

SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

BILL: SB 2562
SPONSOR: Senator Crist
SUBJECT: Official state designations
DATE: April 2, 2003 REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Vickers</u>	<u>Krasovsky</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>Favorable</u>
2.	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u>GO</u>	<u> </u>
3.	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
4.	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
5.	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
6.	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

I. Summary:

This bill designates the merchant marine vessel *SS American Victory* as the official state flagship. This Tampa-based ship currently serves as a memorial and museum ship honoring the contributions of the United States Merchant Marine.

This bill creates section 15.0465 of the Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

History of the *SS American Victory* – Construction of the 455-foot *SS American Victory* was completed on June 20, 1945, at the California Shipyard in Los Angeles, California. This ship sailed the Pacific Ocean during the final days of World War II, supplying America’s war effort and assisting in ferrying military equipment and troops back to the States. After the war, the *SS American Victory*, under the auspices of the Marshal Plan and the United Nations, sailed the world delivering foodstuffs, manufacturing machinery, and raw materials to countries devastated by the destruction caused by World War II. During the Korean War and the Vietnam Conflict, the *SS American Victory* transported cargo, fuel and ammunition to these areas from ports in the United States and elsewhere.¹

Following service during the Vietnam War, the *SS American Victory* was de-activated on October 24, 1969, and placed in the James River Reserve Fleet (JRRF), located on the James River near Norfolk, Virginia. The *SS American Victory* was withdrawn from the JRRF on March 13, 1985, to participate in a government-sponsored Victory Ship Validation Program. The program was designed to gauge the time and expense necessary to activate mothballed Victory-class ships. The ship was brought to full operational status and performed sea trials. In June of

¹ Historical information obtained through the American Victory Mariners Memorial and Museum Ship website.

1985, after a \$2.5 million restoration, the *SS American Victory* sailed for of 26 hours before returning to its anchorage in the JRRF, where it remained until 1999.

The American Victory Mariners Memorial and Museum Ship – In 1998, Congress authorized the conveyance of the *SS American Victory* to the Tampa-based organization, The Victory Ship, Inc. In 1999, the ship was towed from Virginia to Tampa for major renovation. In 2000, the *SS American Victory* was relocated to its permanent home in Tampa Bay adjacent to the Florida Aquarium where it has undergone additional restoration.

Once fully restored and operational, the *SS American Victory* will be the centerpiece of the American Victory Mariners Memorial and Museum Ship, an interactive exhibit honoring America's Merchant Marine, and highlighting the Tampa Bay area's maritime heritage. The *SS American Victory* will also serve as a "Relive History" cruising ship, providing guests with the opportunity to experience service on a merchant marine vessel.

Chapter 15, F.S., designates numerous objects as official symbols of the State of Florida. For example, the sabal palm is designated as the Florida state tree, and the Florida panther is designated the official Florida state animal.

III. **Effect of Proposed Changes:**

The bill creates s. 15.0465, F.S., designating the *SS American Victory* as the official state flagship.

IV. **Constitutional Issues:**

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. **Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:**

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

This bill will have no fiscal impact on the state.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Amendments:

None.

This Senate staff analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's sponsor or the Florida Senate.
