

Tab 1	SB 96 by Sharief ; Identical to H 00253 Dental Care for Veterans					
803306	D	S	RCS	MS, Sharief	Delete everything after	11/04 03:45 PM

Tab 2	SPB 7000 by MS ; OGSR/Persons Provided Public Emergency Shelter					
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Tab 3	SPB 7002 by MS ; OGSR/Department of Military Affairs/United States Department of Defense					
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The Florida Senate
COMMITTEE MEETING EXPANDED AGENDA
MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS, SPACE, AND
DOMESTIC SECURITY
Senator Wright, Chair

MEETING DATE: Tuesday, November 4, 2025

TIME: 10:00 a.m.—12:00 noon

PLACE: 301 Senate Building

MEMBERS: Senator Wright, Chair; Senators Burgess, Jones, Sharief, and Truenow

TAB	BILL NO. and INTRODUCER	BILL DESCRIPTION and SENATE COMMITTEE ACTIONS	COMMITTEE ACTION
1	SB 96 Sharief (Identical H 253)	Dental Care for Veterans; Creating the Veterans Dental Care Program within the Department of Veterans' Affairs; requiring the program to provide specified dental services; providing that funding for the program is subject to legislative appropriation; authorizing the department to seek federal matching funds, private donations, or grants to fund the program, etc. MS 11/04/2025 Fav/CS AHS FP	Fav/CS Yeas 4 Nays 1
Consideration of proposed bill:			
2	SPB 7000	OGSR/Persons Provided Public Emergency Shelter; Amending a provision which provides an exemption from public records requirements for the addresses and telephone numbers of persons provided public emergency shelter and held by the agency that provided the emergency shelter; deleting the scheduled repeal of the exemption, etc.	Submitted and Reported Favorably as Committee Bill Yeas 5 Nays 0
Consideration of proposed bill:			
3	SPB 7002	OGSR/Department of Military Affairs/United States Department of Defense; Amending a provision which provides an exemption from public records requirements for certain information held by the Department of Military Affairs stored in a United States Department of Defense system of records, transmitted using a United States Department of Defense network or communications device, or pertaining to the United States Department of Defense; deleting the scheduled repeal of the exemption, etc.	Submitted and Reported Favorably as Committee Bill Yeas 5 Nays 0
4	Presentation by the Florida Veterans Foundation on Programs, Services and Achievements		Presented
5	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, November 4, 2025, 10:00 a.m.—12:00 noon

TAB	BILL NO. and INTRODUCER	BILL DESCRIPTION and SENATE COMMITTEE ACTIONS	COMMITTEE ACTION
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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.)

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

BILL: CS/SB 96

INTRODUCER: Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security Committee and Senator Sharief

SUBJECT: Dental Care for Veterans

DATE: November 4, 2025 REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Bellamy	Proctor	MS	Fav/CS
2.			AHS	
3.			FP	

Please see Section IX. for Additional Information:

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE - Substantial Changes

I. Summary:

CS/SB 96 revises the purpose of the Veterans Dental Care Grant Program established within the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA). Specifically, the bill provides an additional qualification for veterans to be eligible for the Veterans Dental Care Grant Program. The additional qualification for veterans provided by the bill is an income of up to 400 percent of the federal poverty level.

The bill appropriates the recurring sum of \$500,000 from the General Revenue Fund to the FDVA for the Veterans Dental Care Grant Program.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.

II. Present Situation:

Federal Health Benefits for Veterans

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides health care and related services through an integrated health care system with the Veterans Health Administration.¹ Federal veterans' health care benefits are generally available to a veteran who served for 24 continuous months in

¹ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, *Veterans Health Administration*, available at <http://va.gov/health/> (last visited Oct. 8, 2025).

the active military, naval, or air service, or as a current or former member of the Reserves or the National Guard if called to and completed active duty.² A veteran is not automatically enrolled in VA health care and must apply to receive health care services. To qualify, a person must have been discharged honorably. However, exceptions are made for veterans discharged for service-related disabilities. Additionally, a discharge upgrade or a VA Character of Discharge review may allow a person to be eligible for benefits.³

VA Dental Care

The VA does provide dental care; however, the eligibility requirements are different than medical care. Generally, dental care is provided for a veteran who has a service-connected dental condition, is a former prisoner of war, or has a service-connected disability rating of 100 percent.⁴ Dental care is categorized into 6 distinct classes.⁵

Classification	Eligibility Criteria	Scope of Treatment Provided
Class I	Veteran has a service-connected compensable (i.e., disability compensation is paid) dental condition.	Any dental care and service needed regardless of relation to service-connected condition.
Class II	Veteran has a service-connected noncompensable dental condition (i.e., not subject to disability compensation) shown to have been in existence at the time of discharge or release from active duty service, which took place after September 30, 1981, if: - the veteran served at least 180 days (or 90 days if a veteran of the Gulf War era); - the veteran's DD214^b does not bear certification that the veteran was provided, within 90 days immediately prior to discharge or release, a complete dental examination (including dental x-rays) and all appropriate dental treatment indicated by the examination to be needed; and - application for treatment is received within 180 days of discharge.	A one-time course of dental treatment of the service-connected noncompensable dental condition.
Class II(a)	Veteran has a service-connected noncompensable dental condition or disability determined as resulting from combat wounds or service trauma.	"Any dental care necessary to provide and maintain a functioning dentition. A Dental Trauma Rating (VA Form 10-564-D) or VA Regional Office Rating Decision letter (VA Form 10-7131) identifies the tooth/teeth/condition(s) that are trauma rated."
Class II(b)	Veteran is enrolled and may be homeless and receiving care for a period of 60 consecutive days in specified settings stipulated at 38 U.S.C. §2062.	A one-time course of dental care that is determined clinically necessary to relieve pain, to help the veteran gain employment, or to "treat moderate, severe, or severe and complicated gingival and periodontal pathology."
Class II(c)	Veteran is a former prisoner of war (POW).	Any dental care and service needed regardless of relation to service-connected condition.

² U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, *Eligibility for VA Health Care*, available at <https://www.va.gov/health-care/eligibility/> (last visited Oct. 8, 2025).

³ *Id.*

⁴ Sidath Viranga Panangala & Jared S. Sussman, Congress.gov, *Health Care for Veterans: Answers to Frequently Asked Questions*, CRS Report Number R42747, available at <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R42747?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22R42747%22%7D&s=1&r=1> (last visited Oct. 8, 2025).

⁵ *Id.*

Class III	Veteran has a dental condition clinically determined by VA to be aggravating a disability or condition from an associated service-connected condition or disability.	Dental care and services to treat such dental condition.
Class IV	Veteran whose service-connected disabilities have been rated at 100% or who is receiving the 100% rating by reason of individual unemployability.	Any dental care and service needed regardless of relation to service-connected condition.
Class V	Veteran is actively engaged in a vocational rehabilitation program (38 U.S.C. Chapter 31).	Dental treatment clinically determined to achieve specific objectives.
Class VI	Veteran is receiving VA care or is scheduled for inpatient care and requires dental services for "a dental condition complicating a medical condition currently under treatment."	Outpatient dental care that is clinically necessary to treat "a dental condition complicating a medical condition currently under treatment."

Dental Service Programs

No-cost dental care is provided to veterans in need at two annual Florida events.

Stars, Stripes, & Smiles, a collaborative effort between a Florida congressman's office and a local county dental association provides no-cost dental services to veterans.⁶ Services provided through the annual event in Pasco County are intended to afford veterans relief from dental pain and infection.⁷ Services are funded through private donation and professional dentistry and other volunteers.

A second effort in the state to provide no-cost dental services to veterans is the Florida Mission of Mercy Dental Clinic.⁸ Part of an annual 2-day dental clinic, dentistry volunteers provide dental services to persons who are underserved and uninsured. The first day of the event is for veterans only.⁹ Services provided through the annual event afford recipients, including veterans, dental exams, cleanings, fillings, extractions, root canals, and limited dentures and partials.¹⁰

United States Federal Poverty Income Guidelines

Federal poverty income guidelines are annually updated.¹¹ Current guidelines for 2025 provide the following for the 48 contiguous states¹² and the District of Columbia:

Persons in Family/Household	Poverty Guideline	300%	400%
1	\$15,650	\$46,950	\$62,600
2	\$21,150	\$63,450	\$84,600
3	\$26,650	\$79,950	\$106,600

⁶ Stars, Stripes, & Smiles, *About USA Veteran Smiles*, available at <https://www.usaveteransmiles.org/about-us> (last visited Oct. 8, 2025).

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ Florida Dental Association, *2026 Florida Mission of Mercy, Jacksonville, May 15-16, 2026*, available at <https://www.floridadental.org/foundation/programs/mission-of-mercy> (last visited Oct. 8, 2026).

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ U.S. Dep't of Health and Human Services, Office of the Asst. Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Poverty Guidelines, HHS Poverty Guidelines for 2023, available at <https://aspe.hhs.gov/topics/poverty-economic-mobility/poverty-guidelines> (last visited Mar. 28, 2023).

¹² *Id.* Poverty guidelines for Alaska and Hawaii are each separately calculated.

4	\$32,150	\$96,450	\$128,600
5	\$37,650	\$112,950	\$150,600
6	\$43,150 ¹³	\$129,450	\$172,600

Various federal programs use the guidelines, or percentage multiples of the guidelines, such as 125 percent or 185 percent of the guidelines, in determining eligibility for certain benefits. These include Head Start, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, the National School Lunch Program, the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, and the Children's Health Insurance Program.¹⁴

Florida 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.¹⁵ There are about 1.4 million veterans living in Florida, making the state's veteran population the second largest nationally.¹⁶

Florida Veterans Foundation

The Florida Legislature authorized the FDVA to establish a direct-support organization (DSO) in 2008.¹⁷ The DSO for the FDVA is a not-for-profit corporation organized and operated exclusively to obtain funds, such as grants, gifts, and bequests of money.¹⁸ The DSO provides assistance and support to the FDVA, veterans, and congressionally chartered veteran service organizations with subdivisions in the state.¹⁹ The DSO operates under a written contract with the FDVA, is governed by a Board of Directors, and is subject to audit.²⁰

The Florida Veterans Foundation (FVF) is the FDVA DSO. The FVF serves as the statewide lead organization for Florida veterans and their families by providing direct services and partnering with state and local governments, veteran service organizations, and educational institutions to improve their physical, financial, mental, emotional, and social well-being.²¹ Current initiatives of the FVF include providing dental care to Florida's veterans and financial assistance to wounded and disabled veterans.²²

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ Section 292.05(1), F.S.

¹⁶ Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs, Our Veterans, available at <https://floridavets.org/our-veterans> (last visited Oct. 7, 2025).

¹⁷ Section 292.055, F.S.; ch. 2008-4, Laws of Fla.

¹⁸ Section 292.055(2)(b)2., F.S.

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ Section 292.055(3), (4), and (8), F.S.

²¹ Florida Veterans Foundation, available <https://www.helpflvets.org/> (last visited Oct. 8, 2025).

²² Florida Veterans Foundation, available at <https://www.helpflvets.org/post/public-service-announcement-florida-veterans-foundation-launches-dental-program-with-first-grant-aw> (last visited Oct. 8, 2025).

Veterans Dental Care Grant Program

The Veterans Dental Care Grant Program was established in 2023 within the FDVA to provide no-cost dental care to veterans.²³ The FDVA contracts with the FVF, the FDVA's DSO, to administer the Veterans Dental Care Grant Program.²⁴ Statutory eligibility is limited to being a veteran residing in the state and having been honorably discharged from service or later upgraded to honorable.²⁵ The FVF, through rule, established the following criteria to be eligible for services under the Veterans Dental Care Grant Program:

- Must have been issued a DD-214, NGB 22, or Certificate of Discharge.²⁶
- Must reside in Florida.
- Must be at a 300% Poverty Level or below as defined by the federal government, at the time of their application.²⁷
- Must be less than 100% service-connected disabled.
- Must not have a direct service-connected injury impacting their oral health.²⁸

The FDVA received \$1 million in recurring funds in the 2024-2025 general appropriations act for the Veterans Dental Care Grant Program.²⁹ The FDVA must provide a quarterly report to the Executive Office of the Governor's Office of Policy and Budget, the chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, and the chair of the House of Representatives Budget Committee no later than 30 days after the last business day of each quarter. The report must include the number of veterans served, the type of services provided, and the cost of each service.³⁰ A veteran may apply online for the Veteran Dental Care Grant Program by filing out an application using the FVF Dental Service Locator.³¹

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

CS/SB 96 amends the purpose of the Veterans Dental Care Grant Program in s. 295.157(3), F.S., to provide an additional qualification for veterans to be eligible for oral health care through the program. The additional qualification for veterans provided by the bill is an income of up to 400 percent of the federal poverty level.

The bill appropriates the recurring sum of \$500,000 from the General Revenue Fund to the FDVA to fund the Veterans Dental Care Grant Program.

²³ Section 295.157(3), F.S.

²⁴ Section 295.157(4), F.S.

²⁵ Section 295.157(2)(b) and (3), F.S.

²⁶ A DD-214 and NGB 22 are discharge documents. A DD-214 is a Certificate of Release or Discharge from active duty, and a NGB 22 is a Report of Separation and Record of Service for the Departments of the Army and the Air Force National Guard Bureau. Available at <https://www.va.gov/records/discharge-documents/> (last visited Oct. 20, 2025).

²⁷ Federal poverty levels are set annually by the Department of Health and Human Services. Current federal poverty levels can be found at <https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/dd73d4f00d8a819d10b2fdb70d254f7b/detailed-guidelines-2025.pdf>.

²⁸ Florida Admin. Code R. 55-15.003 (2025).

²⁹ Chapter 2025-198, Laws of Fla.

³⁰ *Id.*

³¹ Florida Veterans Foundation, *Dental Service Locator*, available at <https://www.helpflvets.org/dentalservicelocator> (last visited Oct. 8, 2025).

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2026.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

Not applicable. The bill does not require counties or municipalities to take an action requiring the expenditure of funds, reduce the authority that counties or municipalities have to raise revenue in the aggregate, nor reduce the percentage of state tax shared with counties or municipalities.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None identified.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None identified.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None identified.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None identified.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None identified.

B. Private Sector Impact:

Eligible veterans, who may not otherwise qualify for or receive Federal or State veteran dental care services, and do not currently take advantage of the two annual no-cost dental care events provided to veterans in need, may benefit financially from dental services provided by the Veterans Dental Care Grant Program in the bill.

Additionally, private entities that provide oral health care through the Veterans Dental Care Grant Program may be positively impacted.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The bill appropriates the recurring sum of \$500,000 from the General Revenue Fund to the FDVA to fund the Veterans Dental Care Grant Program.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None identified.

VII. Related Issues:

None Identified.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends section 295.157(3) of the Florida Statutes.

IX. Additional Information:**A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:**

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

CS by Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security on November 4, 2025:

- Amends s. 295.157(3), F.S., to provide an income qualification for veterans, of up to 400 percent of the federal poverty level, to be eligible to receive oral health care through the Veterans Dental Care Grant Program.
- Appropriates the recurring sum of \$500,000 from the General Revenue Fund to the FDVA for the Veterans Dental Care Grant Program.

B. Amendments:

None.



803306

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate	.	House
Comm: RCS	.	
11/04/2025	.	
	.	
	.	
	.	

The Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security (Sharief) recommended the following:

Senate Amendment (with title amendment)

Delete everything after the enacting clause
and insert:

Section 1. Subsection (3) of section 295.157, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

295.157 Veterans Dental Care Grant Program.—

(3) The Veterans Dental Care Grant Program is established within the Department of Veterans' Affairs. The purpose of the program is to provide oral health care to veterans who reside in



803306

this state and who have incomes of up to 400 percent of the federal poverty level.

Section 2. For the 2026-2027 fiscal year, the recurring sum of \$500,000 from the General Revenue Fund is appropriated to the Department of Veterans' Affairs for the purpose of funding the Veterans Dental Care Grant Program established by s. 295.157, Florida Statutes.

Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.

===== T I T L E A M E N D M E N T =====

And the title is amended as follows:

Delete everything before the enacting clause
and insert:

A bill to be entitled

An act relating to Veterans Dental Care Grant Program;
amending s. 295.157, F.S.; revising the purpose of the
Veterans Dental Care Grant Program; providing an
appropriation; providing an effective date.

By Senator Sharief

35-00327-26

202696

A bill to be entitled

An act relating to dental care for veterans; creating s. 295.158, F.S.; defining terms; creating the Veterans Dental Care Program within the Department of Veterans' Affairs; requiring the program to provide specified dental services; authorizing the department to provide such services through certain means; providing that funding for the program is subject to legislative appropriation; authorizing the department to seek federal matching funds, private donations, or grants to fund the program; requiring the department to submit a report annually, beginning on a specified date, to the Governor and Legislature; requiring that the report include specified information; requiring the department to adopt rules; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Section 295.158, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

295.158 Veterans Dental Care Program.—

(1) As used in this section, the term:

(a) "Department" means the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

(b) "Eligible veteran" means a resident of this state who has been honorably discharged from the United States Armed Forces.

(c) "Program" means the Veterans Dental Care Program.

(2) There is created within the department the Veterans

Page 1 of 3

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

35-00327-26

202696

Dental Care Program to expand access to comprehensive services for eligible veterans.

(3) The program must provide, at a minimum, the following dental services:

(a) Preventative care, including, but not limited to, routine dental examinations and prophylaxis cleanings.

(b) Basic restorative care including, but not limited to, dental fillings.

(c) Advanced restorative care, including, but not limited to, dental crowns and tooth extractions.

(d) Endodontic care, including, but not limited to, root canal therapy.

(e) Prosthodontic care, including, but not limited to, dental bridges, partial dentures, complete dentures, and dental implants.

(4) The department may provide services through any of the following:

(a) Contracts with licensed community health centers, nonprofit dental clinics, and private providers.

(b) Partnerships with accredited dental schools in this state to increase access and reduce costs.

(c) Mobile dental units serving rural and underserved areas of this state.

(5)(a) Funding for the program is subject to appropriation by the Legislature.

(b) The department may seek federal matching funds, private donations, or grants to supplement program funding.

(6) Beginning January 1, 2027, and every January 1 thereafter, the department shall submit a report to the

Page 2 of 3

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

35-00327-26

202696

59 Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the
60 House of Representatives. The report must include all of the
61 following:

- 62 (a) The number of veterans served under the program.
63 (b) The types of services provided.
64 (c) The program's expenditures and sources of funding.
65 (d) Recommendations, if any, to improve the program.
66 (7) The department shall adopt rules to implement this
67 section.

68 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.

The Florida Senate
APPEARANCE RECORD

Deliver both copies of this form to
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11/4/25

Meeting Date

96

Bill Number or Topic

Military and Veterans Affairs

Committee

Amendment Barcode (if applicable)

Name Matt Herndon

Phone 941-704-2793

Address 113 E College Ave

Street

Email

Tallahassee

City

FL

State

32301

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:

United Way of Broward County

☐ 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)

The Florida Senate

APPEARANCE RECORD

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11/4/26

Meeting Date

SB 86

Bill Number or Topic

Committee

Amendment Barcode (if applicable)

Name

Nolan Wilson

Phone

Address

2100 Corinne Street

Email

Tallahassee

City

FL

State

32300

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)

11/4/2025

Meeting Date

Military + Veterans Affairs

Committee

The Florida Senate
APPEARANCE RECORD

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

SB96

Bill Number or Topic

Amendment Barcode (if applicable)

Name Harrison Lundy

Phone 813-998-5928

Address 12010 Streambed Drive

Street

Riverview

City

FL

State

33579

Zip

Email harrison@voicesofflorida.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:

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

Voices of Florida

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

S-001 (08/10/2021)



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: October 14, 2025

I respectfully request that **Senate Bill #96**, relating to Dental Care for Veterans, be placed on the:

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



Senator Barbara Sharief
Florida Senate, District 35

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.)

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

BILL: SB 7000

INTRODUCER: Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security Committee

SUBJECT: OGSR/Persons Provided Public Emergency Shelter

DATE: November 4, 2025

REVISED: _____

ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1. Bellamy	Proctor		MS Submitted as Comm. Bill/Fav

I. Summary:

SB 7000 saves from repeal the current public records exemption making the address and telephone number of a person provided public emergency shelter during a storm or catastrophic event, and held by an agency that provided such shelter, exempt from public records inspection and copying requirements.

The exemption is subject to the Open Government Sunset Review Act and stands repealed on October 2, 2026, unless reenacted by the Legislature. The bill saves the exemption from repeal by deleting the scheduled repeal date, thereby maintaining the exempt status of the information.

The bill is not expected to affect state and local government revenues and expenditures.

The bill takes effect October 1, 2026.

II. Present Situation:

Florida Public Records Law

The State Constitution provides that the public has the right to inspect or copy records made or received in connection with official governmental business.¹ This applies to the official business of any public body, officer, or employee of the state, including all three branches of state government, local governmental entities, and any person acting on behalf of the government.²

Additional requirements and exemptions that relate to public records are found in various statutes and rules, depending on the branch of government involved.³ For instance, Legislative

¹ FLA. CONST. art. I, s. 24(a).

² *Id.* See also, *Sarasota Citizens for Responsible Gov't v. City of Sarasota*, 48 So. 3d 755, 762-763 (Fla. 2010).

³ Chapter 119, F.S., does not apply to legislative or judicial records. See, *Locke v. Hawkes*, 595 So. 2d 32, 34 (Fla. 1992); see also *Times Pub. Co. v. Ake*, 660 So. 2d 255 (Fla. 1995).

records are public pursuant to s. 11.0431, F.S. Public records exemptions for the Legislature are codified primarily in s. 11.0431(2)-(3), F.S., and adopted in the rules of each house of the legislature. Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.420 governs public access to judicial branch records.⁴ Lastly, ch. 119, F.S., the Public Records Act, provides requirements for public records held by executive agencies and constitutes the main body of public records laws.

The Public Records Act provides that all state, county, and municipal records are open for personal inspection and copying by any person. Each agency has a duty to provide access to public records.⁵

Section 119.011(12), F.S., defines “public records” to include:

[a]ll documents, papers, letters, maps, books, tapes, photographs, films, sound recordings, data processing software, or other material, regardless of the physical form, characteristics, or means of transmission, made or received pursuant to law or ordinance or in connection with the transaction of official business by any agency.

The Florida Supreme Court has interpreted this definition to encompass all materials made or received by an agency in connection with official business which are used to “perpetuate, communicate, or formalize knowledge of some type.”⁶

The Florida Statutes specify conditions under which public access to governmental records must be provided. The Public Records Act guarantees every person’s right to inspect and copy any state or local government public record at any reasonable time, under reasonable conditions, and under supervision by the custodian of the public record.⁷ A violation of the Public Records Act may result in civil or criminal liability.⁸

Only the Legislature may create an exemption to public records requirements.⁹ An exemption must be created by general law and must specifically state the public necessity justifying the exemption.¹⁰ Further, the exemption must be no broader than necessary to accomplish the stated purpose of the law. A bill enacting an exemption may not contain other substantive provisions¹¹ and must pass by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting in each house of the Legislature.¹²

When creating a public records exemption, the Legislature may provide that a record is “exempt” or “confidential and exempt.” There is a difference between records the Legislature has determined to be exempt from the Public Records Act and those which the Legislature has

⁴ *State v. Wooten*, 260 So. 3d 1060 (Fla. 4th DCA 2018).

⁵ Section 119.01(1), F.S.

⁶ *Shevin v. Byron, Harless, Schaffer, Reid and Assoc. Inc.*, 379 So. 2d 633, 640 (Fla. 1980).

⁷ Section 119.07(1)(a), F.S.

⁸ Section 119.10, F.S. Public records laws are found throughout the Florida Statutes, as are the penalties for violating those laws.

⁹ FLA. CONST. art. I, s. 24(c).

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ The bill may, however, contain multiple exemptions that relate to one subject.

¹² FLA. CONST. art. I, s. 24(c).

determined to be exempt from the Public Records Act and confidential.¹³ Records designated as “confidential and exempt” are not subject to inspection by the public and may only be released under the circumstances defined by statute.¹⁴ Records designated as “exempt” may be released at the discretion of the records custodian under certain circumstances.¹⁵

Open Government Sunset Review Act

The Open Government Sunset Review Act¹⁶ (the Act) prescribes a legislative review process for newly created or substantially amended¹⁷ public records or open meetings exemptions, with specified exceptions.¹⁸ It requires the automatic repeal of such exemption on October 2nd of the fifth year after creation or substantial amendment. In order to save an exemption from repeal, the Legislature must reenact the exemption or repeal the sunset date.¹⁹ In practice, many exemptions are continued by repealing the sunset date, rather than reenacting the exemption.

The Act provides that a public records or open meetings exemption may be created or maintained only if it serves an identifiable public purpose and is no broader than is necessary.²⁰ An exemption serves an identifiable public purpose if it meets one of the following purposes and the Legislature finds that the purpose of the exemption outweighs open government policy and cannot be accomplished without the exemption:

- It allows the state or its political subdivisions to effectively and efficiently administer a governmental program, which administration would be significantly impaired without the exemption;²¹
- It protects sensitive, personal information, the release of which would be defamatory, cause unwarranted damage to the good name or reputation of the individual, or would jeopardize the individual’s safety. If this public purpose is cited as the basis of an exemption, however, only personal identifying information is exempt;²² or
- It protects information of a confidential nature concerning entities, such as trade or business secrets.²³

The Act also requires specified questions to be considered during the review process.²⁴ In examining an exemption, the Act directs the Legislature to carefully question the purpose and necessity of reenacting the exemption.

¹³ *WFTV, Inc. v. The Sch. Bd. of Seminole County*, 874 So. 2d 48, 53 (Fla. 5th DCA 2004).

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ *Williams v. City of Minneola*, 575 So. 2d 683 (Fla. 5th DCA 1991).

¹⁶ Section 119.15, F.S.

¹⁷ An exemption is considered to be substantially amended if it is expanded to include more records or information or to include meetings as well as records. Section 119.15(4)(b), F.S.

¹⁸ Section 119.15(2)(a) and (b), F.S., provide that exemptions that are required by federal law or are applicable solely to the Legislature or the State Court System are not subject to the Open Government Sunset Review Act.

¹⁹ Section 119.15(3), F.S.

²⁰ Section 119.15(6)(b), F.S.

²¹ Section 119.15(6)(b)1., F.S.

²² Section 119.15(6)(b)2., F.S.

²³ Section 119.15(6)(b)3., F.S.

²⁴ Section 119.15(6)(a), F.S.

If the exemption is continued and expanded, then a public necessity statement and a two-thirds vote for passage are required.²⁵ If the exemption is continued without substantive changes or if the exemption is continued and narrowed, then a public necessity statement and a two-thirds vote for passage are not required. If the Legislature allows an exemption to sunset, the previously exempt records will remain exempt unless provided for by law.²⁶

General exemptions from the public records requirements are typically contained in the Public Records Act.²⁷ Specific exemptions are often placed in the substantive statutes which relate to a particular agency or program.²⁸

Florida Division of Emergency Management

The Florida Division of Emergency Management (DEM) is established within the Executive Office of the Governor.²⁹ The director of the DEM is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Governor.³⁰ The primary role of the DEM is to manage and respond to disasters by coordinating with the Federal Government and political subdivisions of the state.³¹ These disasters include but are not limited to hurricanes, floods, and nuclear power. The main body of law which governs emergency management responsibilities, requirements, funding, and authority is the State Emergency Management Act in ch. 252, F.S.

Public Shelters

The State Emergency Management Act specifies the DEM is responsible for maintaining a comprehensive statewide program of emergency management.³² As part of this responsibility, the DEM must prepare a state comprehensive emergency management plan (CEMP) that is integrated into and coordinated with the emergency management plans and programs of the Federal Government.³³ The CEMP must include an evacuation component, a shelter component, and a post disaster response and recovery component.³⁴ As part of the shelter component, the CEMP includes the Statewide Emergency Shelter Plan³⁵. The CEMP must also contain other provisions addressing specific aspects of emergency management outlined in statute. The CEMP must be submitted to the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House, and the Governor on February 1 of every even numbered year.

²⁵ FLA. CONST. art. I, s. 24(c). See generally s. 119.15, F.S.

²⁶ Section 119.15(7), F.S.

²⁷ See, e.g., s. 119.071(1)(a), F.S., exempting from public disclosure examination questions and answer sheets of exams administered by a governmental agency for the purpose of licensure.

²⁸ See, e.g., s. 213.053(2), F.S., exempting from public disclosure information received by the DOR, including investigative reports and information.

²⁹ Section 14.2016, F.S.

³⁰ *Id.*

³¹ *Id.*

³² Section 252.35, F.S.

³³ Section 252.35(2), F.S.

³⁴ *Id.*

³⁵ Division of Emergency Management, *2024 Statewide Evacuation Shelter Plan*, available at https://www.floridadisaster.org/globalassets/final_statewide-emergency-shelter-plan_2024.pdf (last visited August 19, 2025).

County governments have the duty of evacuating and sheltering the public during a declared local or state emergency.³⁶ The State Emergency Management Act requires each county in the state to create a local emergency management agency.³⁷ Local emergency management agencies must develop a county emergency management plan that contains shelter provisions and is coordinated and consistent with the CEMP.³⁸ Each local emergency management agency has jurisdiction and serves the entire county; however, adjoining counties may enter into interjurisdictional emergency management agreements delineated by the Governor through executive order or rule.³⁹

There are two types of emergency shelters open to the public during a declared local or state emergency: general population shelters⁴⁰ and special needs shelters.⁴¹

During a declared local or state emergency, and at the request of the director of a local emergency management agency, district school boards must provide access to their facilities if the use of the facilities is consistent with the county emergency management plan and program.⁴² These facilities are the primary source of public evacuation shelters.⁴³

Additionally, as part of its statewide emergency shelter plan, the DEM administers a program to survey schools, universities, community colleges, state and local government-owned buildings (excluding hospitals, hospice care facilities, assisted living facilities, and nursing homes), and private facilities with written consent of the owner, to identify appropriately designed and located spaces to serve as hurricane evacuation shelters.⁴⁴ During a local or state emergency, spaces suitable as hurricane evacuation shelters shall be made available at the request of local emergency management agencies.⁴⁵

Generally, special needs shelters are available for people who meet the definition of special needs under the Florida Administrative Code⁴⁶ and require care that exceeds basic first aid provided at general population shelters.⁴⁷ The DEM, in coordination with local emergency management agencies, is required to maintain a registry of people with special needs in the jurisdiction of such local emergency management agency.

³⁶ Section 252.38, F.S.

³⁷ Section 252.38 (a), F.S.

³⁸ *Id.*

³⁹ Section 252.38(3)(b), F.S.

⁴⁰ Section 252.385, F.S.

⁴¹ Section 252.355, F.S.

⁴² Section 252.38(1)(d), F.S.

⁴³ Division of Emergency Management, *2024 Statewide Evacuation Shelter Plan*, available at https://www.floridadisaster.org/globalassets/final_statewide-emergency-shelter-plan_2024.pdf (last visited August 19, 2025).

⁴⁴ Section 252.385(2)(a), F.S.

⁴⁵ Section 252.385(4)(a), F.S.

⁴⁶ Florida Administrative Code R. 64-3.015 (2016) defines “person with special needs” to mean someone, who during periods of evacuation or emergency, requires sheltering assistance, due to physical impairment, mental impairment, cognitive impairment, or sensory disabilities.

⁴⁷ Division of Emergency Management, *Important Shelter Information*, available at <https://www.floridadisaster.org/planprep-are/disability/evacuations-and-shelters/shelter-information/> (last visited August 19, 2025).

Public Records Exemption Relating to Emergency Shelters

State law does not require local emergency management agencies to collect information about a person provided general population or special needs public shelter during an emergency, however, nothing in law prevents the collection of this information. If available, local emergency management agencies must provide a complete special needs shelter roster to local law enforcement agencies upon request.⁴⁸ All records, data, information, correspondence, and communications relating to the registration of people with special needs are confidential and exempt from public records under the public records exemption in s. 252.355(5), F.S.

In 2021, CS/CS/HB 327 became law.⁴⁹ The bill created s. 252.385(5), F.S., which exempts from public records the address and telephone number of a person provided public shelter during a storm or catastrophic event:

The address and telephone number of a person provided public emergency shelter during a storm or catastrophic event and held by the agency, as defined in s. 119.011, that provided the emergency shelter is exempt from s. 119.07(1) and s. 24(a), Art. I of the State Constitution.⁵⁰

If a local emergency management agency's county emergency management plan requires shelters to collect information from a person provided general population public shelter during a storm or catastrophic event, current law would exempt the address and telephone number from public inspection and copying.

The public record exemption in s. 252.385(5), F.S. is set to be repealed on October 2, 2026, unless saved from repeal through reenactment by the Legislature.

Open Government Sunset Review of the Public Records Exemption for Public Emergency Shelter Information

During the 2025 interim, Senate and House committee staff surveyed counties and their local emergency management agencies concerning the public record exemption in s. 252.385(5), F.S. These surveys were provided to each of the 67 counties of the State.⁵¹

Staff received a total of 18 local emergency management agency responses. Of the 16 responses that provided feedback regarding the exemption in s. 252.385(5), F.S., 14 recommended that the Legislature reenact the public record exemptions "as is" without any changes. Additionally, of the 18 responses, 16 local emergency management agencies indicated they collect the names, addresses, or both, of a person provided public emergency shelter.⁵²

⁴⁸ Section 252.355(5), F.S.

⁴⁹ Section 252.385(5), s.1, Ch. 2021-19, Laws of Fla.

⁵⁰ *Id.*

⁵¹ Email sent from Rachel Walker, Policy Analyst, House Government Operations Subcommittee to local emergency managements agencies (September 26, 2025) (on file with Senate Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security Committee).

⁵² Most local emergency management agencies collected names and addresses on a voluntary basis. A few require a name or address, as well as an ID to enter a public shelter located at a school.

Public Record Exemption Findings

Legislative staff requested that the local emergency management agencies review the use of the public record exemption in s. 252.385(5), F.S. The responses did not report any issue interpreting or applying the exemption, and noted that the exemption was used, in particular, to protect records that could harm the safety of a vulnerable person provided public shelter during a storm or catastrophic event.⁵³

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

SB 7000 continues a public records exemption created in 2021 which is otherwise scheduled to be repealed on October 2, 2026. The exemption covers the address and telephone number of a person provided public shelter during a storm or catastrophic event and held by the agency that provided such shelter.

The bill provides an effective date of October 1, 2026.

IV. Constitutional Issues:**A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:**

Not applicable. The bill does not require counties or municipalities to take an action requiring the expenditure of funds, reduce the authority that counties or municipalities have to raise revenue in the aggregate, nor reduce the percentage of state tax shared with counties or municipalities.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:**Vote Requirement**

Article I, s. 24(c) of the State Constitution requires a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting for final passage of a bill creating or expanding an exemption to the public records disclosure requirements. The bill continues a current public records exemption beyond its current date of repeal. The bill does not create or expand an exemption. Thus, the bill does not require an extraordinary vote for enactment.

Public Necessity Statement

Article I, s. 24(c) of the State Constitution requires a bill creating or expanding an exemption to the public records disclosure requirements to state with specificity the public necessity justifying the exemption. The bill does not create or expand an exemption and thus, a statement of public necessity is not required.

⁵³ Emails sent from local emergency management agencies to Jon Bellamy, Legislative Analyst, Senate Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security Committee (on file with Senate Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security Committee).

Breadth of Exemption

Article I, s. 24(c) of the State Constitution requires an exemption to the public records disclosure requirements to be no broader than necessary to accomplish the stated purpose of the law. The exemption in the bill does not appear to be broader than necessary to accomplish the purpose of the law. The bill provides the specific information that would be made exempt to prevent the release of information that may jeopardize the safety of a vulnerable person provided public shelter during a storm or catastrophic event.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None identified.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None identified.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None identified.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

The private sector will continue to be subject to the cost associated with an agency's review and redactions of exempt records in response to a public records request.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The government sector will continue to incur costs related to the review and redaction of exempt records associated with responding to public records requests.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None identified.

VII. Related Issues:

None identified.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

The bill substantially amends section 252.385(5) of the Florida Statutes.

IX. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:

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

None.

B. Amendments:

None.

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

FOR CONSIDERATION By the Committee on Military and Veterans
Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security

583-00258-26

20267000pb

A bill to be entitled

An act relating to a review under the Open Government
Sunset Review Act; amending s. 252.385, F.S., which
provides an exemption from public records requirements
for the addresses and telephone numbers of persons
provided public emergency shelter and held by the
agency that provided the emergency shelter; deleting
the scheduled repeal of the exemption; providing an
effective date.

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

Section 1. Subsection (5) of section 252.385, Florida
Statutes, is amended to read:

252.385 Public shelter space; public records exemption.—

(5) The address and telephone number of a person provided
public emergency shelter during a storm or catastrophic event
and held by the agency, as defined in s. 119.011, that provided
the emergency shelter is exempt from s. 119.07(1) and s. 24(a),
Art. I of the State Constitution. ~~This subsection is subject to
the Open Government Sunset Review Act in accordance with s.
119.15 and shall stand repealed on October 2, 2026, unless
reviewed and saved from repeal through reenactment by the
Legislature.~~

Section 2. This act shall take effect October 1, 2026.

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.)

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

BILL: SB 7002

INTRODUCER: Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security Committee

SUBJECT: OGSR/Department of Military Affairs/United States Department of Defense

DATE: November 4, 2025

REVISED: _____

ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1. Bellamy	Proctor		MS Submitted as Comm. Bill/Fav

I. Summary:

SB 7002 saves from repeal the current public records exemption for records held by the Department of Military Affairs (DMA) which:

- Are stored in a United States Department of Defense (DoD) system of records;
- Are transmitted using a DoD network or communications device; or
- Pertains to the DoD, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. s. 394.¹

The exemption is subject to the Open Government Sunset Review Act and stands repealed on October 2, 2026, unless reenacted by the Legislature. The bill saves the exemption from repeal by deleting the scheduled repeal date, thereby maintaining the exempt status of the information.

The bill is not expected to affect state and local government revenues and expenditures.

The bill takes effect October 1, 2026.

II. Present Situation:

Florida Public Records Law

The State Constitution provides that the public has the right to inspect or copy records made or received in connection with official governmental business.² This applies to the official business of any public body, officer, or employee of the state, including all three branches of state government, local governmental entities, and any person acting on behalf of the government.³

¹ Federal law 10 U.S.C. s. 394(a), which addresses military cybersecurity operations, provides for the Secretary of Defense to develop, prepare, and coordinate; make ready all armed forces for purposes of; and, when appropriately authorized to do so, conduct, military cyber activities or operations in cyberspace, including clandestine military activities or operations in cyberspace.

² FLA. CONST. art. I, s. 24(a).

³ *Id.* See also, *Sarasota Citizens for Responsible Gov't v. City of Sarasota*, 48 So. 3d 755, 762-763 (Fla. 2010).

Additional requirements and exemptions that relate to public records are found in various statutes and rules, depending on the branch of government involved.⁴ For instance, Legislative records are public pursuant to s. 11.0431, F.S. Public records exemptions for the Legislature are codified primarily in s. 11.0431(2)-(3), F.S., and adopted in the rules of each house of the legislature. Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.420 governs public access to judicial branch records.⁵ Lastly, ch. 119, F.S., the Public Records Act, provides requirements for public records held by executive agencies and constitutes the main body of public records laws.

The Public Records Act provides that all state, county, and municipal records are open for personal inspection and copying by any person. Each agency has a duty to provide access to public records.⁶

Section 119.011(12), F.S., defines “public records” to include:

[a]ll documents, papers, letters, maps, books, tapes, photographs, films, sound recordings, data processing software, or other material, regardless of the physical form, characteristics, or means of transmission, made or received pursuant to law or ordinance or in connection with the transaction of official business by any agency.

The Florida Supreme Court has interpreted this definition to encompass all materials made or received by an agency in connection with official business which are used to “perpetuate, communicate, or formalize knowledge of some type.”⁷

The Florida Statutes specify conditions under which public access to governmental records must be provided. The Public Records Act guarantees every person’s right to inspect and copy any state or local government public record at any reasonable time, under reasonable conditions, and under supervision by the custodian of the public record.⁸ A violation of the Public Records Act may result in civil or criminal liability.⁹

Only the Legislature may create an exemption to public records requirements.¹⁰ An exemption must be created by general law and must specifically state the public necessity justifying the exemption.¹¹ Further, the exemption must be no broader than necessary to accomplish the stated purpose of the law. A bill enacting an exemption may not contain other substantive provisions¹² and must pass by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting in each house of the Legislature.¹³

⁴ Chapter 119, F.S., does not apply to legislative or judicial records. *See, Locke v. Hawkes*, 595 So. 2d 32, 34 (Fla. 1992); *see also Times Pub. Co. v. Ake*, 660 So. 2d 255 (Fla. 1995).

⁵ *State v. Wooten*, 260 So. 3d 1060 (Fla. 4th DCA 2018).

⁶ Section 119.01(1), F.S.

⁷ *Shevin v. Byron, Harless, Schaffer, Reid and Assoc. Inc.*, 379 So. 2d 633, 640 (Fla. 1980).

⁸ Section 119.07(1)(a), F.S.

⁹ Section 119.10, F.S. Public records laws are found throughout the Florida Statutes, as are the penalties for violating those laws.

¹⁰ FLA. CONST. art. I, s. 24(c).

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² The bill may, however, contain multiple exemptions that relate to one subject.

¹³ FLA. CONST. art. I, s. 24(c).

When creating a public records exemption, the Legislature may provide that a record is “exempt” or “confidential and exempt.” There is a difference between records the Legislature has determined to be exempt from the Public Records Act and those which the Legislature has determined to be exempt from the Public Records Act and confidential.¹⁴ Records designated as “confidential and exempt” are not subject to inspection by the public and may only be released under the circumstances defined by statute.¹⁵ Records designated as “exempt” may be released at the discretion of the records custodian under certain circumstances.¹⁶

Open Government Sunset Review Act

The Open Government Sunset Review Act¹⁷ (the Act) prescribes a legislative review process for newly created or substantially amended¹⁸ public records or open meetings exemptions, with specified exceptions.¹⁹ It requires the automatic repeal of such exemption on October 2nd of the fifth year after creation or substantial amendment. In order to save an exemption from repeal, the Legislature must reenact the exemption or repeal the sunset date.²⁰ In practice, many exemptions are continued by repealing the sunset date, rather than reenacting the exemption.

The Act provides that a public records or open meetings exemption may be created or maintained only if it serves an identifiable public purpose and is no broader than is necessary.²¹ An exemption serves an identifiable public purpose if it meets one of the following purposes and the Legislature finds that the purpose of the exemption outweighs open government policy and cannot be accomplished without the exemption:

- It allows the state or its political subdivisions to effectively and efficiently administer a governmental program, which administration would be significantly impaired without the exemption;²²
- It protects sensitive, personal information, the release of which would be defamatory, cause unwarranted damage to the good name or reputation of the individual, or would jeopardize the individual’s safety. If this public purpose is cited as the basis of an exemption, however, only personal identifying information is exempt;²³ or
- It protects information of a confidential nature concerning entities, such as trade or business secrets.²⁴

¹⁴ *WFTV, Inc. v. The Sch. Bd. of Seminole County*, 874 So. 2d 48, 53 (Fla. 5th DCA 2004).

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ *Williams v. City of Minneola*, 575 So. 2d 683 (Fla. 5th DCA 1991).

¹⁷ Section 119.15, F.S.

¹⁸ An exemption is considered to be substantially amended if it is expanded to include more records or information or to include meetings as well as records. Section 119.15(4)(b), F.S.

¹⁹ Section 119.15(2)(a) and (b), F.S., provide that exemptions that are required by federal law or are applicable solely to the Legislature or the State Court System are not subject to the Open Government Sunset Review Act.

²⁰ Section 119.15(3), F.S.

²¹ Section 119.15(6)(b), F.S.

²² Section 119.15(6)(b)1., F.S.

²³ Section 119.15(6)(b)2., F.S.

²⁴ Section 119.15(6)(b)3., F.S.

The Act also requires specified questions to be considered during the review process.²⁵ In examining an exemption, the Act directs the Legislature to carefully question the purpose and necessity of reenacting the exemption.

If the exemption is continued and expanded, then a public necessity statement and a two-thirds vote for passage are required.²⁶ If the exemption is continued without substantive changes or if the exemption is continued and narrowed, then a public necessity statement and a two-thirds vote for passage are not required. If the Legislature allows an exemption to sunset, the previously exempt records will remain exempt unless provided for by law.²⁷

General exemptions from the public records requirements are typically contained in the Public Records Act.²⁸ Specific exemptions are often placed in the substantive statutes which relate to a particular agency or program.²⁹

Federal System of Records

The Freedom of Information Act

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)³⁰ primarily governs the public's access to Federal agency records. Under FOIA, an agency must promptly provide copies of government records to the public upon receiving a request.³¹ The request for such records must reasonably describe the records and be made in accordance with the agency's established procedural rules for the request.³² Federal agencies are exempt from disclosing records that are categorized into one of the following nine exemptions:

- Information authorized by Executive order to be considered secret for national security or defense purposes.
- Related solely to internal personnel rules and practices of an agency.
- Information exempted by another Federal statute.
- Trade secrets or financial information obtained from a person and privileged or confidential.
- Inter-agency or intra-agency communication that would not be available by law to a party other than an agency in litigation with the agency, provided the privilege shall not apply to records created 25 years or more before the date on which the records were requested.
- Personnel and medical files of an individual which would be an invasion of personal privacy.
- Certain information compiled by law enforcement.
- Information pertaining to examination, operating, or condition reports on behalf of or for the use of an agency responsible for regulation of financial institutions.
- Geological and geophysical information and data, including maps, concerning wells.³³

²⁵ Section 119.15(6)(a), F.S.

²⁶ FLA. CONST. art. I, s. 24(c). See generally s. 119.15, F.S.

²⁷ Section 119.15(7), F.S.

²⁸ See, e.g., s. 119.071(1)(a), F.S., exempting from public disclosure examination questions and answer sheets of exams administered by a governmental agency for the purpose of licensure.

²⁹ See, e.g., s. 213.053(2), F.S., exempting from public disclosure information received by the DOR, including investigative reports and information.

³⁰ 5 U.S.C. § 552.

³¹ 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(3)(A).

³² 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(3)(A)(i) and (ii).

³³ 5 U.S.C. § 552(b).

Information from a Federal agency that is publicly available may be accessed by searching FOIA.gov.³⁴ If information is not available, an individual may submit a FOIA request to an agency's FOIA Office.³⁵

The Privacy Act of 1974 (Privacy Act)

The Privacy Act governs how personal identifying information held by Federal agencies must be stored, may be accessed, and when the government may use or disclose such information.³⁶ A record is defined in the Privacy Act as “[A]ny item, collection, or grouping of information about an individual that is maintained by an agency, including, but not limited to, his education, financial transactions, medical history, and criminal or employment history and that contains his name, or the identifying number, symbol, or other identifying particular assigned to the individual, such as a finger or voice print or a photograph”³⁷ A Federal agency that maintains a system of records³⁸ may not disclose such record without prior written consent of the individual or by written request of the individual to whom the record pertains.³⁹ There are 12 exemptions for certain records and system of records⁴⁰ and 12 exceptions to the written consent requirement.⁴¹ The Privacy Act authorizes disclosure in the following instances:

- To the officers and employees of the agency which maintains the record, who need the record in the performance of their duties;
- When the disclosure is made under the FOIA;
- For an established routine use;
- To the Census Bureau to carry out a census or survey;
- For statistical research or reporting without release of individually identifying data, provided that adequate notice is given;
- To the National Archives and Records Administration as a record of historical value;
- To another agency or an instrumentality of the government for a civil or criminal law enforcement activity;
- To an individual under a compelling circumstance affecting health or safety, and the person whose health or safety is affected is sent a notification of the disclosure;
- To either House of Congress, or one of its committees or subcommittees;
- To the Comptroller General in the course of duties of the General Accountability Office;
- Pursuant to the order of a court of competent jurisdiction; or
- To a consumer reporting agency.⁴²

³⁴ FOIA.gov, *Search Government Websites*, available at <https://www.foia.gov/search.html> (last visited August 8, 2025).

³⁵ FOIA.gov, *How do I make a FOIA Request*, available at <https://www.foia.gov/how-to.html> (last visited August 8, 2025).

³⁶ Meghan M. Stuessy, Congress.gov, *The Privacy Act of 1974: Overview and Issues for Congress*, CRS Report Number R47863, available at <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R47863> (last visited August 8, 2025).

³⁷ 5 U.S.C. § 552a(a)(4).

³⁸ The term “system of records” means a group of any records under the control of any agency from which information is retrieved by the name of the individual or by some identifying number, symbol, or other identifying particular assigned to the individual; 5 U.S.C. § 552a(a)(5).

³⁹ 5 U.S.C. § 552a(b).

⁴⁰ 5 U.S.C. § 552a(d)(5), 5 U.S. Code § 552a(j), 5 U.S. Code § 552a(k).

⁴¹ 5 U.S.C. § 552a(b).

⁴² United States Department of Legal Affairs, Privacy Reminders, Privacy Act “Exceptions”, available at https://www.dla.mil/Portals/104/Documents/GeneralCounsel/FOIA/PrivacyReminders/FOIA_Reminder12.pdf?ver=pmD36CFRR8zarytVh_aWCg%3d%3d (last visited October 2, 2025).

Florida Department of Military Affairs

The DMA is a state agency created under ch. 250, F.S.⁴³ The DMA provides management oversight and administrative support to the Florida National Guard (FNG).⁴⁴ The head of the DMA is the Adjutant General.⁴⁵ The Adjutant General must be a Federally recognized officer of the FNG, have served in the FNG for 5 of the last 10 years and have attained the rank of colonel or higher, and be appointed by the Governor subject to Senate Confirmation.⁴⁶

As Commander in Chief⁴⁷, the Governor may order the FNG to active state duty in order to preserve the public peace, execute the laws of the state, enhance domestic security, respond to terrorist threats or attacks, respond to an emergency, or respond to any need for emergency aid to civil authorities.⁴⁸ The FNG may also be activated by the Federal government.⁴⁹

Employees of the DMA, as part of their state government duties, use the U.S. Department of Defense information network (DoDIN). DoDIN is the DoD's "end-to-end set of electronic information capabilities and associated processes for collecting, processing, storing, disseminating, and managing digital information on-demand to warfighters, policy makers, and support personnel, including owned and leased communications and computing systems and services, software (including applications), data, security services, and other associated services, and National Security Systems."⁵⁰

In 2018, the DoD determined information in the DoDIN system was exempt from public disclosure based on exemption 3 of FOIA.⁵¹

Public Records related to the Florida Department of Military Affairs

Federal vs State Exemptions

Although DoDIN information is exempt pursuant to the FOIA, the FOIA does not apply to State agencies.⁵² Without state exemption, the DMA employees that use the DoDIN may create a state agency record that is not exempt from public record disclosure pursuant to ch. 119, F.S. These records include information on military missions, units, deployments, troop concentrations, rules on the use of force, highly deployable units, and personal identifying information of the FNG

⁴³ Section 250, F.S.

⁴⁴ Department of Military Affairs, *The Florida Department of Military Affairs*, available at <https://dma.myflorida.com/> (last visited August 8, 2025).

⁴⁵ Section 250.05(3), F.S.

⁴⁶ Section 250.10(1), F.S.

⁴⁷ Section 250.06, F.S.

⁴⁸ Section 250.05(4), F.S.

⁴⁹ 10 U.S.C. § 12406.

⁵⁰ Office of the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Privacy, Civil Liberties, and Transparency, *10 USC § 130e Decisions*, Department of Defense Information Network; October 19, 2018, PDF, available at https://pclt.defense.gov/Portals/140/FOIA/FOIA_Resources/10-19-2018_Determination.pdf (last visited August 8, 2025).

⁵¹ *Id.*

⁵² *Wallace v Guzman*, 687 So.2d 1351, 1353 (Fla. 3d DCA 1997). See also *Housing Authority of the City of Daytona Beach v. Gommillion*, 639 So. 2d 117, 118 (Fla. 5th DCA 1994).

servicemembers and the DoD employees.⁵³ The public necessity statement of the exemption stated that the dissemination of these records could pose a national security risk or harm the safety of the FNG servicemembers.⁵⁴

Department of Military Affairs Public Record Exemption

In 2021, CS/CS/CS/HB 1069, was passed and signed into law.⁵⁵ This public record exemption created s. 119.0712(4), F.S., and aligned Florida Law with the FOIA and the Privacy Act. This makes records held by the DMA exempt from public disclosure which:

- Are stored in a DoD system of records;
- Are transmitted using a DoD network or communication device; or
- Pertain to the military cybersecurity operations law 10 U.S.C. s.394.⁵⁶

Any information not made exempt by s. 119.0712(4), F.S., may be disclosed only after the DMA makes redactions in accordance with federal and state law.⁵⁷ The public may still access records pertaining to the DoD by using the FOIA submission process.

The public record exemption is set to be repealed on October 2, 2026, unless saved from repeal through reenactment by the Legislature.

Open Government Sunset Review of the Public Records Exemption For the DoD Information Held by the DMA

During the 2025 interim, Senate and House staff jointly met with the DMA to review the public records exemption in s 119.0712(4), F.S.

Public Record Exemption Findings

The DMA did not report any issue interpreting or applying the exemption and noted that the exemption was used to protect records that could pose a national security risk or harm the safety of the FNG servicemembers.

Since December of 2022, the DMA has received 58 public records requests, 12 of which, in whole or part, were exempt pursuant to s. 119.0712(4), F.S. The DMA's preference is to preserve the current language of the exemption and to remove the sunset provision.⁵⁸

⁵³ Department of Military Affairs, *2021 Agency Legislative Bill Analysis* (Jan. 21, 2021) (on file with the Senate Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security).

⁵⁴ *Id.*

⁵⁵ Section 119.0712(4), F.S., s.1, Ch. 2021-86, Laws of Fla.

⁵⁶ *Id.*

⁵⁷ Section 119.0712(4), F.S.

⁵⁸ Email from Colonel Jason Hunt, Commander, 83rd Troop Command, Florida National Guard, to Tim Proctor, Staff Director, Senate Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security. (September 20, 2025) (on file with the Senate Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security).

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

SB 7002 continues a public records exemption created in 2021 which is otherwise scheduled to be repealed on October 2, 2026. The public records exemption applies to information held by the DMA that is stored in a DoD system of records, transmitted using a DoD network or communications device; or pertains to the DoD, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. s. 394.

The bill provides an effective date of October 1, 2026.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

Not applicable. The bill does not require counties or municipalities to take an action requiring the expenditure of funds, reduce the authority that counties or municipalities have to raise revenue in the aggregate, nor reduce the percentage of state tax shared with counties or municipalities.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

Vote Requirement

Article I, s. 24(c) of the State Constitution requires a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting for final passage of a bill creating or expanding an exemption to the public records disclosure requirements. The bill continues a current public records exemption beyond its current date of repeal. The bill does not create or expand an exemption. Thus, the bill does not require an extraordinary vote for enactment.

Public Necessity Statement

Article I, s. 24(c) of the State Constitution requires a bill creating or expanding an exemption to the public records disclosure requirements to state with specificity the public necessity justifying the exemption. The bill does not create or expand an exemption and thus, a statement of public necessity is not required.

Breadth of Exemption

Article I, s. 24(c) of the State Constitution requires an exemption to the public records disclosure requirements to be no broader than necessary to accomplish the stated purpose of the law. The exemption in the bill does not appear to be broader than necessary to accomplish the purpose of the law. The bill provides the specific information that would be made exempt to prevent the release of information that may pose a risk to national security or harm the safety of FNG servicemembers.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None identified.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None identified.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None identified.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None identified.

B. Private Sector Impact:

The private sector will continue to be subject to the cost associated with an agency's review and redactions of exempt records in response to a public records request.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The government sector will continue to incur costs related to the review and redaction of exempt records associated with responding to public records requests.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None identified.

VII. Related Issues:

None identified.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

The bill substantially amends section 119.0172(4) of the Florida Statutes.

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.

FOR CONSIDERATION By the Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security

583-00257-26

20267002pb

A bill to be entitled

An act relating to a review under the Open Government Sunset Review Act; amending s. 119.0712, F.S., which provides an exemption from public records requirements for certain information held by the Department of Military Affairs stored in a United States Department of Defense system of records, transmitted using a United States Department of Defense network or communications device, or pertaining to the United States Department of Defense; deleting the scheduled repeal of the exemption; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Subsection (4) of section 119.0712, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

119.0712 Executive branch agency-specific exemptions from inspection or copying of public records.—

(4) DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AFFAIRS.—Information held by the Department of Military Affairs that is stored in a United States Department of Defense system of records, transmitted using a United States Department of Defense network or communications device, or pertaining to the United States Department of Defense, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. s. 394, is exempt from s. 119.07(1) and s. 24(a), Art. I of the State Constitution. Any information not made exempt by this subsection may be disclosed only after the department makes any redactions in accordance with applicable federal and state laws. This exemption applies to information made exempt by this subsection which is held by

Page 1 of 2

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

583-00257-26

20267002pb

the department before, on, or after the effective date of the exemption. ~~This subsection is subject to the Open Government Sunset Review Act in accordance with s. 119.15 and shall stand repealed on October 2, 2026, unless reviewed and saved from repeal through reenactment by the Legislature.~~

Section 2. This act shall take effect October 1, 2026.

Page 2 of 2

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



FLORIDA VETERANS
— F O U N D A T I O N —

Florida Veterans Foundation Program Overview

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

Presenter: Dr. Pia Woodley, FVF Chair
November 4, 2025

Prepared by: Florida Veterans Foundation | In partnership with the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs
www.HelpFLVets.org

CONTENTS

01

Foundation Overview

Our mission and dedication
to improving veteran lives.

02

Dental Health Initiatives

Highlights the Foundation's
statewide dental health care
programs.

03

Partnerships & Grants

Showcases the
Foundation's strategic
collaborations.

04

Leadership, Oversight, & Financials

Emphasizes the Foundation's
commitment to transparency and
accountability.

Foundation Overview

- The **Florida Veterans Foundation (FVF)** is the **direct support organization** of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA).
- Serves **1.4 million veterans** and their families.

Focus areas include:

- Dental care and access
- Emergency financial assistance
- Transportation for veterans
- Education and outreach



FLORIDA VETERANS FOUNDATION

OUR PROJECTS:

- Emergency Financial Assistance
- Dental Services
- Awareness + Prevention
- Transitional Housing
- Veteran Transportation

Visit Our Website
www.helpfivets.org

Empowering Florida's Veterans, Honoring Their Service.
No Veteran Left Behind.

FLORIDA FLVET 10-25
DON'T TREAD ON ME

Proceeds from license plate sales benefit Florida veterans in need. For more information, please visit helpfivets.org or your local driver's license and motor vehicle service center.

850-782-4305
fvf@fdva.fl.gov
helpfivets.org

Florida Veterans Foundation

Mission & Vision

- *"Improve quality of life and honor those who served"*
- Guides all programs and initiatives

Core Programs / Services

- State Nursing Home Dental Initiative, Mission of Mercy, Florida Veterans Dental Program
- Project Vet Relief, Grants
- Disabled American Veterans (DAV) vans
- Veterans Benefit Guide, community engagement

Partnerships & Support

- FDVA
- Local dental clinics & volunteers
- Nonprofits & veteran service organizations
- Legislative and community support

Dental Initiatives

State Veterans' Homes Dental Initiative

- **Essential dental care services to residents of:**
 - **8** State Veterans' Nursing Homes
 - **1** State Veterans' Domiciliary
- **Since April 2023:**
 - **71** residents served
 - **\$76,089.65** invested

Mission of Mercy (MOM) Dental Stand Down

- **2025 MOM Event:** Daytona Beach, March 21–22, 2025
- **FVF Contribution:** \$25,000
- **Impact:**
 - \$137,499 in treatment value
 - 689 procedures for **112 veterans**
- **Next Event:** May 15–16, 2026 – Jacksonville, FL

Florida Veterans Dental Program

- Established through **CS/HB 635 (2023)**
- **\$1 million appropriation (2024)** by Florida Legislature
- **Managed by FVF (2025)** under state contract
- Rapid growth into a **statewide network** serving veterans' dental needs.

Key Milestones

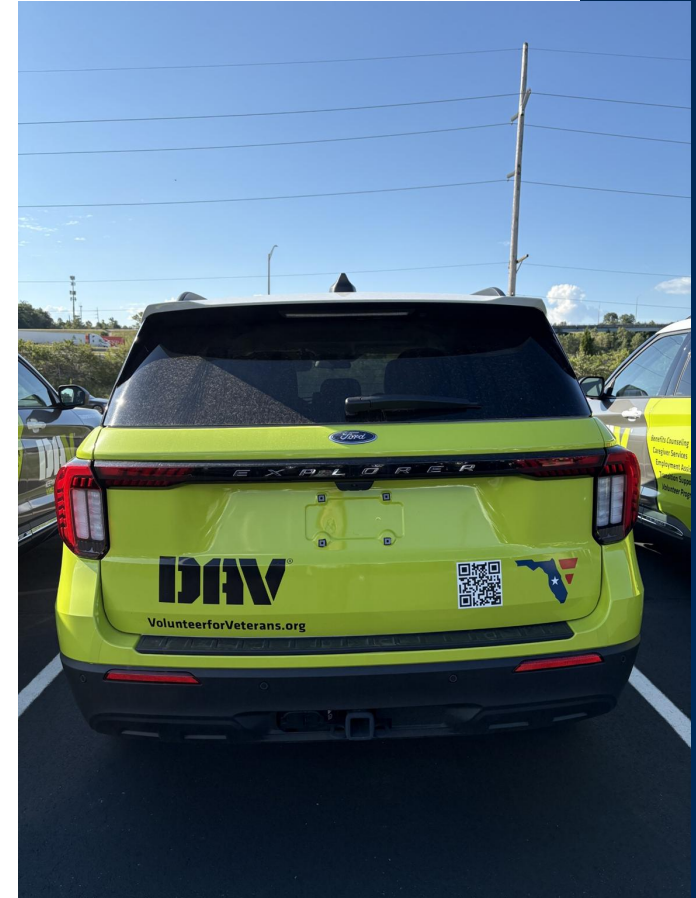
- **Apr 2025:** FVF contract signed; funds allocated
- **May 2025:** First grant – *Wounded Veterans Relief Fund (WVRF)*
- **Jul 2025:** Recurring funding approved; Public Service Announcement outreach launched
- **Aug 2025:** 3 new grants awarded:
 - *Community Smiles* – Dade County
 - *Homeless Empowerment Program* – Pinellas County
 - *Premier Dental* – Pasco & Hernando Counties
- **Sept 2025:** Monitoring and site visits initiated

Dental Program: Outcomes & Quality Assurance

- **FY2025 (May–June):**
 - 45 veterans served | 315 procedures | \$52,285 spent
- **FY2026 Q1 (Jul–Sep):**
 - 245 veterans served | 1,631 procedures | \$302,127 spent
- **Total:** 290 veterans | 1,946 procedures
- Veterans served from all branches, including conflicts from **Korea to Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom**
- **Monthly Quality Assurance Surveillance Meetings**
 - Focus:
 - Compliance
 - Veteran satisfaction
 - Program efficiency
 - Motto: *Helping Florida Veterans — One Smile at a Time*

Partnership with DAV

- **4 transport vans donated to:**
 - Lake Nona – Delivered 2024
 - West Palm Beach – Delivered 2024
 - Miami – Delivered 2025
 - Tampa – Delivery pending
- **Value:** \$175,669.49
- **Outcome:**
 - Enhances veteran access to medical appointments.



Partnership with Project VetRelief

- Collaboration with **The American Legion's Project Vet Relief**
- **Investment:** \$45,000
- **38 veterans assisted** with emergency financial support
- Provides **stability for veterans in crisis**



Veterans' Benefits Guide

- Partnership with **FDVA**
- Purpose: Essential tool connecting veterans to earned **benefits and resources**.
- Produced and distributed **Florida Veterans' Benefits Guide (2025)**
- **175,000 copies printed** statewide
- **Investment: \$55,153.59**
- Available digitally at: <https://floridavets.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/FDVA-Benefits-Guide.pdf?v=2025c>



FVF Grant Programs

Operation Noble Endeavors – *New Initiative*

- Enhances quality of life at **8 State Veterans' Homes + 1 domiciliary**
- Each home receives **3 projects at \$10,000 each**
- **27 projects total | \$270,000 investment**
- Tailored improvements honoring residents' service and dignity

Supporting Veterans' Well-Being Grant – *New Initiative*

- \$1,000 grants awarded to six veteran-focused groups:
 - National Veterans Homeless Support
 - Fleet Reserve Association Branch 34
 - Women Veterans Unite
 - Florida Society Sons of the American Revolution
 - National Alliance on Mental Illness
 - Central Florida Warriors Hockey

Leadership, Oversight, & Financials

Legislative Engagement

- Supported **Legislative Breakfast & FDVA/FVF Reception** to enhance collaboration.

Audits

- Annual audit by **Lanigan & Associates, P.C.** – *No findings*
- **DHSMV Inspector General Audit** of Gadsden License Plate funds – *No findings*

Leadership & Financial Summary

- Monthly Executive Board meetings + new **subcommittees**:
 - Membership Subcommittee
 - Investment Subcommittee
- **Dollars Generated:**
 - Operating Funds: **\$1,677,553.07**
 - Investment Account: **\$669,366.17**

Summary: FVF continues to expand programs, partnerships, and oversight to support Florida's veterans.

Contact Us



850-782-4305



linktr.ee/helpflvets



fvf@fdva.fl.gov



helpflvets.org

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)

11/4/2025
Meeting Date
SEN MS/Comm
Committee

Name Florida Veterans Foundation
Dr. Pia Woodley
Address 2601 S. Blairstone Road C300
Tallahassee, FL 32399
City State Zip

Phone 850.296.0185
Email pia.woodley@fdva.fl.gov

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)

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)

10/4/25
Meeting Date

mil. vet
Committee

Name Paul Kimbel

Phone 722-384-1589

Address 152 Sage Cir
Street

Email Paul.Kimbel@FLSUA.FL.gov

Crystal Beach FL 34681
City State Zip

Speaking: ☒ For ☐ Against ☐ Information

OR

Waive Speaking: ☐ In Support ☐ Against

PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

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

S-001 (08/10/2021)



VETERANS FLORIDA

2026-27 Briefing

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

November 4, 2025

Board of Directors



CPT (Ret) USN, Jeff Cathey,
Chair
Governor - 2d Term - Mar 2029



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



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



CDR (Ret) USN, Jon "Fizz" Fay,
Secretary
Governor - 1st Term - Mar 2029



Lynda Weatherman
Senate - 2d Term - Mar 2027



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



Angela Drzewiecki
Senate - 2d Term - Mar 2027



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

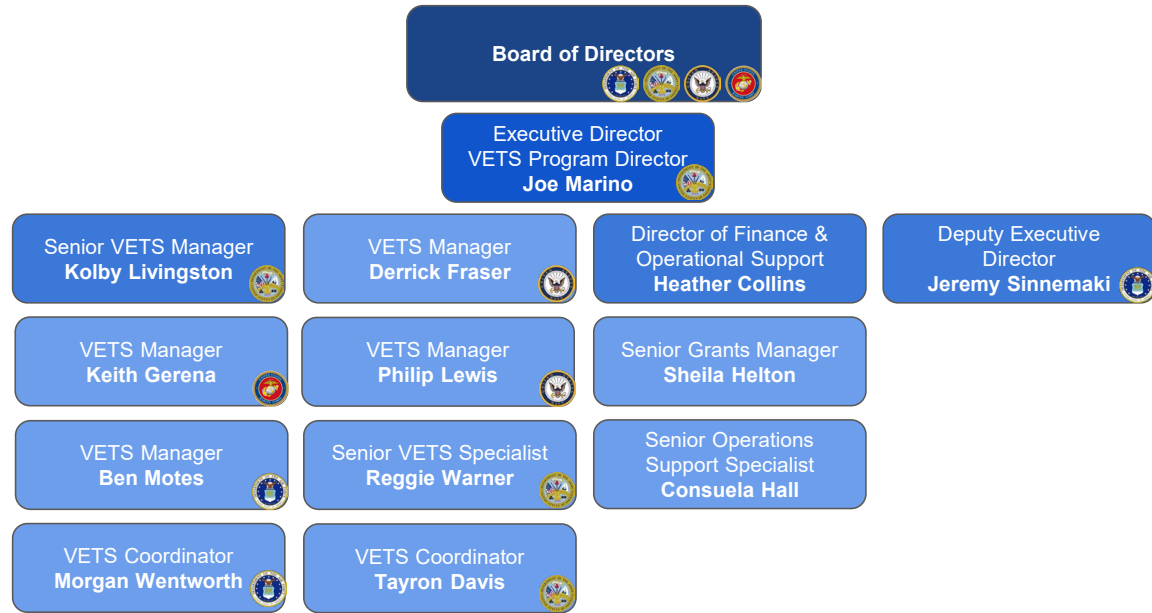


Will Rodriguez, USN
Governor - 1st Term - Mar 2029



Representative Danny Alvarez,
USA
House - 1st Term

Team Chart



Administration

- Statutory name is **Florida is for Veterans Inc.**
- Created under FDVA and as 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** and **VETS Program** 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 Florida 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

History Highlights

2014

- Established nonprofit under FDVA
- Board appointed by Governor, President, and Speaker

2016

- Received initial VETS Programs funding
 - Workforce Grant
 - Entrepreneur Grant
 - Marketing with VISIT

2018

- USDA/NIFA Subcontractor for veteran agriculture training pilot

2020

- SkillBridge pilot for agriculture training

2021

- DeSantis signed the nation's first statewide SkillBridge initiative in statute
- USDA/NIFA grant for veteran agriculture training - 3 years AGVets
- Stabilized Program funding at \$2 million

2022

- Created the nation's first statewide law enforcement SkillBridge with FHP
- Signed other state agencies to SkillBridge

2024

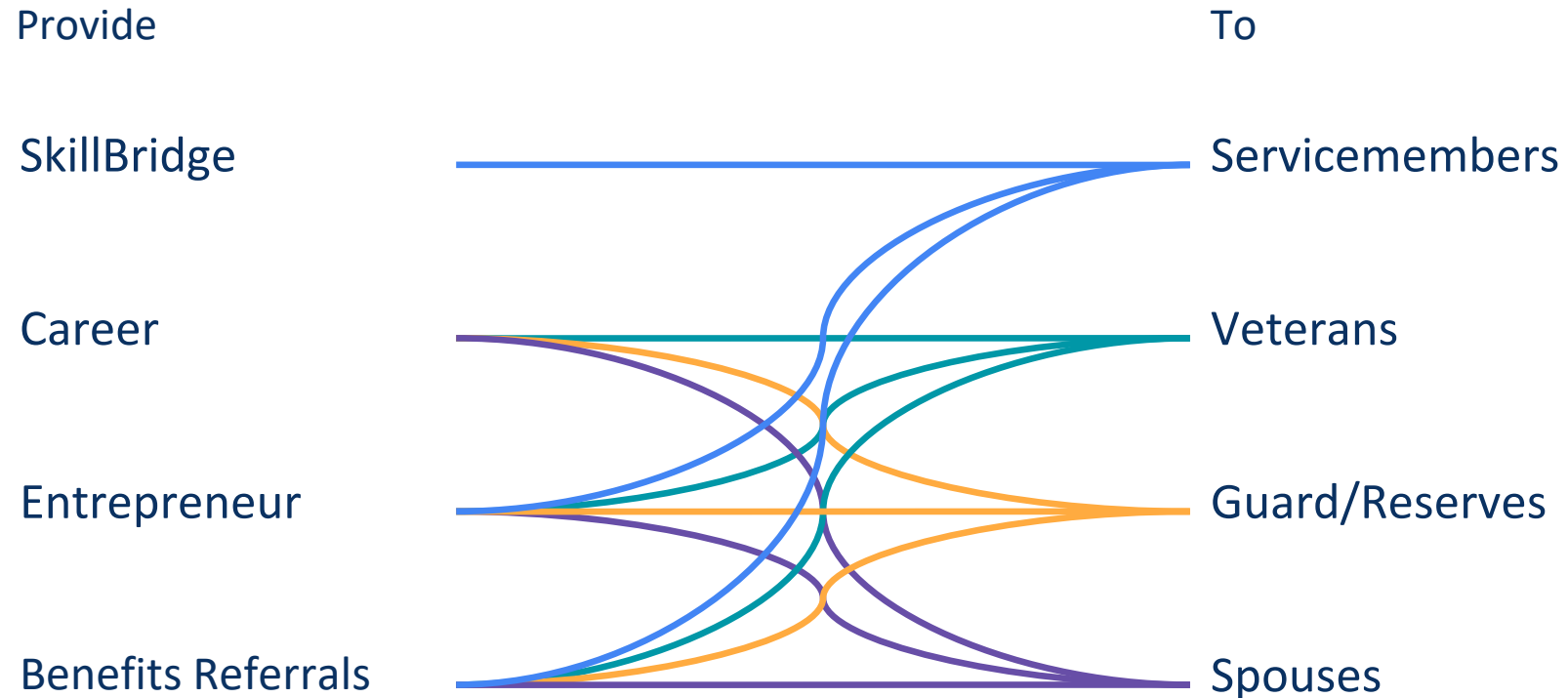
- Reoriented VETS Program to align better with state's REACH Act prioritizing certificate based training
- Spouses eligible for additional Program activities
- Codified collaboration with several state agencies towards veteran and spouse success
 - Commerce, DOH, DBPR, etc
- Renewed USDA/NIFA grant for veteran agriculture training - 3 years AGVets

2025

- Secured recurring appropriations for VETS Program

VETS Program

Primary Services, s. 295.22, F.S.



who make, or want to make, Florida their home

VETS Program

SkillBridge Partners

Florida Highway Patrol	Department of Commerce	Department of Children and Families
Department of Veterans Affairs	Department of Management Services	Department of Revenue
Pasco County Sheriff	Ares Technical	Okaloosa County Sheriff
EnterSource	The Haskell Company	Largo Police Department
Bridgestone Americas	S&B Metal Products	Knights Armament
SRI Management	Maritech Marine	Amentum
Emerald Coast Wildlife Refuge	96th OSS	Duos Technologies
Titusville Police Department	NextEra Energy	Kaleidoscope Interventions
Jacksonville Sheriff	Marion County Sheriff	SkyWarrior Flight Training
Vertol Systems Company	Fish & Wildlife Commission	Alachua County
CAP Government	Aerohead	Holladay Aviation
HT Hackney	Argo Cyber Security	Walton County

VETS Program

Entrepreneur Partners

Partner	Location	Modeling	Getting Started	Growth	Workshop	Networking
26 West Entrepreneurship Center/State College of FL	Sarasota/Manatee	1			4	4
Action Zone	Hillsborough	2				4
Florida Atlantic University	Palm Beach	1	1	1	2	4
Florida Gulf Coast University	Lee	1	1	1	4	3
Nova Southeastern University/Alan B. Levan	Broward	1	1	1	4	4
Sparkling a Change for Veterans	Escambia/Santa Rosa/Walton	1	1			2
St Petersburg College	Pinellas	2				
SWFL, Inc	Lee				4	6
Valor2Venture	Duval	1	1	1	4 virtual	2
Veterans Entrepreneurship Initiative	Orange	3 with 1 virtual	1	1	8 with 4 virtual	5



Additional Programs

AGVets Program

- Program: 10 veterans complete 6 month hands-on training at agriculture research farms and ranches while receiving an educational stipend
- Funded under United States Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture through three-year grant



Additional Programs

UF/HASTE Program

- Program: 10 veterans complete 6 month hardware security training at University of Florida and at home while earning \$10,000 educational stipend
 - 10 veterans are training with graduation in November 2025
- Funded under University of Florida through a National Science Foundation three-year grant



Outreach

Veterans Florida and 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

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
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Michael Harvey
CEO and Founder,
Octanium Corporation
ENTREPRENEUR

Drake Ladner
Assistant Project Manager,
ESA South
SKILLBRIDGE

Adam Ogburn
Field Technician,
UF/IFAS SkillsBridge
AGRICULTURE

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



SESSION SPOTLIGHT
VETERANS IN THE LEGISLATURE

REP. MICHELLE SALZMAN
U.S. Army Veteran

VETERANS FLORIDA
Your Pursuit • Our Power



Pursue a Career in Cybersecurity
Veterans Hardware Security Training and Education

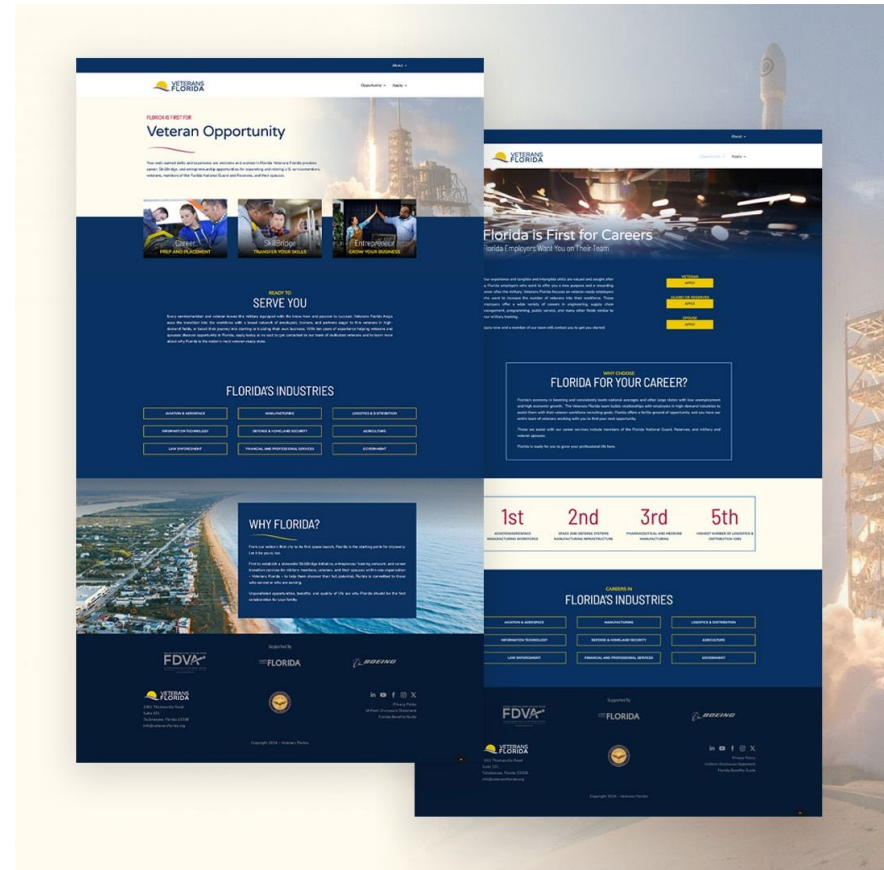
VETS-HASTE
Available for veterans with experience and interest in a career with digital devices or experience in STEM fields. The program employs hands-on learning to equip you with the basics of hardware security and microelectronics that you will need for an internship with industry leaders.

Interested?
Apply now and a Veterans Florida team member will contact you with more information.

DETAILS
The program starts April 2024 and schedules in October. Selected participants will receive \$150,000 stipend and an additional \$2,500 for travel to UF for registration, lectures and graduation.

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VETERANS FLORIDA
Your Pursuit • Our Power

WWW.VETERANSFLORIDA.ORG



VETERANS FLORIDA
Veteran Opportunity

Florida is First for Careers
Florida Employers Want You on Their Team

FLORIDA'S INDUSTRIES

WHY FLORIDA?

1st 2nd 3rd 5th

FLORIDA'S INDUSTRIES

FDVA
FLORIDA
SKILLBRIDGE

Outreach

Outreach Events

General Public Event	Where	When
Jax Sea & Sky	Jacksonville Beach	Oct 24-25, 2025
Blue Angels Homecoming	Pensacola NAS	Nov 14-15, 2025
St Pete Grand Prix and Salute to Service	St Petersburg	Feb 27 - Mar 1, 2026



Outreach

Additional Outreach Updates

- Attended Boeing/Embry Riddle Cici and Hyatt Brown Research Center Ribbon Cutting in Daytona Beach, Sep 10, 2025
 - Visited with Senator Tom Wright,
 - COL Long Space Florida CEO,
 - Danielle Getty Boeing Partnerships Manager,
 - Mike Ferro Boeing Florida Legislative Affairs,
 - P. Barry Butler, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University President
- Joining Space Florida and others for a NASA based initiative to bring and train aerospace-related workforce to Florida, ORBIT
- NH and SC contacting us about how to establish statewide SkillBridge initiatives like Florida's, through NASDVA



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
2023-24	239
Total	1,792

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
2023-24	1,368	244
Total	6,343	1,411

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
2023-24	88
Total	220

2026-27 Priorities

- Allows Workforce Grant funds to go to individuals as stipends while training at a UF/IFAS **AGVets** facility (grant funds currently only available to employers); opens training to spouses
- Renames Veterans Employment and Training Services Program to **Veterans Florida Opportunity Program**
- Adds executive branch ex officio nonvoting Board member



VETERANS FLORIDA

Joe Marino
Executive Director
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The Florida Senate
APPEARANCE RECORD

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

Program Update
Bill Number or Topic

11/4/2025
Meeting Date
SMVDHS
Committee

Amendment Barcode (if applicable)

Name Joe Marino Phone 850 322 2093

Address 3301 Thomasville Rd Suite 101 Email marino@veteransflorida.org
Street
Tallahassee FL 32308
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

☐ 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)

CourtSmart Tag Report

Room: SB 301

Case No.:

Type:

Caption: Senate Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security

Judge:

Started: 11/4/2025 10:02:59 AM

Ends: 11/4/2025 10:57:02 AM **Length:** 00:54:04

10:03:00 AM Chair Wright calls meeting to order
10:03:07 AM Roll call
10:03:19 AM Quorum announced
10:03:24 AM Pledge of Allegiance led by Senator Truenow
10:03:43 AM Chair with opening comments
10:04:05 AM Tab 1 SB 96 Dental Care for Veterans
10:04:19 AM Senator Sharief explains the bill
10:04:51 AM Amendment Barcode 803306
10:05:02 AM Senator Sharief explains the amendment
10:06:29 AM Senator Truenow
10:06:33 AM Senator Sharief
10:06:44 AM Senator Truenow
10:06:53 AM Senator Sharief
10:07:33 AM Chair Wright
10:07:46 AM Senator Sharief
10:08:19 AM Chair Wright
10:08:55 AM Senator Sharief
10:09:26 AM Chair Wright
10:09:28 AM Senator Sharief
10:09:30 AM Chair Wright
10:09:38 AM Senator Sharief
10:09:45 AM Chair Wright
10:09:58 AM Senator Sharief
10:10:12 AM Senator Truenow
10:10:20 AM Senator Sharief
10:10:58 AM Senator Burgess
10:12:44 AM Chair Wright
10:13:29 AM Senator Sharief
10:13:48 AM Amendment is adopted
10:13:53 AM Back on the Bill as amended
10:13:56 AM Appearance Forms
10:14:02 AM Harrison Lundy waives
10:14:07 AM Nolan Wilson waives
10:14:21 AM Matt Herndon waives
10:14:33 AM Senator Jones
10:15:24 AM Senator Burgess
10:16:26 AM Senator Sharief
10:16:30 AM Chair Wright
10:17:31 AM Senator Sharief
10:19:02 AM Roll call
10:19:14 AM CS/SB 96 is reported favorably
10:19:33 AM Chair to Vice-Chair Burgess

10:19:37 AM Tab 2 SPB 7000 OGSR/Persons Provided Public Emergency Shelter
10:19:49 AM Senator Wright explains the proposed bill
10:20:40 AM Senator Burgess
10:20:52 AM Senator Truenow moves SPB 7000 as a committee bill
10:20:56 AM Motion is adopted
10:20:58 AM Roll call
10:21:07 AM SPB 7000 is reported favorably
10:21:17 AM Tab 3 SPB 7002 OGSR/Department of Military Affairs/United States Department of Defense
10:21:27 AM Senator Wright explains the proposed bill
10:22:28 AM Senator Sharief moves SPB 7002 as a committee bill
10:22:31 AM Motion is adopted
10:22:34 AM Roll call
10:22:41 AM SPB 7002 is reported favorably
10:22:50 AM Chair to Chair Wright
10:23:09 AM Tab 4 Presentation by the Florida Veterans Foundation on Programs, Services and Achievements
10:23:16 AM Dr. Pia Woodley, Lieutenant Commander (Retired), United States Navy, Chair, presents
10:34:00 AM Senator Burgess
10:34:56 AM Dr. Woodley
10:35:05 AM Senator Sharief
10:35:25 AM Dr. Woodley
10:35:31 AM Chair Wright
10:35:52 AM Dr. Woodley
10:36:04 AM Chair Wright
10:36:11 AM Dr. Woodley
10:36:35 AM Tab 5 Presentation by Veterans Florida on Veteran Workforce Recruitment and Training Programs
10:36:49 AM Mr. Joe Marino, Executive Director presents
10:53:45 AM Senator Sharief
10:54:21 AM Mr. Marino
10:55:08 AM Chair Wright
10:55:31 AM Mr. Marino
10:55:52 AM Chair Wright
10:56:50 AM Senator Jones moves to adjourn
10:56:54 AM Meeting adjourned