

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

CS/SB 184 — Military and Veterans Affairs

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

Housing Rental Applications for Military Servicemembers

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

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

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

Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame

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

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

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

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

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

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

Florida National Guard Commercial Driver License Testing Pilot Program

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

Military and Overseas Voting Assistance Task Force

Finally, the bill establishes the Military and Overseas Voting Assistance Task Force (task force) within the Department of State to study issues involving the development and implementation of an online voting system that allows absent members of the uniformed services to electronically submit voted ballots. The task force consists of the following 11 members:

- The Secretary of State or his or her designee;
- The Adjutant General or his or her designee;
- The executive director of the Agency for State Technology or his or her designee;
- One member of the Senate appointed by the President of the Senate;
- One member of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;
- Three supervisors of elections appointed by the Florida State Association of Supervisors of Elections; and
- Three individuals appointed by the Secretary of State with relevant expertise in computers, the Internet, or other associated technologies.

The Secretary of State must submit a report by the task force to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by July 1, 2017, that recommends whether or not the state should pursue the development and implementation of an online voting system for absent uniformed services voters. If the task force recommends pursuit of an online

voting system, the report must include steps for developing and implementing such a system. The task force expires upon submission of the report.

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

Vote: Senate 39-0; House 113-0