

# SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

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Prepared By: Community Affairs Committee

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BILL: SB 354

INTRODUCER: Senator Hill

SUBJECT: Veterans' Day Observance

DATE: January 5, 2006

REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Carrouth</u>	<u>Matthews</u>	<u>ED</u>	<u>Favorable</u>
2.	<u>Vickers</u>	<u>Yeatman</u>	<u>CA</u>	<u>Favorable</u>
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

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## I. Summary:

This bill requires each school district to observe November 11<sup>th</sup> of each year as the Veterans' Day holiday, and classes may not be held on that day for any reason except for a declared state of emergency.

The bill creates an undesignated section of Florida Statutes.

The effective date of the bill is July 1, 2006.

## II. Present Situation:

**Establishment of Veterans' Day** - World War I (known at the time as "The Great War") officially ended when the Treaty of Versailles was signed on June 28, 1919, in the Palace of Versailles outside the town of Versailles, France. However, fighting ceased seven months earlier when an armistice or temporary cessation of hostilities, between the Allied nations and Germany went into effect on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month. For that reason, November 11, 1918, is generally regarded as the end of "the war to end all wars."

In November 1919, President Wilson proclaimed November 11 as the first commemoration of Armistice Day. An Act (52 Stat. 351; 5 U. S. Code, Sec. 87a) approved May 13, 1938, made the 11th of November in each year a legal holiday - - a day to be dedicated to the cause of world peace and to be thereafter celebrated and known as "Armistice Day." Armistice Day was primarily a day set aside to honor veterans of World War I, but in 1954, after World War II had required the greatest mobilization of soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen in the Nation's history; after American forces had fought aggression in Korea, the 83rd Congress, at the urging of the veterans service organizations, amended the Act of 1938 by striking out the word

"Armistice" and inserting in its place the word "Veterans." With the approval of this legislation (Public Law 380) on June 1, 1954, November 11th became a day to honor American veterans of all wars.

**Veterans' Day Observance in Florida** - Currently, s. 1001.42(4) (g), F.S., requires district school boards to designate school holidays and vacation periods as a part of their yearly calendar. Therefore, the decision to observe Veterans' Day, or any other holiday, is determined by individual district school boards. During the 2005-2006 school year, 48 of 67 school districts chose to observe Veterans' Day.<sup>1</sup> However, districts affected by the 2005 hurricane season are likely to amend their calendars in order to make up lost instructional time.

Section 110.117, F.S. specifies Veterans' Day as one of nine paid holidays to be observed by all state branches and agencies. Congress also establishes November 11<sup>th</sup> as Veterans' Day and the day is observed as a public holiday for Federal employees.<sup>2</sup> When a holiday falls on a non-workday, the holiday is observed on Monday (if the holiday falls on Sunday) or Friday (if the holiday falls on Saturday) for both Florida and Federal Government employees. Veterans' Day will fall on a Saturday in 2006 and a Sunday in 2007. Therefore, both Florida and Federal Government employees will observe Veterans' Day on Friday, November 10<sup>th</sup> in 2006 and Monday, November 12<sup>th</sup> in 2007.

### III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill would remove a school board's discretion to decide whether or not to hold classes on Veterans' Day, requiring all school districts to observe Veterans' Day as a holiday each year. School districts will not be able to hold classes on November 11<sup>th</sup>, except for declared state emergencies. The bill specifies that the prior Friday or following Monday shall be observed as the Veterans' Day holiday when November 11<sup>th</sup> falls on a weekend (as it will in 2006 and 2007).

Each of the nineteen school districts that presently hold classes on November 11<sup>th</sup> were surveyed. Four school district superintendents responded.<sup>3</sup> Each of the superintendents who responded was vocal in their commitment to local decision-making and believed that conducting classes on Veterans' Day genuinely engaged their students in meaningful activities that honor and include local veterans.

The effective date of the bill is July 1, 2006.

### IV. Constitutional Issues:

#### A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: DOE Statistical Brief on School District Calendars, released July 2005

<sup>2</sup> 5 U.S.C.A. s. 6103

<sup>3</sup> Desoto, Gulf, Okeechobee, and Union Counties

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

**V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:**

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

The fiscal impact is indeterminable.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The fiscal impact is indeterminable.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

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This Senate staff analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.

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## **VIII. Summary of Amendments:**

None.

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