

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

SB 116 —Veterans

by Rules Committee; Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services; and Senators Burgess, Collins, Avila, and Davis

The bill amends multiple provisions regarding veterans. Specifically, the bill:

- Reduces the maximum number of nominees the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame Council transmits to the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA) for submission to the Governor and Cabinet for induction into the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame from 20 to 5.
- Requires the FDVA to:
 - Expand the scope of an ongoing survey by evaluating veterans and their spouses and dependents' awareness of available programs and services and make recommendations increasing such awareness.
 - Ensure coordination with the U.S. Department of Defense regarding the reentry of servicemembers into civilian life. The FDVA may engage county and city veteran service officers for assistance in connecting servicemembers with civilian resources.
 - Report actions taken to implement provisions of the bill and to include in its 2025 annual report an evaluation of health literacy among Florida veterans along with its recommendations on increasing public awareness.
 - Develop a statewide plan to establish adult day health care facilities across the state to serve veterans and their families. The bill also directs the FDVA to provide a report detailing the plan to the Legislature by November 1, 2025.
- Expands the type of training to be provided to the FDVA claims examiners and county and city veterans service officers under the Veteran Suicide Prevention Training Pilot Program to include mental health training. The bill requires pilot program participants to be trained to recognize indicators of mental health conditions and also requires the FDVA to contract with an organization having proven experience developing and implementing veteran-relevant and evidence-based mental health assistance to develop curriculum for such training.
- Requires Florida is For Veterans, Inc., to advise the FDVA on problems or needs of retired and recently separated military personnel and their spouses.
- Provides that a percentage of the proceeds from the sale of the Gadsden Flag specialty license plate may be used for administrative costs.

The bill appropriates \$50,000 in nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund to the FDVA to conduct a survey evaluating the extent to which resident veterans and their spouses and dependents are aware of existing programs and services and for the FDVA to develop a plan to establish adult day health care facilities to serve veterans and their families and \$300,000 in nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund to the FDVA to implement the Veteran Suicide Training Pilot Program, as amended by the bill.

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 98-0