

Committee on Appropriations

CS/CS/HB 1285 — Florida State Guard

by Appropriations Committee; State Affairs Committee; and Rep. Giallombardo and others

The bill makes permanent the Florida State Guard (guard), a volunteer force directed to protect and defend the public from threats to public safety and to augment existing state and local agencies. The guard may also provide support under an Emergency Management Assistance Compact to other states.

The bill revises the structure of the guard by creating a Division of the State Guard within the Department of Military Affairs. The department will provide administrative support and services to the division, which is otherwise autonomous.

The division will be headed by a director, who must have served at least 5 years as a servicemember of the United States Armed Forces, United States Reserve Forces, or Florida National Guard. Administrative duties for the guard currently assigned to the Adjutant General are transferred to the director.

The Governor will appoint the director, subject to Senate confirmation, commission all volunteer personnel, and activate and deactivate the guard.

The bill creates a specialized force within the guard to assist other law enforcement agencies. The specialized force is authorized to bear arms, detect, and apprehend when activated. Only certified law enforcement officers will have the same law enforcement authority as the law enforcement agency with which they are working when activated.

The bill increases the maximum number of volunteers in the guard from 400 to 1,500, and authorizes volunteers to be compensated for their service at rates established by the director, subject to legislative appropriation.

The General Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 provides \$107.6 million in appropriations from the General Revenue Fund for the Florida State Guard.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2023.

Vote: Senate 28-11; House 91-20