



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

*Honoring those who served U.S.*

## **Veterans' Update Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs January 11, 2016**

### **Legislation**

- The 2016 Florida Legislative Session begins Jan. 12, 2016 and ends March 12, 2016.

Here is a quick summary of proposed veteran-related legislation awaiting initial action in Florida's 2016 Legislative Session. *Note: Some listed bills have companion legislation in the other legislative body.*

### ***Florida House of Representatives***

- **HB 83 - Relating to Identification Cards and Driver Licenses** - *The word "Veteran" shall be exhibited on the identification card of a veteran upon the payment of an additional \$1 fee for the identification card and the presentation of a copy of the person's DD Form 214, issued by the United States Department of Defense, or another acceptable form specified by the Department of Veterans' Affairs. Until a veteran's identification card is next renewed, the veteran may have the word "Veteran" added to his or her identification card upon surrender of his or her current identification card, payment of a \$2 fee to be deposited into the Highway Safety Operating Trust Fund, and presentation of a copy of his or her DD Form 214 or another acceptable form specified by the Department of Veterans' Affairs. If the applicant is not conducting any other transaction affecting the identification card, a replacement identification card **shall** be issued with the word "Veteran" without payment of the fee required in s. 51 322.21(1)(f)3. The word "Veteran" shall be exhibited on the driver license of a veteran upon the payment of an additional \$1 fee for the license and the presentation of a copy of the person's DD Form 214, issued by the United States Department of Defense, or another acceptable form specified by the Department of Veterans' Affairs. Until a veteran's license is next renewed, the veteran may have the word "Veteran" added to his or her license upon surrender of his or her current license, payment of a \$2 fee to be deposited into the Highway Safety Operating Trust Fund, and presentation of a copy of his or her DD Form 214 or another acceptable form specified by the Department of Veterans' Affairs. If the applicant is not conducting any other transaction affecting the driver license, a replacement license **shall** be issued with the word "Veteran" without payment of the fee required in s. 322.21(1)(e). (See SB 158.)*
- **HB 235 - Relating to Parking for Disabled Veterans** - *(See SB 222.)*

- **HB 263 - Relating to Small Business Financial Assistance** - Creates Veterans Employment Small Business Grant Program within Department of Veterans' Affairs; directs Florida Is For Veterans, Inc., to administer program; authorizes corporation to accept & administer moneys appropriated for such grants; limits grant amount small businesses may receive under program; provides requirements for receiving grants; requires corporation to provide certain notice to regional small business development centers; provides for program termination. Effective Date: July 1, 2016. (See SB 404.)
- **HB 269 – Relating to Services for Combat Veterans and Their Families** - Requires DCF to establish Florida Combat Veterans' Care Coordination Program to provide combat veterans & their families with behavioral healthcare referral & care coordination services & to contract with managing entities to enter into agreements with Florida 211 Network participants for such services; provides for statewide delivery of services by program teams; requires Florida 211 Network participants to collect & submit certain information to DCF; requires DCF to submit report to Governor & Legislature; provides appropriation. (See SB 128.)
- **HB 279 - Relating to Annual Sales Tax Holiday for Veterans of the United States Armed Forces** - Creates annual sales tax holiday for veterans of US Armed Forces; specifies items eligible for sales tax holiday; specifies tax treatment of layaways, exchanges, & Internet sales; provides definitions; specifies reporting requirements of retailers; authorizes DOR to adopt emergency rules. (See SB 538.)
- **HB 429 - Relating to Military and Veterans Affairs** - Creates Military & Overseas Voting Assistance Task Force within DOS; provides legislative findings; requires application form for original, renewal, or replacement driver licenses or identification cards to include option for veterans to request information on local, state, & federal benefits & services available as result of military service; requires DHSMV to report veteran contact information monthly to DVA; requires DVA to provide such information to third-party provider & county or city veteran service officers; prohibits third-party provider from selling such information; requires third-party provider to maintain confidentiality of information. (See SB 184.)
- **HB 435 - Relating to Gold Star License Plates** - (See SB 88.)
- **HB 439 - Relating to Mental Health Services in Criminal Justice System** - Expands eligibility for military veterans & servicemembers for certain programs. Expanding the definition of “veteran,” for the purpose of eligibility for veterans’ court, to include veterans who were discharged or released under a general discharge. (See SB 604.)
- **HB 505 – Relating to Voter Identification** - Expanding the list of acceptable forms of identification for certain voter registration applicants to include a Veteran health identification card issued by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. (See SB 666.)
- **HB 511 - Relating to Special License Plates** - Requires money received from sale of Woman Veteran license plates to be used for certain purposes; provides for special license plate to be issued to recipient of Bronze Star. (See SB 518.)
- **HB 581 – Relating to State Veterans’ Nursing Homes** - Directs FDVA to contract for study to determine need for additional state veterans' nursing home & most appropriate county for home; directs FDVA to submit study to Governor & Legislature; provides study criteria for ranking each county according to need; requires FDVA to use specified studies to select new veterans' nursing home sites; directs FDVA to conduct subsequent studies & to submit studies to Governor & Legislature.

- **HB 611 - Relating to Homestead Property Tax Exemptions** - Exempts surviving unremarried spouse of certain deceased veterans from payment of ad valorem taxes for certain homesteads in this state, irrespective of state in which veteran's homestead was located at time of death, if certain conditions are met. *(See SB 804.)*
- **HB 641 – Relating to Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services** - Waives specified license & registration fees for honorably discharged veterans of U.S. Armed Forces, spouses of such veterans, or business entities that have majority ownership held by such veterans or spouses of such veterans.
- **HB 799 – Relating to Out-of-State Fee Waivers for Active Duty Service Members** - Provides that active duty members of Armed Forces of U.S. residing or stationed outside of this state may receive out-of-state fee waivers; requires tuition & fees charged to such students to be below specified amount & for annual report of all out-of-state fee waivers for such individuals. Effective Date: July 1, 2016. *(See SB 944.)*
- **HB 811 – Relating to Homestead Tax Exemption/Spouses of Deceased Combat-disabled Veterans** - Proposes amendment to State Constitution to authorize living spouse of deceased veteran, who upon his or her death was aged 65 or older, partially or permanently disabled as result of combat, & honorably discharged, to receive discount on payment of ad valorem taxes assessed on homestead property based on percentage of veteran's disability & to specify that exemption is transferrable to another residence if spouse remains unmarried & uses residence as his or her primary residence. *(See SB 816 and SB 778 and HB 813.)*
- **HB 813 – Relating to Homestead Tax Exemptions** - Authorizes surviving spouses of certain deceased veterans who owned homesteads to receive homestead tax exemption; specifies duration of such exemption; provides that letter from federal government to appropriate property appraiser establishes evidence of entitlement to exemption; provides for construction of act; provides for contingent effect. Effective Date: July 1, 2016, if HJR 811, or a similar joint resolution having substantially the same specific intent and purpose, is approved by the electors. *(See SB 778 and SB 816 and HB 811).*
- **HB 1321 - Relating to Discounts on Public Park Entrance Fees and Transportation Fares** - Requires counties & municipalities to provide discounts on public park entrance fees to military members, veterans, & spouses & parents of certain deceased military members, law enforcement officers, firefighters, & emergency workers; requires regional transportation authorities to provide discounts on fares & charges to certain disabled veterans. Effective Date: July 1, 2016.
- **HB 7023 – Relating to Ad Valorem Tax Exemption for Deployed Servicemembers** - Expands military operations that qualify certain servicemembers who receive a homestead exemption & were deployed during previous calendar year to receive additional ad valorem tax exemption on that homestead property; provides procedures for grant of exemption. Effective Date: upon becoming a law. *(See SB 160.)*

### **Florida Senate**

- **SB 88 - Relating to Gold Star License Plates** - Amends s. 320.0894, F.S.; expanding certain individuals as qualified for issuance of a Gold Star license plate.
- **SB 128 - Relating to Services for Combat Veterans and Their Families** - Defining the term “combat veteran;” requiring that the Department of Children and Families establish the

*Florida Combat Veterans' Care Coordination Program to provide combat veterans and their families with behavioral health care referral and care coordination services; requiring that the department contract with managing entities to enter into agreements with Florida 211 Network participants for such services, etc.*

- **SB 158 - Relating to Identification Cards and Driver Licenses** – *(See HB 83.)*
- **SB 160 - Relating to Ad Valorem Tax Exemption For Deployed Servicemembers** - *Expands the military operations that qualify a servicemember deployed in support of such an operation in the previous calendar year for an additional ad valorem tax exemption; providing an extended deadline and specifying procedures for filing an application for such tax exemption for a qualifying deployment during the 2014 calendar year, etc. Effective Date: Upon becoming a law, and first applies to ad valorem tax rolls for 2015*
- **SB 184 - Relating to Military and Veterans Affairs** - *Requiring the application form for an original, renewal, or replacement driver license or identification card to include a voluntary checkoff authorizing veterans to request written or electronic information on federal, state, and local benefits and services for veterans; creating the Military and Overseas Voting Assistance Task Force within the Department of State; providing legislative findings regarding continuing education for veterans of the United States Armed Forces, etc.*
- **SB 222 - Relating to Parking for Disabled Veterans** - *Requiring the governing body of each publicly owned or publicly operated airport to grant free parking to any vehicle displaying specified license plates for disabled veterans; clarifying that such license plates, rather than “DV” license plates, are exempt from certain parking fees charged by a county, municipality, or an agency thereof, etc.*
- **SB 404 - Relating to Small Business Financial Assistance** - *Creates the Veterans Employment Small Business Grant Program within the Department of Veterans' Affairs; requiring a small business to apply to and enter into an agreement with the corporation to receive grants; requiring the corporation to notify the appropriate regional small business development center of a small business' participation; providing for termination of the program, etc. (See HB 263.)*
- **SB 518 - Relating to Bronze Star License Plates** - *Creates a special license plate for recipients of the Bronze Star medal, etc.*
- **SB 538 - Relating to Annual Sales Tax Holiday for Veterans of the United States Armed Forces** - *Creates an annual sales tax holiday for veterans; specifying items that are eligible for the sales tax holiday; defining the term “veteran” for purposes of the sales tax holiday, etc. (See HB 279.)*
- **SB 604 - Relating to Mental Health Services in the Criminal Justice System** - *Expands eligibility for military veterans & servicemembers for certain programs. Expanding the definition of “veteran,” for the purpose of eligibility for veterans' court, to include veterans who were discharged or released under a general discharge. (See HB 439.)*
- **SB 626 - Relating to Consumer Credit** – *Authorizes the Office of Financial Regulation to deny a license or take disciplinary action against a person who violates the Military Lending Act or the regulations adopted under that act in connection with a consumer finance loan under the Florida Consumer Finance Act, etc. Effective Date: 10/3/2016. (See HB 717.)*
- **SB 666 - Relating to Voter Identification** – *(See HB 505)*

- **SB 772 – Relating to Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services** - Waives specified license & registration fees for honorably discharged veterans of U.S. Armed Forces, spouses of such veterans, or business entities that have majority ownership held by such veterans or spouses of such veterans. *(See HB 641.)*
- **SB 778 - Relating to Homestead Tax Exemption/Spouses of Combat-related Disabled Veterans** – Joint Resolution proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to authorize the discount on ad valorem taxes on homestead property which is received by certain veterans who have permanent, combat-related disabilities to carry over upon the death of the veteran to the benefit of a surviving spouse until the surviving spouse remarries or sells or otherwise disposes of the property and to specify that the discount is transferrable to another permanent residence if the surviving spouse remains unmarried, etc.
- **SB 804 - Relating to Homestead Property Tax Exemptions** - Exempting the unremarried surviving spouses of certain deceased veterans from payment of ad valorem taxes for certain homesteads in this state, irrespective of the state in which the veteran’s homestead was located at the time of death, if certain conditions are met, etc. *(See HB 611.)*
- **SB 816 - Relating to Homestead Property Tax Discount for Disabled Veterans** - Providing for the transfer of a certain discount on ad valorem taxes on homestead property to the surviving spouse of a specified disabled veteran under certain circumstances; providing for the transfer of the discount by the surviving spouse to a new residence under certain circumstances, etc.
- **SB 918 – Relating to Licensure of Health Care Professionals** - Deleting the requirement that applicants making initial application for certain licensure complete certain courses; providing for the issuance of a license to practice under certain conditions to a military health care practitioner in a profession for which licensure in a state or jurisdiction is not required to practice in the military; providing for the issuance of a temporary professional license under certain conditions to the spouse of an active duty member of the Armed Forces of the United States who is a healthcare practitioner in a profession for which licensure in a state or jurisdiction may not be required, etc. Effective Date: 7/1/2016. *(See HB 941.)*
- **SB 944 – Relating to Out-of-State Fee Waivers for Active Duty Service Members** - Requires state universities, Florida College System institutions, and certain centers to waive out-of-state fees for active duty members of the United States Armed Forces residing or stationed outside of this state; prohibiting tuition and fees charged to such students from exceeding a specified amount, etc. Effective Date: 7/1/2016. *(See HB 799.)*
- **SB 1504 - Relating to Credit For Relevant Military Service** - Providing for the issuance of a license to practice under certain conditions to a military health care practitioner in a profession for which licensure in a state or jurisdiction is not required to practice in the military; requiring the Construction Industry Licensing Board and the Electrical Contractors’ Licensing Board to provide a method by which honorably discharged veterans may apply for licensure, etc. Effective Date: Except as otherwise expressly provided in this act, this act shall take effect July 1, 2016. *(See SB 918 and HB 941.)*
- **SB 7016 - Relating to Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children** - Reenacts provisions of law establishing and implementing the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children and provides for future legislative review and repeal of the Compact on July 1, 2019. The Compact is an agreement between states that

*is designed to assist member states in uniformly addressing key educational transition issues in enrollment, placement, attendance, eligibility, and graduation.*

For more information, please contact FDVA Legislative and Cabinet Affairs Director Colleen Krepstekies at [KrepstekiesC@fdva.state.fl.us](mailto:KrepstekiesC@fdva.state.fl.us) or FDVA Legislative Analyst Jessica Kraynak at [KraynakJ2@fdva.state.fl.us](mailto:KraynakJ2@fdva.state.fl.us).

### **Key Upcoming Events**

- Jan. 19 -- Governor's Veterans Service Award, Deland National Guard Armory

### **Important Dates**

- Jan. 12 – 2016 Florida Legislative Session begins
- Jan. 21 – Florida Defense Support Task Force Meeting, Tallahassee
- March 15 – Florida Presidential Primary

### **Veterans' Home Vacancies**

The following state veterans' nursing home has a couple of vacancies. Subject to daily change.

- Emory L. Bennett State Veterans' Nursing Home in Daytona Beach. Call (386) 274-3460 for more information.

### **Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs**

**Mission:** To advocate with purpose and passion for Florida veterans and link them to superior services, benefits and support.

**Vision:** FDVA is the premier point of entry for Florida veterans to access earned services, benefits and support.

**Motto:** "Honoring those who served U.S."

**Website:** [www.FloridaVets.org](http://www.FloridaVets.org)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/floridaveterans](http://www.facebook.com/floridaveterans)

**LinkedIn:** [www.linkedin.com/company/fdva](http://www.linkedin.com/company/fdva)

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