

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: HB 685 Florida Veterans' History Program

SPONSOR(S): Salzman

TIED BILLS: **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** SB 408

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR or BUDGET/POLICY CHIEF
1) Local Administration, Federal Affairs & Special Districts Subcommittee	15 Y, 0 N	Mwakyanjala	Darden
2) Infrastructure & Tourism Appropriations Subcommittee			
3) State Affairs Committee			

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

The Department of State's Division of Arts and Culture (Division) is the state's arts agency. The Division promotes access to cultural opportunities through various programs and grants. The University of Florida conducts the Veterans History Project, in conjunction with the Library of Congress, in order to collect the oral histories of veterans for the Library of Congress's Veterans History Project.

The bill creates the Florida Veterans' History Program within the Division. The program will collect and preserve the stories and experiences of Florida's veterans and the State of Florida's military contributions throughout the nation's history. The Division may request assistance with the program from the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

The bill may require the Division to incur additional expenses in meeting the requirement to seek out and identify veterans to share their experiences

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Present Situation

Department of State

The Department of State (DOS),¹ is composed of six divisions: Elections, Historical Resources, Corporations, Library and Information Services, Arts and Culture, and Administration.² The head of the department is the Secretary of State (Secretary). The Secretary is appointed by Governor, subject to Senate confirmation. The functions of the Secretary including performing the duties of the custodian of state records set in the Florida Constitution.³ The Secretary also serves as the state protocol officer and, in consultation with the Governor and other governmental officials, develops, maintains, publishes, and distributes the state protocol manual.⁴

Division of Arts and Culture

The DOS's Division of Arts and Culture (Division) is the state's arts agency. The Division promotes access to cultural opportunities through various programs and grants. The Division provides funding for:

- Arts in education;
- Local arts agencies;
- State service organizations;
- Museums;
- Theater;
- Dance;
- Folk art;
- Literature;
- Media arts;
- Multidisciplinary;
- Music; and
- Visual arts programs and projects.⁵

One of the duties of the Division is to operate the Florida Folklife Program (Program).⁶ Established in 1979, the Program documents, presents, and preserves Florida's vibrant folklife and traditional culture.⁷ This task is accomplished by identifying, researching, interpreting, and presenting folk arts, performers, folklore, traditions, customs, and cultural heritages.⁸ The Division is responsible for publishing written materials to disseminate information about the folk cultural resources of the state. The Division is authorized to enter contracts and agreements with other entities to carry out its duties and to accept donations.⁹

The Division employs a state folklorist to organize activities of the program.¹⁰ The state folklorist is advised by the Florida Folklife Council, a seven-member body appointed by the Secretary.¹¹ The

¹ S. 20.10, F.S.

² S. 20.10(2), F.S.

³ S. 20.10(1), F.S.

⁴ S. 15.01(1), F.S.

⁵ Fla. Dept. of State, Division of Arts and Culture, *Mission*, <https://dos.fl.gov/cultural/about-us/mission/> (last visited Jan. 13, 2024).

⁶ S. 265.802, F.S.

⁷ Fla. Dept. of State, *Florida Folklife Program*, <https://dos.fl.gov/historical/folklife/> (last visited Jan. 13, 2024).

⁸ S. 265.802(1), F.S.

⁹ S. 265.802(2), F.S.

¹⁰ S. 265.802(4), F.S.

¹¹ S. 265.803, F.S.

council is responsible for helping to stimulate public interest in folklife, recommending potential projects, and assisting in developing proposals and grant applications.¹²

Folklife informants and participants may be advanced or reimbursed travel and per diem expenses for in the manner provided for state employees.¹³

Veterans Oral History Projects

Several research institutions in the state have active programs that gather oral history from our nation's veterans. The University of Florida organizes the Veterans History Project (VHP) within the university's Samuel Proctor Oral History Program (SPOHP).¹⁴ The VHP, founded in 2000, is a collection of over 300 oral history interviews with veterans from military conflicts ranging from the Civil War to the present day. The VHP came into existence after the Library of Congress approached SPOHP for assistance in collecting oral histories from World War II veterans for the nationwide Veteran's History Project.¹⁵ The University of Central Florida collects and preserves oral histories from Central Florida veterans as a part of its UCF Community Veterans History Project.¹⁶ These histories, which have been collected since the fall of 2010, are available through the UCF library and will also contribute to the Library of Congress's VHP.

Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill establishes the Florida Veterans' History Program (FVHP) within the Division as a Florida Folklife Program. The FVHP will collect and preserve the stories and experiences of Florida's veterans and the State of Florida's military contributions throughout the nation's history.¹⁷ The bill authorizes the Division to request assistance with the FVHP from the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

The bill requires the Division's folklorists to seek out and identify veterans who are willing to share their experiences to collect and preserve the stories and experiences of Florida's veterans and the State of Florida's military contributions. The bill authorizes the Division to adopt rules to implement the FVHP and to contract with a third-party vendor to fulfil these responsibilities.

B. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1: Creates s. 265.8021, F.S., creating the Florida Veterans' History Program.

Section 2: Provides an effective date of July 1, 2024.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None.

¹² S. 265.803(2), F.S.

¹³ S. 265.802(3), F.S.

¹⁴ The Samuel Proctor Oral History Program is an oral history program within the University of Florida whose mission is to gather, preserve, and promote living histories of individuals from all walks of life. Univ. of Fla., Samuel Proctor Oral History Program, *Our Mission*, <https://oral.history.ufl.edu/welcome/mission/> (last visited Jan. 12, 2024).

¹⁵ Univ. of Fla., Samuel Proctor Oral History Program, *Veterans History Project*, <https://oral.history.ufl.edu/projects/vhp/> (last visited Jan. 12, 2024).

¹⁶ Univ of Central Fla, *UCF Community Veterans History Project*, <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/veteranshistoryproject/> (last visited Jan. 12, 2024).

¹⁷ The term "veteran" means a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released under honorable conditions only or who later received an upgraded discharge under honorable conditions, notwithstanding any action by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs on individuals discharged or released with other than honorable discharges. S. 1.01(14), F.S.

2. Expenditures:

The Division may incur additional expenses to meet the requirement to seek out and identify veterans to share their experiences.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

None.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

Not applicable. This bill does not appear to require counties or municipalities to spend funds or take action requiring the expenditures of funds; reduce the authority that counties or municipalities have to raise revenues in the aggregate; or reduce the percentage of state tax shared with counties or municipalities.

2. Other:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

The bill authorizes the Division of Arts and Culture in the Department of State to adopt rules to implement the program created by the bill.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

IV. AMENDMENTS/COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES

None.