



THE FLORIDA SENATE
SENATOR BEN ALBRITTON
President

For Immediate Release
June 6, 2025

Contact: Julie Rogers
(850) 487-5750

Enhanced Outreach and Support Services for Florida Veterans & Families Signed into Law
SB 116 by Senator Burgess boosts access to support services, focuses on key veteran needs

Tallahassee—Senate Bill (SB) 116, Veterans, by Senator Danny Burgess (R-Zephyrhills), was signed into law today by Florida Governor Ron DeSantis. The legislation expands support services for United States military veterans and their families, enhances coordination of health care services, incorporates mental health training, and increases the availability of adult day care programs to serve veterans who require full-time care.

“Today is a monumental day for Florida veterans,” said Senator Burgess, who previously served as Executive Director of the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs (FDVA) and currently serves as a Major in the U.S. Army Reserve. “I am grateful to Governor Ron DeSantis for signing this life-changing bill into law. SB 116 prioritizes veterans, especially those elderly or disabled, and their families through the expansion of adult day care facilities and support services, fulfilling a long-standing vision that began during my time in the Florida House. Veterans now will have greater access to daytime care, offering flexibility and respite for working family caregivers while enhancing the quality of life for veterans through therapeutic services, social engagement, and peer support.”

“Thank you, Governor DeSantis, for your continued support of our U.S. military veterans and your commitment to making Florida the most military- and veteran-friendly state in the nation,” said Senate President Ben Albritton (R-Wauchula). “The sacrifice of our service men and women is unparalleled; they risk their lives every day in service for our country. When our veterans face a crisis, it can be challenging to know where to turn. This bill strengthens vital veteran outreach and services, especially in addressing veteran suicide. One veteran suicide is one too many. By expanding mental health training to help recognize risk indicators, this legislation plays a key role in bridging that gap and saving lives.”

Enhancing Health Survey and Coordination

The bill expands the FDVA’s current voluntary survey of veteran needs, with a particular focus on health care to enhance veteran awareness of existing federal, state, or community programs available. This information will help the FDVA evaluate how to help veterans take full advantage of these services. The bill also requires the FDVA to coordinate with the U.S. Department of Defense and local veterans service offices to engage servicemembers returning home to or

Enhanced Outreach and Support Services for Florida Veterans & Families Signed into Law

Page 2

retiring in Florida. The bill appropriates additional funds to the FDVA to implement these provisions.

Expanding Mental Health Training

The bill adds mental health training to the Veteran Suicide Prevention Training Pilot Program, expanding the program to train participants to identify indicators of elevated mental health risk. The bill appropriates \$300,000 to the FDVA to implement the expanded pilot program.

Improving Coordination between Veterans Florida and FDVA

The bill requires the state-run non-profit Florida Is for Veterans, Inc. (Veterans Florida) to advise the FDVA when it identifies military personnel and spouse needs that can be served by the department.

Increasing Adult Day Health Care Programs

In 2023, the Legislature authorized the FDVA to provide adult day health care programs, which assist caregivers of veterans who require around-the-clock care. The first veteran adult day care center is planned as part of the new veterans facility campus in Collier County. SB 116 takes the next step in providing adult day care options for veterans, requiring the FDVA to develop a plan to establish adult day health care facilities across Florida to serve veterans and their families. The FDVA would report recommendations on the needs of veterans, where to locate these facilities, and the anticipated costs of building and operating the programs. The bill appropriates additional funds to FDVA to develop the plan.

For more information, please visit www.FLSenate.gov.

#