

## Committee on Ethics and Elections

### CS/SB 348 — Ethics

by Ethics and Elections Committee and Senators Gaetz, Collins, and Avila

The bill adds to the Code of Ethics a “stolen valor” provision prohibiting candidates, public officers, and public employees from knowingly making certain fraudulent representations relating to military service for the purpose of material gain, including:

- Representing that he or she is or was a servicemember or veteran of the Armed Forces of the United States, actively served during a wartime era, served in combat, or was a prisoner of war.
- Representing that he or she was a recipient of a decoration, medal, title, or honor from the Armed Forces of the United States or that is otherwise related to military service.
- Representing that he or she is a holder of an awarded qualification or military occupational specialty.
- Wearing the uniform or any medal or insignia authorized for use by members or veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States which he or she is not authorized to wear.

The bill also expands the existing authority to seek wage garnishment for unpaid fines stemming from judgments of ethics complaints by:

- Allowing for withholding the lesser of 25 percent or the maximum allowable under federal law, including an amount to cover the administrative cost of withholding the payment, from any salary-related payment until the fine is satisfied.
- Allowing for referral of any unpaid penalty to a collection agency.
- Allowing actions to collect an unpaid penalty within 20 years after the date the penalty is imposed.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor’s signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.

*Vote: Senate 39-0; House 114-0*