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594-04122-15

Proposed Committee Substitute by the Committee on Fiscal Policy
(Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government)

A bill to be entitled

An act relating to military and veteran support;
amending s. 288.980, F.S.; revising the definition of
the term "activities"; removing the requirement that
an applicant to the Defense Infrastructure Grant
Program provide matching funds of a certain amount;
amending s. 292.10, F.S.; revising the categories of
veterans eligible to receive assistance from local
governing bodies; amending s. 455.213, F.S.; requiring
the Department of Business and Professional Regulation
to waive initial professional licensing fees for a
veteran who has received a general discharge under
honorable conditions; requiring the Department of
Veterans' Affairs to create, in consultation with the
Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, a
section in the Florida Veterans' Benefits Guide on
agricultural farming opportunities for veterans;
prescribing requirements; requiring the Department of
Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles and the Department
of Military Affairs to create a pilot program for
commercial driver license testing for qualified
members of the Florida National Guard by a specified
date; requiring that such testing be conducted at
certain locations; providing for funding; providing an
effective date.

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



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Section 1. Subsections (3) and (4) of section 288.980, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

288.980 Military base retention; legislative intent; grants program.—

(3) (a) The department is authorized to award grants on a competitive basis from any funds available to it to support activities related to the Florida Defense Reinvestment Grant Program and the Florida Defense Infrastructure Grant Program.

(b) As used in this section, the term "activities" as used in this section means studies, presentations, analyses, plans, and modeling. For the purposes of the Florida Defense Reinvestment Grant Program, the term also includes, but is not limited to, economic development grants provided to businesses in defense-dependent communities. For the purposes of the Florida Defense Infrastructure Grant Program, the term ~~"activities"~~ also includes, but is not limited to, construction, land purchases, and easements. Staff salaries are not considered an "activity" for which grant funds may be awarded. Travel costs and costs incidental thereto incurred by a grant recipient shall be considered an "activity" for which grant funds may be awarded.

(c) The department shall require that an applicant:

1. Represent a local government with a military installation or military installations that could be adversely affected by federal actions.

~~2. Agree to match at least 30 percent of any grant awarded.~~

~~3.~~ Prepare a coordinated program or plan of action delineating how the eligible project will be administered and



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57 accomplished.

58 ~~3.4.~~ Provide documentation describing the potential for
59 changes to the mission of a military installation located in the
60 applicant's community and the potential impacts such changes
61 will have on the applicant's community.

62 (d) In making grant awards the department shall consider,
63 at a minimum, the following factors:

64 1. The relative value of the particular military
65 installation in terms of its importance to the local and state
66 economy relative to other military installations.

67 2. The potential job displacement within the local
68 community should the mission of the military installation be
69 changed.

70 3. The potential impact on industries and technologies
71 which service the military installation.

72 (4) The Florida Defense Reinvestment Grant Program is
73 established to respond to the need for this state to work in
74 conjunction with defense-dependent communities in developing and
75 implementing strategies and approaches that will help
76 communities support the missions of military installations, and
77 in developing and implementing alternative economic
78 diversification strategies to transition from a defense economy
79 to a nondefense economy. Eligible applicants include defense-
80 dependent counties and cities, and local economic development
81 councils located within such communities. The program shall be
82 administered by the department and grant awards may be provided
83 to support community-based activities that:

84 (a) Protect existing military installations;

85 (b) Diversify or grow the economy of a defense-dependent



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86 community; or

87 (c) Develop plans for the reuse of closed or realigned
88 military installations, including any plans necessary for
89 infrastructure improvements needed to facilitate reuse and
90 related marketing activities.

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92 Applications for grants under this subsection must include a
93 coordinated program of work or plan of action delineating how
94 the eligible project will be administered and accomplished,
95 which must include a plan for ensuring close cooperation between
96 civilian and military authorities in the conduct of the funded
97 activities and a plan for public involvement. An applicant must
98 agree to match at least 30 percent of any grant awarded.

99 Section 2. Section 292.10, Florida Statutes, is amended to
100 read:

101 292.10 Local governing bodies authorized to assist war
102 veterans; powers.—The board of county commissioners of each
103 county and the governing body of each city in the state are
104 authorized hereby granted full and complete power and authority
105 to aid and assist wherever practical and feasible the veterans,
106 male and female, who have served in the Armed Forces of the
107 United States in any war, and received an honorable discharge,
108 or received a general discharge under honorable conditions from
109 any branch of the military service of the United States, and
110 their dependents, in presenting claims for and securing such
111 compensation, hospitalization, education, loans, career
112 training, and other benefits or privileges to which said
113 veterans, or any of them, are or may become entitled under any
114 federal or state law or regulation by reason of their service in



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115 the Armed Forces of the United States.

116 Section 3. Subsection (12) of section 455.213, Florida
117 Statutes, is amended to read:

118 455.213 General licensing provisions.—

119 (12) The department shall waive the initial licensing fee,
120 the initial application fee, and the initial unlicensed activity
121 fee for a military veteran or his or her spouse at the time of
122 discharge, if he or she applies to the department for a license,
123 in a format prescribed by the department, within 60 months after
124 the veteran is discharged from any branch of the United States
125 Armed Forces. To qualify for this waiver, the veteran must have
126 been honorably discharged or received a general discharge under
127 honorable conditions.

128 Section 4. Agricultural farming opportunities for
129 veterans.—

130 (1) The Department of Veterans' Affairs, through the
131 direct-support organization established under s. 292.055,
132 Florida Statutes, and in consultation with the Department of
133 Agriculture and Consumer Services, shall include a section in
134 the Florida Veterans' Benefits Guide on agricultural farming
135 opportunities in this state for veterans of the Armed Forces of
136 the United States. The section must, at a minimum, include
137 information on:

138 (a) Federal, state, and local agricultural farming
139 programs, incentives, assistance, and grants that are available
140 to veterans.

141 (b) Federal and state agricultural farming outreach and
142 advocacy programs that are available to veterans.

143 (2) The Department of Veterans' Affairs shall:



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144 (a) Make the guides available to all military installations
145 in this state.

146 (b) Provide a concise description of the contents of the
147 section and a link to the section on its website.

148 Section 5. No later than June 30, 2016, the Department of
149 Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles and the Department of Military
150 Affairs shall jointly create a pilot program to provide
151 opportunities for commercial driver license testing to qualified
152 members of the Florida National Guard through the commercial
153 driver license skills test waiver available under s. 322.12,
154 Florida Statutes. Testing held pursuant to the pilot program
155 must be conducted at a Florida National Guard armory, an Armed
156 Forces Reserve Center, or the Camp Blanding Joint Training
157 Center. The pilot program must be administered using existing
158 funds appropriated to each department.

159 Section 6. This act shall take effect July 1, 2015.