

Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security

CS/SB 132 — Disabled Parking Permits

by Transportation Committee and Senators Joyner, Dean, Abruzzo, and Altman

The bill allows a permanently and totally disabled veteran to submit a United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) Form Letter (VAFL) 27-333, or its equivalent, to the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles in lieu of a certificate of disability when renewing or replacing a disabled parking permit. Upon request, the USDVA issues a VAFL 27-333 to veterans to certify his or her status as “permanently and totally” disabled due to a service connected disability. The letter must have been issued within the last 12 months and be provided with the application for a renewal or replacement disabled parking permit.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2015.

Vote: Senate 38-0; House 116-0

Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security

CS/CS/CS/HB 185 — Public Records/Active Duty Servicemembers and Families

by Local and Federal Affairs Committee; Government Operations Subcommittee; Veteran and Military Affairs Subcommittee; and Rep. Gaetz and others (CS/CS/SB 674 by Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee; Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security Committee; and Senators Evers, Soto and Altman)

The bill creates a public records exemption for certain identification and location information of current and former military servicemembers, including reservists and National Guard members, who have served since September 11, 2001, and their spouses and dependents. The information that is exempt includes:

- The home address, telephone number, and date of birth of a servicemember, and the telephone number associated with a servicemember's personal communication device;
- The home address, telephone number, date of birth, and place of employment of the spouse or dependent of a servicemember, and the telephone number associated with such spouse's or dependent's personal communication device; and
- The name and location of the school attended by the spouse, or the school or day care facility attended by a dependent, of a servicemember.

The exemption is subject to the Open Government Sunset Review Act and will stand repealed on October 2, 2020, unless reviewed and reenacted by the Legislature. The bill contains a public necessity statement as required by the State Constitution.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.

Vote: Senate 40-0; House 113-0

Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security

CS/CS/HB 329 — Special License Plates

by Economic Affairs Committee; Highway and Waterway Safety Subcommittee; and Rep. Ingram and others (CS/CS/SB 112 by Transportation Committee; Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security Committee; and Senators Hays, Latvala, and Altman)

The bill creates the following six special military license plates:

- Combat Action Ribbon
- Air Force Combat Action Medal
- Distinguished Flying Cross
- World War II Veteran
- Woman Veteran
- Navy Submariner

Upon payment of the annual license tax in s. 320.08, F.S., World War II veterans, women veterans, Navy Submariners, and recipients of the relevant military combat or achievement award may be issued the applicable special license plate created by the bill. With the exception of the “Woman Veteran” plate, revenue generated from the sale of these plates will be deposited into the Grants and Donations Trust Fund and the State Homes for Veterans Trust Fund within the Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs (FDVA) to support the Veterans’ Homes Program. Revenue generated from the “Woman Veteran” plate will be deposited in the FDVA’s Operations and Maintenance Trust Fund for the purpose of creating and implementing programs benefitting women veterans.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2015.

Vote: Senate 37-0; House 116-0

Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security

CS/CS/HB 361 — Military Housing Ad Valorem Tax Exemptions

by Local and Federal Affairs Committee; Finance and Tax Committee; and Reps. Trumbull, Smith, and others (CS/SB 686 by Finance and Tax Committee and Senator Lee)

The bill provides that property of the United States that is currently exempt from taxation includes leasehold interests of and improvements affixed to land if the leasehold interest and improvements are used pursuant to the Military Housing Privatization Initiative of 1996. The bill exempts the actual housing units and directly-related facilities, such as housing maintenance facilities, housing management offices, parks and recreational facilities. The bill provides that it does not apply to public lodging establishments and does not affect existing agreements for municipalities or counties to provide municipal services. Upon becoming law, these provisions will apply retroactively to January 1, 2007.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2015.

Vote: Senate 39-0; House 115-0

Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security

CS/SB 620 — Emergency Management

by Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee and Senators Richter and Altman

The bill provides that the per diem expense reimbursement limitations under s. 112.061(6), F.S., do not apply to state employees traveling on an Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) mission when such expenses are reimbursed pursuant to an amount agreed upon in an interstate mutual aid request for assistance.

The EMAC is an agreement between all 50 states to provide each other mutual assistance in managing an emergency or disaster declared by the governor of the affected state. The EMAC requires a member state that receives aid from another member state pursuant to the EMAC to reimburse the aiding member state for its expenses. Florida's current per diem limits may prevent a state employee from being fully reimbursed when certain EMAC missions take place in states where expenses exceed authorized reimbursement levels.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.

Vote: Senate 37-0; House 114-0

Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security

CS/CS/HB 801 — The Beirut Memorial

by State Affairs Committee; Government Operations Appropriations Subcommittee; and Rep. Taylor and others (CS/SB 876 by Fiscal Policy Committee and Senators Dean and Altman)

The bill authorizes the design and installation of a memorial to honor the 241 members of the United States Armed Forces who lost their lives in the October 23, 1983 bombing in Beirut, Lebanon. The memorial will be placed within the Capitol Complex memorial garden, an area of the Capitol Complex set aside by the Department and Management Services pursuant to s. 265.111(3), F.S., on which authorized memorials will be placed.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2015.

Vote: Senate 40-0; House 113-1

Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security

SB 7028 — Educational Opportunities for Veterans

by Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security Committee

The existing Congressman C.W. “Bill” Young Veteran Tuition Waiver Program provides for out-of-state fee waivers for honorably discharged veterans who physically reside in Florida and attend a state university, state college, career center, or charter technical career center. Under this program, veterans who relocate to Florida from another state and enroll in a public postsecondary institution are exempt from the out-of-state fees normally assessed to non-resident students. Currently, the waiver may be applied up to 110 percent of the required credit hours of a degree or certificate program.

The bill amends the Congressman C.W. “Bill” Young Veteran Tuition Waiver Program to expand fee waiver eligibility to any individual using United States Department of Veterans Affairs education benefits, commonly referred to as G.I. Bill benefits. As a result, veterans’ dependents and veterans of the commissioned corps of the Public Health Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration are entitled to the out-of-state fee waiver while using any federal G.I. Bill benefit.

The bill also repeals the statutory provision that restricts the out-of-state fee waiver to 110 percent of the required credit hours of a degree or certificate program.

The bill seeks to comply with recent federal legislation (Public Law 113-146) that requires public postsecondary institutions to provide in-state tuition rates to veterans and eligible dependents as a condition of continuing to receive G.I. Bill education benefits.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.

Vote: Senate 40-0; House 116-0