

By Senator Bean

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1                                   A bill to be entitled  
2           An act relating to military and veterans affairs;  
3           creating the Military and Overseas Voting Assistance  
4           Task Force within the Department of State; specifying  
5           membership of the task force; authorizing  
6           reimbursement for per diem and travel expenses;  
7           prescribing duties of the task force; requiring  
8           submission of a report to the Governor and the  
9           Legislature by a specified date; providing for  
10          expiration of the task force; providing for staffing;  
11          providing legislative findings regarding continuing  
12          education for veterans of the United States Armed  
13          Forces; providing legislative intent for the State  
14          Board of Education and the Board of Governors of the  
15          State University System to work collaboratively to  
16          establish degree programs at state universities and  
17          Florida College System institutions, train faculty,  
18          coordinate campus disability services, facilitate  
19          statewide meetings for personnel, and provide  
20          sufficient courses and priority registration to  
21          veterans; amending s. 322.08, F.S.; requiring the  
22          application form for an original, renewal, or  
23          replacement driver license or identification card to  
24          include a voluntary checkoff permitting certain  
25          veterans to request written information for federal,  
26          state, and local veteran services programs; directing  
27          the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles to  
28          report specified information to the department;  
29          directing the department to assist veterans with

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30 preparing certain claims and securing certain  
31 services; providing an effective date.

32  
33 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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35 Section 1. Military and Overseas Voting Assistance Task  
36 Force.—The Military and Overseas Voting Assistance Task Force, a  
37 task force as defined in s. 20.03, Florida Statutes, is created  
38 within the Department of State. The task force is created for  
39 the express purpose of studying issues involving the development  
40 and implementation of an online voting system that allows absent  
41 uniformed services voters to electronically submit voted  
42 ballots.

43 (1) The task force is composed of 20 members, as follows:

44 (a) The Secretary of State or his or her designee, who  
45 shall serve as chair of the task force.

46 (b) The Adjutant General or his or her designee.

47 (c) The executive director of the Department of Veterans'  
48 Affairs or his or her designee.

49 (d) The executive director of the Agency for State  
50 Technology or his or her designee.

51 (e) One member of the Senate appointed by the President of  
52 the Senate.

53 (f) One member of the House of Representatives appointed by  
54 the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

55 (g) One member of the Senate appointed by the Minority  
56 Leader of the Senate.

57 (h) One member of the House of Representatives appointed by  
58 the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives.

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59 (i) One member appointed by the Governor.

60 (j) Six supervisors of elections appointed by the Secretary  
61 of State.

62 (k) Five individuals appointed by the Secretary of State,  
63 with relevant expertise in computers, the Internet, or other  
64 associated technologies.

65 (2) Members of the task force shall serve without  
66 compensation, but are entitled to reimbursement for per diem and  
67 travel expenses pursuant to s. 112.061, Florida Statutes.

68 (3) The task force, at a minimum, shall study and report on  
69 the following issues:

70 (a) Any factor that limits the ability of absent uniformed  
71 services voters to request, receive, and return absentee ballots  
72 within the current statutory time period for casting absentee  
73 ballots.

74 (b) The costs associated with the development and  
75 implementation of an online voting system.

76 (c) The feasibility of absent uniformed services voters  
77 using an online voting system to electronically submit a voted  
78 ballot.

79 (d) The security of electronically submitting a voted  
80 ballot through an online voting system.

81 (e) Procedures adopted by other states to facilitate  
82 greater electoral participation among absent uniformed services  
83 voters.

84 (4) The Secretary of State shall submit a report to the  
85 Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the  
86 House of Representatives by July 1, 2016, containing the task  
87 force's recommendation concerning whether the state should

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88 pursue the development and implementation of an online voting  
89 system that allows absent uniformed services voters to  
90 electronically submit voted ballots. If the task force favorably  
91 recommends an online voting system, the report must include  
92 recommended steps for developing and implementing such a system.  
93 Upon submission of the report, the task force shall expire.

94 (5) The Division of Elections of the Department of State  
95 shall provide support staff for the task force. The Agency for  
96 State Technology shall assist the task force upon request.

97 Section 2. The Legislature finds that many veterans of the  
98 United States Armed Forces in this state have completed training  
99 and coursework during their military service, including overseas  
100 deployments, resulting in tangible and quantifiable strides in  
101 their pursuit of a postsecondary degree. The Legislature further  
102 finds that the State Board of Education and the Board of  
103 Governors of the State University System must work together to  
104 ensure that military training and coursework are granted  
105 academic credit in order to assist veterans in continuing their  
106 education. Therefore, it is the intent of the Legislature that  
107 the State Board of Education and the Board of Governors work  
108 collaboratively to:

109 (1) Establish degree programs, including, but not limited  
110 to, vocational and technical degrees, at each state university  
111 and Florida College System institution that awards academic  
112 credit for military training and experience.

113 (2) Appoint and train specific faculty within each degree  
114 program at each state university and Florida College System  
115 institution as liaisons and contacts for veterans.

116 (3) Coordinate existing disability services on the campus

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117 of each state university and Florida College System institution  
118 with veteran disability services provided by the United States  
119 Department of Veterans Affairs, other federal and state  
120 agencies, and private entities.

121 (4) Facilitate statewide meetings for personnel at state  
122 universities and Florida College System institutions who provide  
123 student services for veterans to discuss and develop best  
124 practices, exchange ideas and experiences, and hear  
125 presentations by individuals with expertise in the unique needs  
126 of veterans.

127 (5) Make every effort to provide veterans with sufficient  
128 courses required for graduation, including, but not limited to,  
129 giving priority registration to veterans.

130 Section 3. Present subsection (8) of section 322.08,  
131 Florida Statutes, is redesignated as subsection (9), and a new  
132 subsection (8) is added to that section, to read:

133 322.08 Application for license; requirements for license  
134 and identification card forms.—

135 (8) (a) To facilitate outreach by the Department of  
136 Veterans' Affairs, the application form for an original,  
137 renewal, or replacement driver license or identification card  
138 must include a voluntary checkoff permitting an honorably  
139 discharged member of the United States Armed Forces to request  
140 written information for federal, state, and local veteran  
141 services programs from a county or city veteran service officer  
142 through a direct-support organization or, if the veteran is not  
143 under the jurisdiction of a county or city veteran service  
144 officer, the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

145 (b) The department shall work with the Department of

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146 Veterans' Affairs to administer this subsection. The department  
147 shall report quarterly to the Department of Veterans' Affairs  
148 the legal name, sex, date of birth, social security number, and  
149 address of each honorably discharged member of the United States  
150 Armed Forces who provides a DD Form 214 issued by the United  
151 States Department of Defense or another acceptable form  
152 specified by the Department of Veterans' Affairs and who selects  
153 the voluntary checkoff to receive written information for  
154 federal, state, and local programs pursuant to paragraph (a).  
155 Information for such programs shall be sent by United States  
156 mail.

157 (c) The Department of Veterans' Affairs shall provide  
158 assistance to veterans who select the voluntary checkoff  
159 pursuant to paragraph (a) with preparing claims for and securing  
160 compensation, hospitalization, career training, and other  
161 benefits or privileges that such veterans are or may become  
162 entitled to under any federal or state law or regulation by  
163 reason of their service in the United States Armed Forces. The  
164 Department of Veterans' Affairs may apply for and administer any  
165 federal veteran services programs and develop and coordinate  
166 such state and local programs as may be beneficial to the  
167 particular interests of veterans, including, but not limited to,  
168 social services, health care, education, employment, and any  
169 other areas of determined need. Programs developed,  
170 administered, and coordinated pursuant to this subsection are  
171 subject to chapters 215 and 216 and services secured pursuant to  
172 this subsection shall be without charge to the veteran.

173 Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2015.