

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF FINAL BILL ANALYSIS

BILL #: CS/HB 357 Special Observances
SPONSOR(S): State Affairs Committee, Holcomb and others
TIED BILLS: **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** CS/SB 346

FINAL HOUSE FLOOR ACTION: 117 Y's 0 N's **GOVERNOR'S ACTION:** Approved

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CS/HB 357 passed the House on January 24, 2024, and subsequently passed the Senate on February 14, 2024.

Florida Law provides designations for legal holidays and special observances. Recognition of a legal holiday or special observance could apply statewide or may be limited to a particular region of the state. Some holidays or special observances may also require a commemoration or observance of the day, week, or month.

Florida currently recognizes "Veterans' Day" as a legal holiday that is celebrated annually on November 11, and in 2023, the Legislature established "Veterans Week" as a special observance.

The bill replaces "Veterans Week" special observance by designating the month of November as "Veterans Appreciation Month." The Governor may issue an annual proclamation designating the month of November as Veterans Appreciation Month and encouraging counties, municipalities, public schools, and Florida residents to observe the occasion by creating special programs and events to show appreciation for the veterans who have served the United States.

The bill does not appear to have a fiscal impact on the state or local governments.

The bill was approved by the Governor on April 5, 2024, ch. 2024-65, L.O.F., and will become effective on July 1, 2024.

I. SUBSTANTIVE INFORMATION

A. EFFECT OF CHANGES:

Background

Legal Holidays and Special Observances

Florida law designates a number of legal holidays and special observances.¹ Recognition of a legal holiday or special observance may apply statewide or may be limited to a particular region. For example, “Gasparilla Day”² is a legal holiday observed only in Hillsborough County, while “Bill of Rights Day”³ applies throughout the state.

Depending on the holiday or special observance, certain actions may be required to be performed for the commemoration or observance of the date, day, or month. For example, April 2 is designated as “Florida State Day” which is to be known as “Pascua Florida Day,”⁴ regardless of whether the Governor issues a proclamation. However, the Governor is required to proclaim September 11 as “9/11 Hero’s Day” and public schools must observe such day.⁵

Florida law currently recognizes 21 legal holidays⁶ and 38 special observances.⁷ The state also recognizes nine paid holidays that are observed by all state branches and agencies.⁸

Veterans Recognition

“Veterans’ Day” is a legal holiday that is celebrated annually on November 11.⁹ In 2023, “Veterans Week” was established by the Legislature as a special observance, which begins on the Sunday preceding November 11 of each year.¹⁰ However, if November 11 is on a Sunday, then Veterans Week begins on that day.¹¹

Veterans in Florida

Each year, about 250,000 servicemembers end military service as veterans and either reenter the civilian workforce or enroll in higher education.¹² Florida is home to 20 major military installations¹³ and

¹ See ch. 683, F.S.

² S. 683.08, F.S.

³ S. 683.25, F.S.

⁴ S. 683.06(1), F.S.

⁵ S. 683.335(1), F.S.

⁶ S. 683.01, F.S. Legal holidays that are also public holidays include Sunday, the first day of each week; New Year’s Day, January 1; Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr., January 15; Birthday of Robert E. Lee, January 19; Lincoln’s Birthday, February 12; Susan B. Anthony’s Birthday, February 15; Washington’s Birthday, the third Monday in February; Good Friday; Pascua Florida Day, April 2; Confederate Memorial Day, April 26; Memorial Day, the last Monday in May; Birthday of Jefferson Davis, June 3; Flag Day, June 14; Independence Day, July 4; Labor Day, the first Monday in September; Columbus Day and Farmers’ Day, the second Monday in October; Veterans’ Day, November 11; General Election Day; Thanksgiving Day, the fourth Thursday in November; Christmas Day, December 25; and Shrove Tuesday, sometimes also known as “Mardi Gras,” in counties where carnival associations are organized for the purpose of celebrating the same.

⁷ See ss. 683.04 - 683.335, F.S.

⁸ S. 110.117(1), F.S. Paid state holidays include New Year’s Day, the Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr., Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veterans’ Day, Thanksgiving Day, the Friday after Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day.

⁹ S. 683.01(1)(q), F.S.

¹⁰ S. 683.1475, F.S.

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, *Your VA Transition Assistance Program (TAP)*, available at <https://www.benefits.va.gov/transition/tap.asp> (last visited February 15, 2024).

¹³ Florida Department of Commerce, *Military Bases – Military Base Encroachment*, available at <https://floridajobs.org/community-planning-and-development/programs/community-planning-table-of-contents/military-base-encroachment> (last visited February 15, 2024).

65,159 active duty military personnel with 37,833 more in the National Guard or in reserve.¹⁴ Florida is also home to the nation's third-largest veteran population with 1,430,000 veterans.¹⁵

Effect of the Bill

The bill replaces the "Veterans Week" special observance by designating the month of November each year as "Veterans Appreciation Month."

The Governor may issue a proclamation annually designating the month of November as Veterans Appreciation Month and encouraging counties, municipalities, public schools, and Florida residents to observe the occasion by creating special programs and events to show appreciation for the veterans who have served the United States.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

None.

¹⁴ Department of Defense, Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC), *DoD Personnel, Workforce Reports & Publications - Military and Civilian Personnel by Service/Agency by State/Country (September 2023)*, available at <https://dwp.dmdc.osd.mil/dwp/app/dod-data-reports/workforce-reports> (last visited February 15, 2024)

¹⁵ Florida Department of Veterans Affairs. *Fast Facts*, available at <https://www.floridavets.org/our-veterans/profilefast-facts/> (last visited February 15, 2024).