 24/7 care

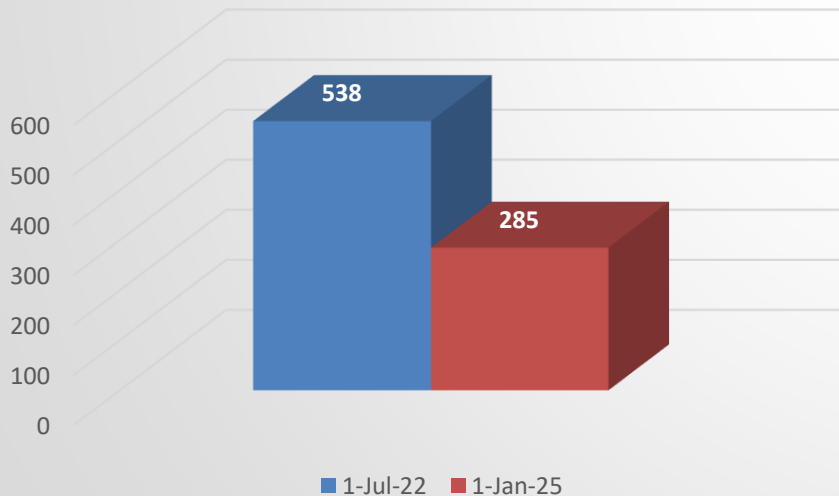
# Veterans' Homes Program

Occupancy Rate

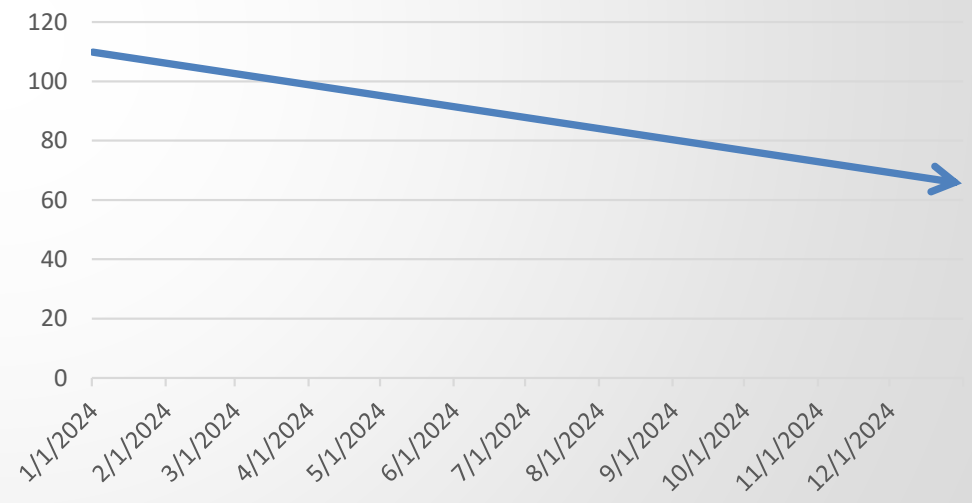


- Occupancy Up
- Vacancies Down
- Agency Use Decreasing

Direct Care Vacancies



Daily Total Agency Usage



# Collier County State Veterans' Nursing Home

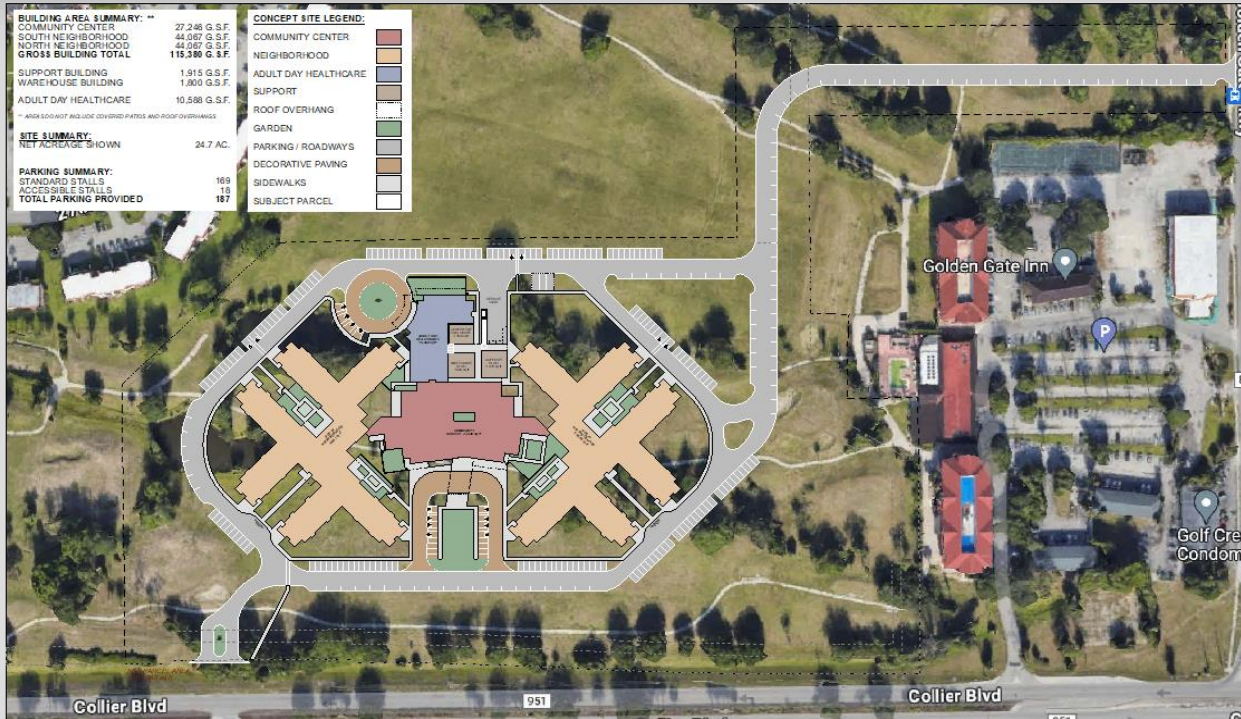


- **120-bed skilled nursing facility with memory care**
- **Adult Day Health Care for 40 Veterans**
- **Outpatient Therapy**
- **Community Wellness Center**





# Collier County State Veterans' Nursing Home



## Resident Amenities

- Coffee Shop
- Sports Bar
- Library

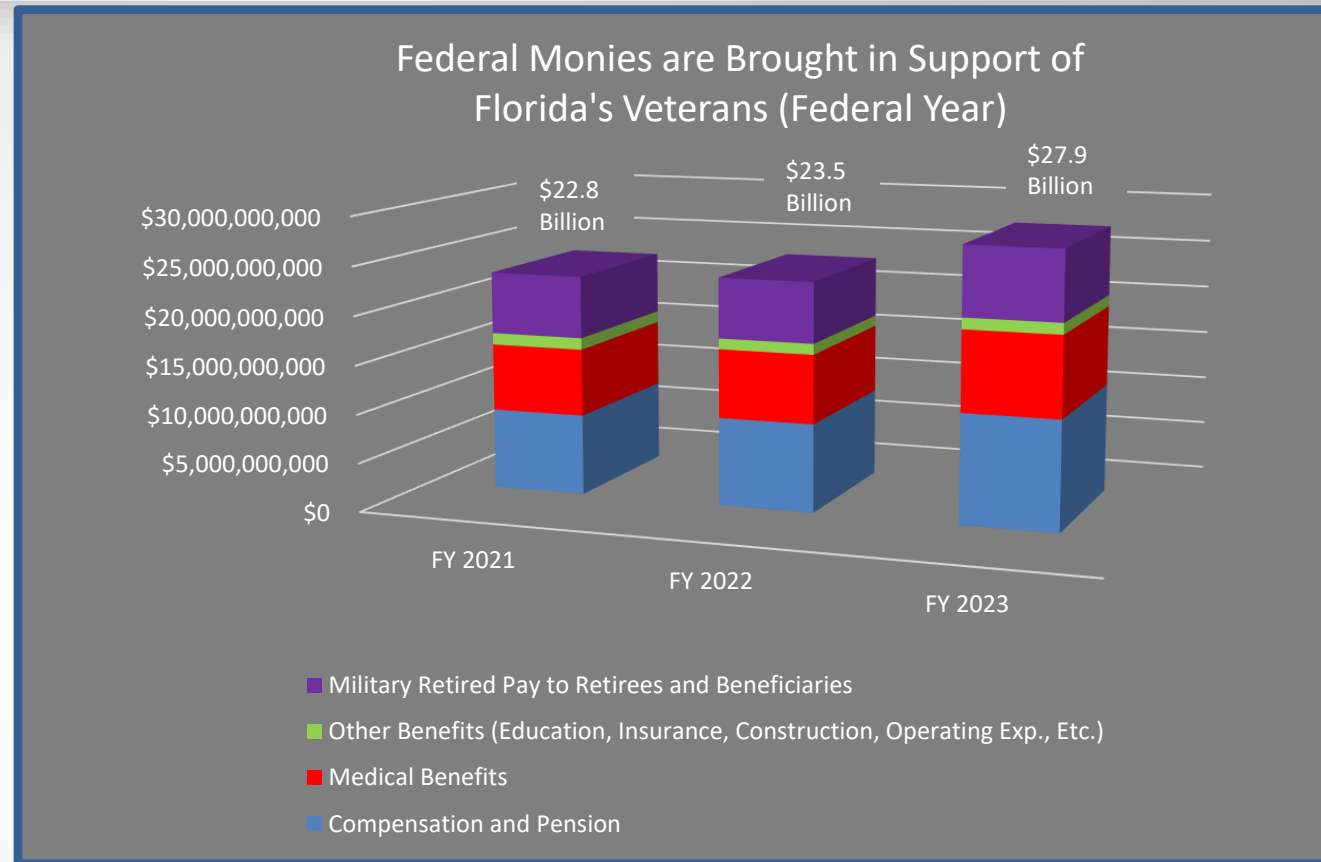
## Costs

- ADHC
  - \$9,540,788 paid by Collier County
- SNF
  - \$74,224,817 paid by the Federal Government
  - \$30,000,000 paid by Collier County
  - \$10,000,000 paid by the State of Florida

# Division of Veterans' Benefits & Assistance

**Federal Dollars \$\$\$ brought into Florida through:**

- Compensation claims
- Debt waivers
- Education assistance
- Salaries/pensions
- Homelessness
- Construction



**Impact: \$27.9 billion flowed into Florida's economy in FY 2023-24 through Federal/County/VSO/FDVA Team.**

✓ ROI **\$41:\$1**. (FY 2024-25 ROI currently **\$53:\$1**)



# Benefits & Assistance

## State Veterans' Service Officer Organization

Bureau of Field Services - 78 FTEs, of which 72 are SVSOs working in 48 locations.  
Division of Veterans' Assistance and Bureau of Claims Services - 27 FTEs, of which 22 are SVSOs.





# Benefits & Assistance

## State Veterans' Service Officer





# Veterans' Outreach



- Health Care
- Education
- Earned Benefits

**FDVA.VSO@FDVA.FL.GOV**  
**727-319-7440**

# Disaster Relief



*In aftermath of Hurricanes Helene & Milton, 42 State Veterans' Service Officers were deployed to Multi-Agency Resource Centers & Disaster Recovery Centers in hard-hit counties to connect more than 380 veterans & their families to earned services, benefits & support.*



# A Pathway for Patriots



A PATHWAY FOR PATRIOTS

[HopeNavigators@fdva.fl.gov](mailto:HopeNavigators@fdva.fl.gov)

833-GET-HOPE

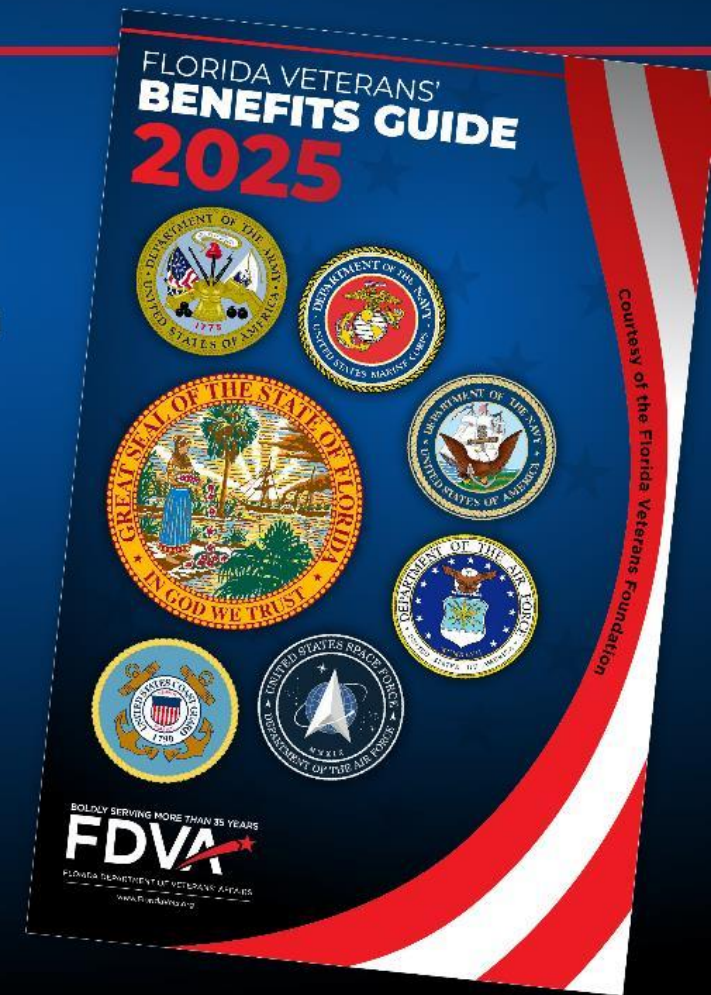
- FDVA joins First Lady Casey DeSantis' initiative in late 2023.
- Connects Veterans & family members to services & community resources through Hope Navigators. More than 900 Veterans served to date.
- Coordinates with State & County Veterans' Service Officers to assist Veterans in navigating their benefits.
- Offices in Tallahassee, Bay Pines; Jacksonville next

# Florida Veterans' Benefits Guide

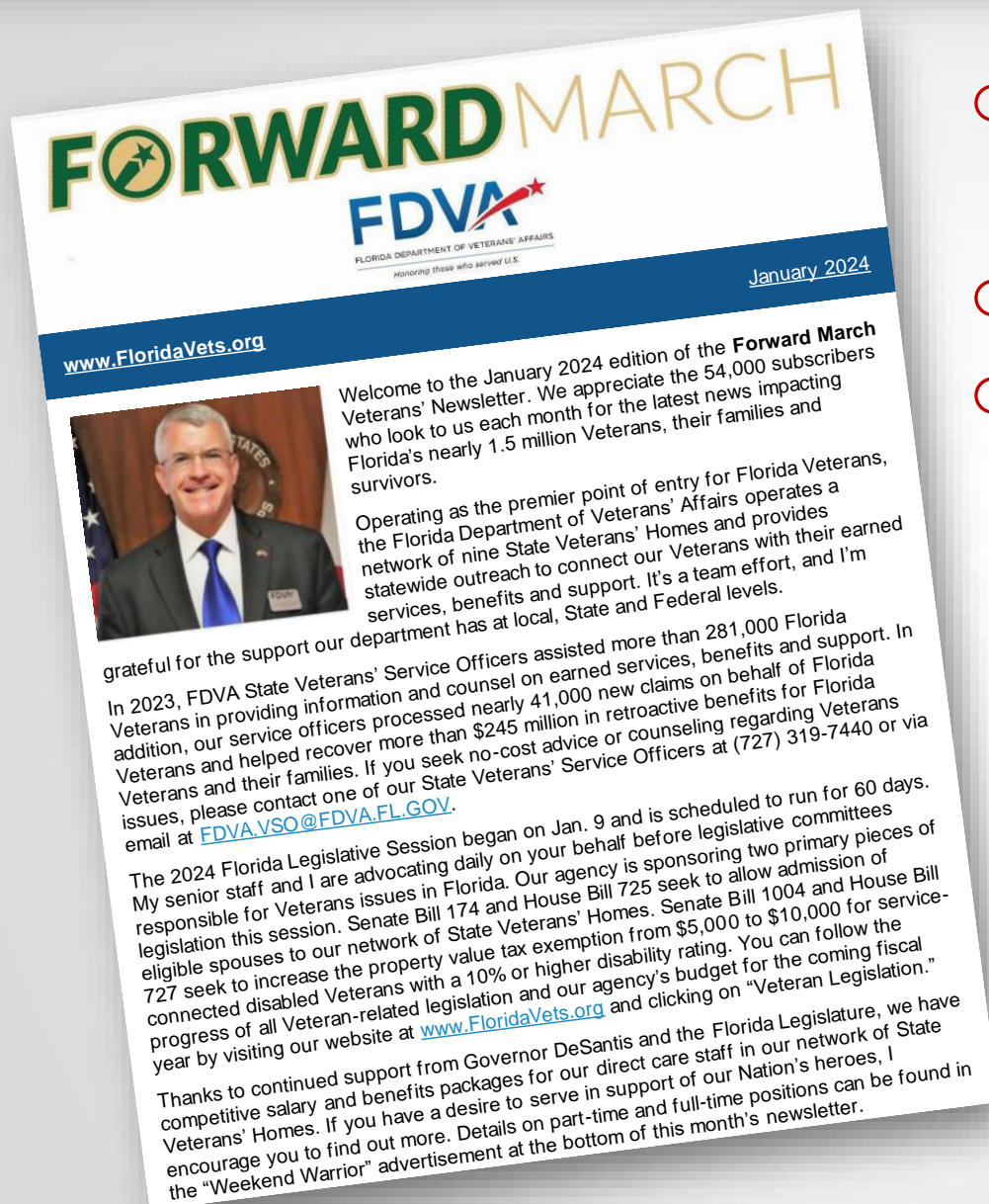
## FLORIDA VETERANS' **BENEFITS GUIDE** **2025**

**NOW AVAILABLE!**

FDVA is proud to announce  
the updated 2025 version of the  
Florida Veterans' Benefits Guide.



# Monthly Veterans' Newsletter



- Free email subscription newsletter from FDVA
- 62,000 active subscribers
- Subscribe at [FloridaVets.org](http://FloridaVets.org)



# Veteran Suicide Prevention



## Florida GOVERNOR'S CHALLENGE

*Advancing Veteran Suicide Prevention*



New number. Same support.

**Dial 988 then Press 1**





FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

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*Honoring those who served U.S.*



***FloridaVets.org***

**GET OUR FREE  
UPGRADED  
APP.**

It won't take  
up space on  
your phone.



The Florida Senate

**APPEARANCE RECORD**

Deliver both copies of this form to  
Senate professional staff conducting the meeting

AGENCY UPDATE  
Bill Number or Topic

2/18/25  
Meeting Date  
Military VETERANS; SPACE  
Committee

Name MAJOR GENERAL JAMES, HARTSELL

Amendment Barcode (if applicable)  
Phone (850) 282-4304

Address 2601 S. BLAIR HANS STONE RD

Email JAMES.HARTSELL@FDVA.FL.GOV

TALLAHASSEE FL 32309  
City State Zip

Speaking: ☐ For ☐ Against ☒ Information **OR** Waive Speaking: ☐ In Support ☐ Against

**PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:**

☒ I am appearing without  
compensation or sponsorship.

☐ I am a registered lobbyist,  
representing:

☐ I am not a lobbyist, but received  
something of value for my appearance  
(travel, meals, lodging, etc.),  
sponsored by:

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

S-001 (08/10/2021)



# FLORIDA VETERANS

— F O U N D A T I O N —

## **NO FLORIDA VETERAN LEFT BEHIND**

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

Overview of Florida Veterans Foundation

February 2025

Chair, Florida Veterans Foundation | Dr. Pia S. Woodley, DBA

Chief Operating Officer | Mr. Raymond Miller

Outreach Coordinator | Ms. Brooke Dennison

Lead Dental Program Analyst | Mr. Paul Kimbel



# FLORIDA VETERANS

— F O U N D A T I O N —

## **NO FLORIDA VETERAN LEFT BEHIND**

### AGENDA

- Introduction | Chair, Florida Veterans Foundation
- The Foundation
- Overview of Programs and Services
- Recent Achievements and Impact
- Future Goals
- Q&A

# Introduction to the Chair

**Education**

**Military**

**Healthcare | Higher Education | Hiring**



# The Foundation

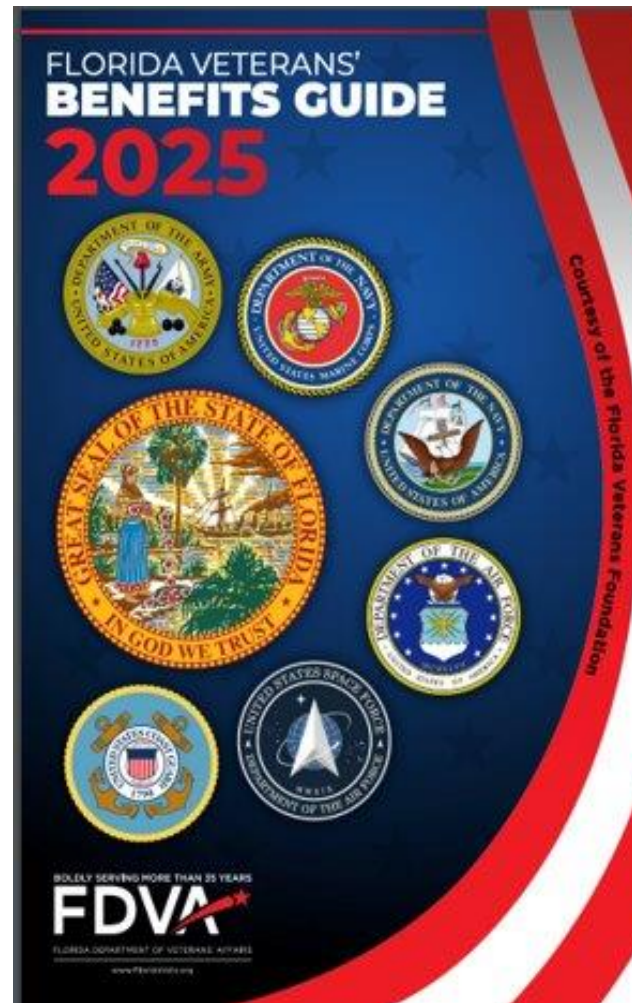
- Established by the Florida Legislature in 2008
- Direct Support Organization of Florida Department of Veterans Affairs (FDVA)
  - 501(C)(3) Nonprofit
- *Independent Audit* ▪ *FDVA statutory oversight* ▪ *990 forms are on HelpFIVets.org.*
- *FVF is registered with the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Resources.*





# Our Commitment

Dedicated to improving the lives of veterans in Florida by providing charitable, educational, and dental services



# Overview of Programs and Services



Project: Vet Relief

2025 Benefit Guides

Florida State Veterans' Homes |  
Veterans Dental Grant Program |  
Mission of Mercy

Bay Area Legal Services | County  
Veteran Service Offices | FHCA, etc.



# Recent Achievements and Impact

Achievements	Impact
Project: Vet Relief	Jul 2024 to date: \$77k
Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Partnership	2024: Delivered two vans
Florida State Veterans' Homes	200 + residents provided dental care

## Success Story:

Gadsden Flag license plate | 18<sup>th</sup> best selling plate in the state of Florida



# Our Goals

Goal #1 | Address Veterans In-Need

Goal #2 | Support FDVA Initiatives

Goal #3 | Board Infrastructure

Goal #4 | Financial Stewardship

# Thank You



Dr. Pia S. Woodley, DBA |  
Chair, Florida Veterans Foundation  
Cell: (850) 296-0185  
Email: [pia.woodley@fdva.fl.gov](mailto:pia.woodley@fdva.fl.gov)

02/18/2025  
~~1/22/2025~~

The Florida Senate  
**APPEARANCE RECORD**

*Florida Veterans Foundation*

Meeting Date  
*Military, Veteran and Space,  
and Domestic Security*  
Committee

Deliver both copies of this form to  
Senate professional staff conducting the meeting

Bill Number or Topic

Amendment Barcode (if applicable)

Name *Dr. Pia S. Woodley*

Phone *850. 296. 0185*

Address *2601 S. Blairstone Road Ste 300*

Email *pia.woodley@fdva.fl.gov*

Street  
*Tallahassee, FL 32399*  
City State Zip

Speaking: ☐ For ☐ Against ☒ Information **OR** Waive Speaking: ☐ In Support ☐ Against

**PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I am appearing without compensation or sponsorship.	<input type="checkbox"/> I am a registered lobbyist, representing:	<input type="checkbox"/> I am not a lobbyist, but received something of value for my appearance (travel, meals, lodging, etc.), sponsored by:
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# APPEARANCE RECORD

02/18/25

Meeting Date

mil + Vet Aff. sp + Donor

Committee

Deliver both copies of this form to  
Senate professional staff conducting the meeting

Bill Number or Topic

Amendment Barcode (if applicable)

Name

Raymond Miller

Phone

217-416-5814

Address

340 Meadow Ridge

Email

raymond.miller@dcq.fl.gov

Street

Tall

City

FL

State

32312

Zip

Speaking:



For



Against



Information

OR

Waive Speaking:



In Support



Against

## PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:



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compensation or sponsorship.



I am a registered lobbyist,  
representing:



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S-001 (08/10/2021)



The Florida Senate

**APPEARANCE RECORD**

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Senate professional staff conducting the meeting

Bill Number or Topic

Amendment Barcode (if applicable)

Meeting Date

Committee

2/18/25  
Milit Vet Affair. Sp +

Name

Brooke Dennison

Phone

727-644-4869

Address

84 Pimlico Dr., Crawfordville

Email

brooke.dennison@fldva.fl.gov

Street

City

State

Zip

FL 32327

Speaking:



For



Against



Information

**OR**

Waive Speaking:



In Support



Against

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S-001 (08/10/2021)

The Florida Senate

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Bill Number or Topic

Amendment Barcode (if applicable)

Meeting Date

Committee

Name

Phone

Address

Street

City

State

Zip

Email

Speaking:

☒

For

☐

Against

☐

Information

**OR**

Waive Speaking:

☐

In Support

☐

Against

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S-001 (08/10/2021)





# VETERANS FLORIDA

## 2025 Briefing

Florida Senate Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and  
Domestic Security

February 18, 2025

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# Board of Directors



COL (Ret) USA, Robert Kirila,  
Chair  
House - 2d Term - July 2026



CPT (Ret) USN, Jeff Cathey,  
Vice Chair  
Governor - 1st Term - July 2024



BG (Ret) USA, Jerry Neff,  
Treasurer, Chair B&F  
House - 2d Term - July 2026



Angela Drzewiecki,  
Secretary  
Senate - 2d Term - Mar 2027



Col (Ret) USMC, Rocky  
McPherson, Chair Emeritus  
Governor - 2d Term - July 2024



President Pro Tem  
Garrett Richter  
Senate - 1st Term - June 2027



MCPO (Ret) USN, Mark Harden  
Governor - 2d Term - July 2024



Lynda Weatherman  
Senate - 2d Term - Mar 2027



Alan Suskey, USA,  
Chair P&O  
House - 1st Term - July 2026



Sen Jay Collins, USA  
Senate - 1st Term



Representative Danny Alvarez,  
USA  
House - 1st Term

# Team Chart



# Administration

- Statutory name is **Florida is for Veterans Inc.**
- Created under FDVA and a separate budget entity in 2014
- Board of Directors, comprised of 11 members appointed by the Governor, Senate President, and House Speaker
  - Senator Collins, Representative Alvarez joined last CY
- Administer the Florida Veterans Employment and Training Services (VETS) Program under the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs.
- **Operations** (recurring) and **VETS Program** (nonrecurring) funding provided under state's Health and Human Services Budget.
- s. 295.21, s. 295.22, s. 295.23
- OPPAGA Review every three years

# Purpose

s. 295.21, F.S.

- State's initial point of military transition assistance
- Promote Florida as a veteran-friendly state helping to provide veterans and their spouses with opportunities and access to resources and benefits
  - Encourage retired and recently separated military personnel to remain in or to make Florida their permanent residence
- Encourage the hiring of veterans and their spouses by the businesses
  - Promote the value of military skill sets to businesses, assist in tailoring the training of veterans and their spouses to match the needs of the employment marketplace
- Enhance the entrepreneurial skills of veterans and their spouses

# Purpose

Veterans Florida provides

- Career
- SkillBridge
- Entrepreneur

training, resources, and referrals to

- Separating and retiring servicemembers
- Veterans
- Members of the Guard and Reserves
- Spouses

who make, or want to make, Florida their home



# History Highlights

2014	2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Established nonprofit under FDVA as a separate budget entity</li> <li>Board appointed by Governor, President, and Speaker</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Established the nation's first statewide SkillBridge initiative in statute</li> <li>USDA/NIFA Prime contractor for veteran agriculture training - 3 years</li> <li>Stabilized Program funding at \$2 million</li> </ul>
2016	2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Received initial Programs funding                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workforce Grant</li> <li>Entrepreneur Grant</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Created the nation's first statewide law enforcement SkillBridge with FHP</li> <li>Signed other state agencies to SkillBridge</li> </ul>
2018	2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>USDA/NIFA Subcontractor for veteran agriculture training pilot</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Realigned Workforce Grant with state's REACH Act prioritizing certificate based training</li> <li>Spouses eligible for certain Program activities</li> <li>Codified collaboration with several state agencies towards veteran and spouse success                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commerce, DOH, DBPR, etc</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
2020	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SkillBridge pilot for agriculture training</li> </ul>	

# Programs Budgets

## VETS Program s. 295.22, FS

Private Support  
\$95,000

State Appropriated  
\$2,000,000

### VETS Team

S&B for Career, SkillBridge, Entrepreneur  
Placements & Agency Referrals  
\$555,000

Workforce Training Grant Payments  
\$500,000

Entrepreneur Training Payments  
\$755,000

Administration  
S&B, General Expenses, Travel  
\$284,000

## UF/HASTE

Subcontract  
\$15,000  
(each year, 3 years)

S&B Recruiting  
\$10,000

Marketing  
\$5,000

## USDA/NIFA/AgVets

USDA Contract  
\$275,000  
(each year, 3 years)

S&B for Placements  
\$44,000

Veteran Stipends  
\$168,000

Marketing  
\$5,000

Administration  
\$45,000

# Outreach

Targeting 200,000 a year, total 1 million



**VETERANS FLORIDA**  
Join us for a Live Webinar!  
Florida's Agriculture Industry

**Simon Bollin**  
Agribusiness Development  
Manager, Hillsborough County  
Extension Services

**Dr. Samira Daroub**  
Professor and Center Director,  
UF, Everglades Research and  
Education Center

**Tripp Hunter**  
Director of State  
Legislative Affairs,  
Florida Farm Bureau

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM  
**Thursday, October 24, 2024**

**Discussions & Insights**

- Opportunities in the Agriculture Industry
- Transitioning military into agribusiness



**VETERANS FLORIDA**  
Join us for a Live Webinar!  
Veteran Success

**Craig Burnard**  
Military Liaison,  
Learning Alliance Corporation

**Michael Harvey**  
CEO and Founder,  
Octanium Corporation

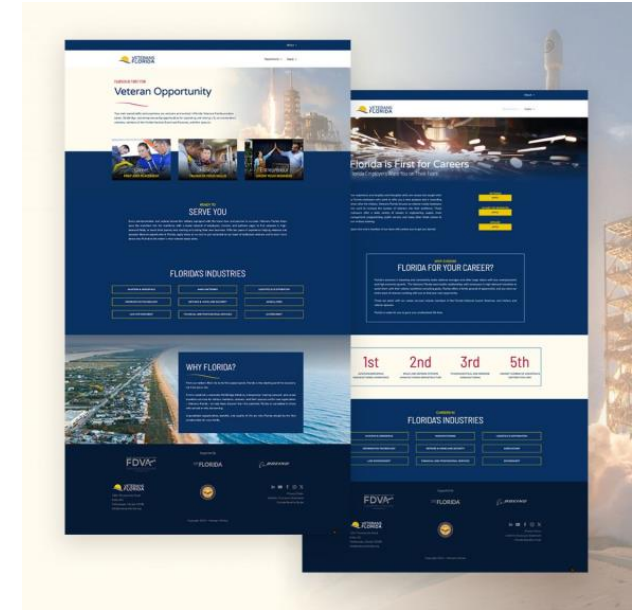
**Drake Ladner**  
Assistant Project Manager,  
ESA South

**Adam Ogburn**  
Field Technician,  
UF/IFAS SkillBridge

10:00 - 11:00 AM ET  
**Thursday, November 21, 2024**

**Discussions & Insights**

- Opportunities and resources for veterans in the state of Florida
- Veterans Florida services



# Outreach

VISIT Florida Marketing s. 295.23, F.S.



## Military Job Fairs

- In and Out of State
- Paychecks for Patriots
- On-base SkillBridge fairs

## Major Events

- Airshows
- Expected high audience density

## Annual Expo

- State Resources
- Battle of the Pitches



# Outreach



# Results

Workforce Grant Veterans	
Fiscal Year	Trained
2015-16	1
2016-17	117
2017-18	187
2018-19	303
2019-20	393
2020-21	237
2021-22	118
2022-23	197
<b>2023-24</b>	<b>239</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,792</b>

Entrepreneur Program Veterans		
Fiscal Year	Served	Trained
2015-16	424	167
2016-17	300	147
2017-18	393	82
2018-19	426	96
2019-20	304	108
2020-21	525	262
2021-22	989	132
2022-23	1,614	173
<b>2023-24</b>	<b>1,368</b>	<b>244</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,343</b>	<b>1,411</b>

Served includes veteran participation in any program element offered in the Entrepreneurship Program including workshops and networking. Trained attended a weeks-long cohort.

SkillBridge Program Servicemembers	
Fiscal Year	Trained
2020-21	1
2021-22	35
2022-23	96
<b>2023-24</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>220</b>



# Results



# 2025-26 Priorities

Current Year Appropriations	
Area	Request
Operations	\$400,000 recurring
VETS Program	\$2,000,000 nonrecurring
License Reciprocity Software	\$1,000,000 nonrecurring

2025-26 Legislative Budget Request	
Area	Request
Operations	+ \$50,000 ● (increase to \$450,000 recurring)
VETS Program	\$2,500,000 <b>recurring</b>

## Policy

- Simplify/Streamline Workforce Training Grant
- Public Records Exemption
  - Protect individual, personal, proprietary business information
  - Executed contracts with employers and trainers remain public information



# VETERANS FLORIDA

Joe Marino  
Executive Director  
850-296-8268

[marino@veteransflorida.org](mailto:marino@veteransflorida.org)





The Florida Senate

APPEARANCE RECORD

Deliver both copies of this form to  
Senate professional staff conducting the meeting

Veterans FL update  
Bill Number or Topic

2/10/2025

Meeting Date

Mil/Vet

Committee

Name

Joe Marino

Phone

850 322 2073

Address

~~4401~~ 3301 Thomasville Rd 4101

Email

marino@veteransflorida.org

Street

Tall

FL

32303

City

State

Zip

Speaking:

☐ For

☐ Against

☒ Information

OR

Waive Speaking:

☐ In Support

☐ Against

PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:



I am appearing without  
compensation or sponsorship.



I am a registered lobbyist,  
representing:

Veterans Florida



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- Typical Services Offered:
  - Individual case management
  - Upskilling
  - Training
  - Wraparound services
  - Referrals to community partner programs
  
- ✓ Dedicated veterans service providers at each local board
- ✓ Priority of service for all veterans



# Veteran-Focused Initiatives

- Military Spouse Employment Programs
- Paychecks for Patriots Hiring Events
- Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG)
- Get There Faster Veterans Grants
- Apprenticeships
- Veterans Florida





## Designation Criteria:

- Veterans' Performance Incentive Awards submission
- Local military connections
- Evidence reflecting veteran-related activities within the board's WIOA Local Plan, including both operational and strategic aspects
- Evidence of proactive and successful outreach
- Letter grade score of A or higher for veteran services

# PY 2023-2024 Network Impact for Veterans

# 9,764 Veterans Served

across all programs

**115,772**

Total number of  
services provided to  
veterans

**3,884**

Veterans now  
employed

**3,770**

Disabled veterans  
served

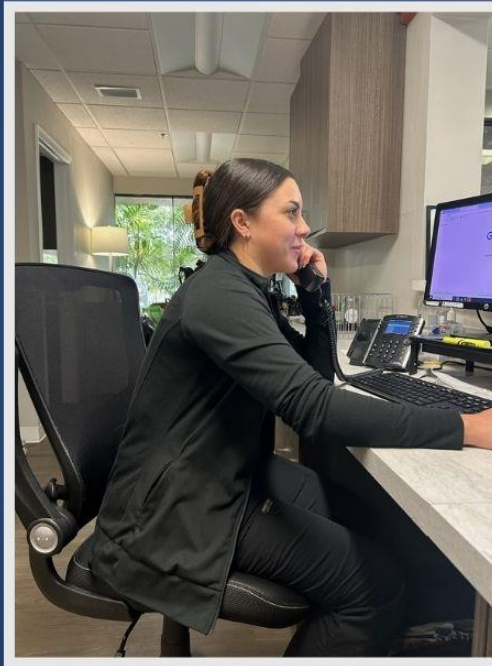
**197**

Veterans earned a  
credential

**12,264**

Businesses served  
by Local Veterans  
Employment  
Representatives

# DoD SKILLBRIDGE



## Cristal Galyon

- CSPBC Skillbridge internship began 2023
- Received peer mentoring and career guidance
- On-the-job training allowed her to break into medical field
- Recently advanced to a Supervisory Role at Retina Group of Florida earning \$22 an hour

# Thank You!

Adrienne Johnston  
President & CEO, CareerSource Florida



2/18/25

Meeting Date

MIL & VET AFFAIRS

Committee

The Florida Senate

# APPEARANCE RECORD

Deliver both copies of this form to  
Senate professional staff conducting the meeting

PRESENTATION

Bill Number or Topic

Amendment Barcode (if applicable)

Name

ADRIENNE JOHNSTON

Phone

850-792-5242

Address

Street

Email

AJOHNSTON@Careersourceflorida.com

City

State

Zip

Speaking:

☐

For

☐

Against

☒

Information

OR

Waive Speaking:

☐

In Support

☐

Against

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S-001 (08/10/2021)



# CourtSmart Tag Report

**Room:** SB 301

**Case No.:**

**Type:**

**Caption:** Senate Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security

**Judge:**

**Started:** 2/18/2025 1:45:15 PM

**Ends:** 2/18/2025 3:37:21 PM **Length:** 01:52:07

1:45:14 PM Chair Wright calls meeting to order  
1:45:20 PM Roll call  
1:45:56 PM Quorum announced  
1:45:59 PM Pledge of Allegiance  
1:46:02 PM Opening Comments  
1:46:14 PM Tab 2, SB 116 Veterans by Senator Burgess  
1:46:45 PM Senator Burgess  
1:52:07 PM Chair Wright  
1:52:14 PM Senator Burgess  
1:52:56 PM Mr. Bob Asztalos  
1:54:11 PM Appearance Forms  
1:54:21 PM Dan Hendrickson  
1:58:16 PM Senator Burgess  
1:58:29 PM Karen Murillo -AARP Florida  
1:58:39 PM Jorge Morales - San Antonio, TX  
2:00:59 PM Senator Burgess  
2:01:04 PM Mr. Morales  
2:01:10 PM Senator Burgess  
2:01:13 PM Mr. Morales  
2:01:24 PM Senator Burgess  
2:01:28 PM Senator Sharief  
2:02:05 PM Senator Burgess  
2:03:11 PM Roll call on SB 116  
2:04:12 PM SB 116 is reported favorably  
2:04:20 PM Tab 3, Presentation by Florida National Guard - Department of Military Affairs on Mission, Status and Operations  
2:04:35 PM Colonel Jason Hunt  
2:11:56 PM Senator Burgess  
2:12:01 PM Colonel Hunt  
2:12:55 PM Chair Wright  
2:12:59 PM Senator Collins  
2:13:05 PM Colonel Hunt  
2:15:04 PM Senator Collins  
2:15:09 PM Colonel Hunt  
2:15:58 PM Chair Wright  
2:16:11 PM Tab 4, Presentation - Department of Veterans' Affairs on Veteran Outreach, Benefit Assistance and Status of State Veterans' Homes  
2:16:25 PM Major General James Hartsell  
2:34:01 PM Senator Burgess  
2:34:13 PM Major General Hartsell  
2:36:20 PM Senator Burgess

**2:36:40 PM** Chair Wright  
**2:37:42 PM** Senator Burgess  
**2:37:48 PM** Major General Hartsell  
**2:38:32 PM** Tab 5, Presentation by the Chair of The Florida Veterans Foundation on Programs, Services and Achievements  
**2:38:50 PM** Dr. Pia Woodley  
**2:49:19 PM** Senator Burgess  
**2:49:26 PM** Chair Wright  
**2:49:42 PM** Appearance Forms  
**2:49:48 PM** Raymond Miller  
**2:49:56 PM** Brooke Dennison  
**2:50:01 PM** Paul Kimbel  
**2:50:06 PM** Tab 6, Presentation by Veterans Florida on Veteran WorkForce Recruitment and Training Programs  
**2:50:35 PM** Mr. Joe Marino, Executive Director  
**3:13:56 PM** Chair Wright  
**3:14:01 PM** Mr. Marino  
**3:14:49 PM** Chair Wright  
**3:14:52 PM** Mr. Marino  
**3:16:47 PM** Chair Wright  
**3:16:52 PM** Tab 7, Presentation by CareerSource Florida on Veteran Employment Activities and Programs  
**3:17:21 PM** Ms. Adrienne Johnston, President & CEO  
**3:31:52 PM** Chair Wright  
**3:32:08 PM** Tab 1 SM 314 Florida National Guard Increased Force Structure  
**3:32:16 PM** Chair to Senator Collins  
**3:32:21 PM** Vice Chair Collins  
**3:32:25 PM** Chair Wright  
**3:33:57 PM** Appearance Form  
**3:34:02 PM** Colonel Jason Hunt  
**3:34:10 PM** Senator Burgess  
**3:34:48 PM** Senator Sharief  
**3:35:25 PM** Senator Collins  
**3:35:49 PM** Chair Wright  
**3:35:58 PM** Roll call on SM 314  
**3:36:27 PM** SM 314 is reported favorably  
**3:36:41 PM** Senator Sharief moves to adjourn  
**3:37:08 PM** Meeting adjourned