

CHAMBER ACTION

1 The Military & Veteran Affairs Committee recommends the
2 following:

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4 **Council/Committee Substitute**

5 Remove the entire bill and insert:

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7 A bill to be entitled
8 An act relating to the Department of Military Affairs;
9 creating s. 250.5206, F.S.; creating the Family Readiness
10 Program within the Department of Military Affairs to
11 provide need-based assistance to families of specified
12 members of the Florida National Guard on active duty;
13 providing that implementation of the program shall be
14 subject to appropriations expressly provided for the
15 program; specifying use of funds; specifying services for
16 which funds may be used; providing program eligibility;
17 providing for review of requests for assistance under the
18 program; providing authority of the Adjutant General to
19 award program funds; providing for monthly audits of the
20 program; providing for annual reports; providing
21 rulemaking authority of the department; providing an
22 effective date.
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24 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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26 Section 1. Section 250.5206, Florida Statutes, is created
27 to read:

28 250.5206 Family Readiness Program.--The Department of
29 Military Affairs shall establish a Family Readiness Program,
30 headed by a program director and based on the United States
31 Department of Defense National Guard and Reserve Family
32 Readiness Strategic Plan 2004-2005 initiative.

33 (1) PURPOSE.--The purpose of the program is to provide
34 need-based assistance to families of members of the Florida
35 National Guard on active duty serving in the Global War on
36 Terrorism and who are federally deployed or participating in
37 state operations for Homeland Defense.

38 (2) FUNDING.--Implementation of the program is subject to
39 appropriations expressly provided for the program. All funding
40 shall be used to purchase needed services and may not be used to
41 fund staffing or administrative costs.

42 (3) ELIGIBLE SERVICES.--Program funds may be used in
43 emergency situations to purchase critically needed services,
44 including, but not limited to, reasonable living expenses,
45 housing, vehicles, equipment or renovations necessary to meet
46 disability needs, and health care.

47 (4) ELIGIBILITY.--Eligible recipients shall include
48 persons designated as beneficiaries on the United States
49 Department of Defense Form 93 or who are otherwise dependents of
50 eligible servicemembers.

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51 (5) REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE; REVIEW; AWARDS.--Requests for
 52 assistance shall be validated and assessed at the local level by
 53 a federal Family Center Support Specialist stationed at a state
 54 armory. Recommendations subsequent to assessment and validation
 55 shall be forwarded to the program director who shall review the
 56 recommendations for eligibility, appropriateness, and
 57 sufficiency of documentation. The Adjutant General or his or her
 58 designee shall receive the recommendations from the program
 59 director and is authorized to award funds pursuant to
 60 subsections (3) and (4).

61 (6) AUDIT.--The inspector general of the department shall
 62 conduct a monthly audit review of the program.

63 (7) ANNUAL REPORT.--The department shall maintain
 64 sufficient data to provide an annual report to the Governor and
 65 the Legislature on the families served under the program, the
 66 types of services provided, and the allocation of funds spent.

67 (8) RULES.--The department is authorized to adopt rules
 68 necessary to implement the Family Readiness Program, including
 69 procedures for applying for assistance, qualifying services, and
 70 criteria for eligibility.

71 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2005.