

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2023 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Health Policy

CS/CS/HB 139 — Benefits, Training, and Employment for Veterans and Their Spouses

by Appropriations Committee; Healthcare Regulation Subcommittee; and Rep. Woodson and others (CS/SB 858 by Health Policy Committee and Senators Torres, Wright, Avila, Brodeur, Simon, Powell, Stewart, Osgood, Thompson, Collins, Davis, Harrell, Book, Jones, and Garcia)

The bill expands the purposes of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs and Florida Is For Veterans, Inc., to include veterans' spouses. The bill establishes the Office of Veteran Licensure Services (OVLS) within the Department of Health (DOH) to assist active duty members of the U.S. Armed Forces, the U.S. Reserve Forces, the National Guard, and veterans and their spouses in obtaining health care practitioner licensure under s. 456.024, F.S. The bill requires the executive director of the OVLS to be a veteran.

The bill requires the OVLS to:

- Provide information, guidance, direction, and assistance with the licensure process;
- Coordinate with each health practitioner regulatory board, or the department if there is no board, to expedite all applications submitted pursuant to s. 456.024, F.S.;
- Refer an individual requesting assistance with résumé writing and proofreading, job application completion, and interviewing skills and techniques, or information about educational or employment opportunities in health care professions, to Florida Is For Veterans, Inc.; and
- Submit a report by Veterans Day each year to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The report must categorize each individual served as an active duty member, a veteran, or a veteran's spouse and must include specific data.

The bill also makes technical changes to statutory provisions related to the inclusion of veterans' spouses and the waiver of certain fees for veterans and their spouses.

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

Vote: Senate 40-0; House 115-0