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LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate	.	House
Comm: RCS	.	
03/14/2017	.	
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The Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security (Garcia) recommended the following:

Senate Amendment (with title amendment)

Delete everything after the enacting clause
and insert:

Section 1. Section 295.231, Florida Statutes, is created to
read:

295.231 Veterans Employment Small Business Grant Program.-
The Veterans Employment Small Business Grant Program is created
within the Department of Economic Opportunity to be administered
by Florida Is For Veterans, Inc. The purpose of the program is



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11 to stimulate investment in the state's economy by providing
12 grants to small businesses that hire and employ honorably
13 discharged veterans or disabled veterans with service-connected
14 disabilities.

15 (1) As used in this section, the term:

16 (a) "Corporation" means Florida Is For Veterans, Inc.

17 (b) "Small business" means an independently owned and
18 operated, for-profit, privately held business that employs 50 or
19 fewer persons; generates \$1 million or less in annual revenue;
20 and has maintained its principal place of business in this state
21 for at least the previous 4 calendar years.

22 (2) The corporation may accept and administer moneys
23 appropriated to the department for transfer to the corporation
24 to provide grants to encourage small businesses in this state to
25 hire and employ veterans.

26 (3) A small business that initially hires a veteran on or
27 after July 1, 2017, as an employee may receive a one-time grant
28 of:

29 (a) Fifteen hundred dollars per newly hired veteran, as
30 defined in s. 1.01(14).

31 (b) Three thousand dollars for each newly hired disabled
32 veteran, as that term is described in s. 295.07(1)(a).

33 (4) The total of grants awarded to a participating small
34 business under subsection (3) may not exceed \$10,500 per fiscal
35 year.

36 (5) A small business must apply to and enter into an
37 agreement with the corporation in order to participate in the
38 program. The agreement must require that the small business:

39 (a) Employ a qualifying veteran for at least 1 year before



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40 becoming eligible for a grant awarded under subsection (3).

41 (b) Report information regarding the employment status of
42 each qualifying veteran, if requested to do so by the
43 corporation.

44 (c) Pay each qualifying veteran an amount equal to at least
45 90 percent of the annual median income for veterans in this
46 state, based on the most recent federal census or the most
47 recent American Community Survey 5-year estimates published by
48 the United States Census Bureau.

49 (d) Use any awarded grant moneys to facilitate the small
50 business' creation of additional jobs for and employment of
51 veterans; however, grant moneys may be used only for
52 manufacturing, equipment, and facility expenses or other
53 operating costs or fixed capital outlay projects.

54 (e) Not receive an additional grant for rehiring a veteran
55 previously claimed as an employee by the same small business for
56 purposes of obtaining funds under the program.

57 (f) Is eligible to receive a grant award only for a veteran
58 initially hired on or after July 1, 2017.

59 (6) The corporation shall notify the regional small
60 business development center that serves the county in which a
61 participating small business is located of the small business's
62 participation in the grant program in order to facilitate
63 improved access to the resources of the Florida Small Business
64 Development Center Network.

65 (7) The Department of Economic Opportunity may adopt rules
66 to implement and administer this section, including, but not
67 limited to, rules specifying requirements for the application
68 and approval process and the documentation necessary to claim



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69 grant moneys awarded under this section.

70 (8) By December 31, 2020, the corporation shall provide a
71 report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the
72 Speaker of the House of Representatives on the grant program's
73 progress and outcomes for the preceding 3 fiscal years. The
74 report must include aggregate information on the total number of
75 veterans and small businesses assisted by the program; an
76 accounting of how the corporation used the state funds it
77 received for the grant program; and a description of the nature
78 of the participation in the program by the Florida Small
79 Business Development Center Network. The report must also
80 contain specific information on the number of small businesses
81 receiving grant funds; the number of veterans employed by each
82 small business receiving grant funds; the salary paid to each
83 veteran employed; the period of time for which the small
84 business employed each veteran; the grant program's economic
85 benefit to the state; and all performance-based metrics and
86 methodologies used to calculate the grant program's economic
87 benefit to the state.

88 (9) The grant program terminates July 1, 2022.

89 Section 2. Beginning July 1, 2017, and for the 2017-2018
90 through the 2021-2022 fiscal years, the sum of \$500,000 in
91 nonrecurring funds from the State Economic Enhancement and
92 Development Trust Fund is appropriated to the Department of
93 Economic Opportunity for transfer to Florida Is For Veterans,
94 Inc., to contract with the Department of Economic Opportunity to
95 implement and administer the Veterans Employment Small Business
96 Grant Program. The corporation may award grant moneys up to a
97 maximum of \$500,000 per fiscal year. The corporation may spend



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98 up to \$25,000 per fiscal year of funds transferred by the
99 department for staffing and administrative costs associated with
100 implementation and administration of the program. If any
101 appropriated funds remain upon termination of the program,
102 Florida Is For Veterans, Inc., shall transfer those funds to the
103 Department of Economic Opportunity for deposit in the State
104 Economic Enhancement and Development Trust Fund.

105 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2017.

107 ===== T I T L E A M E N D M E N T =====

108 And the title is amended as follows:

109 Delete everything before the enacting clause
110 and insert:

111 A bill to be entitled
112 An act relating to small business financial
113 assistance; creating s. 295.231, F.S.; creating the
114 Veterans Employment Small Business Grant Program
115 within the Department of Economic Opportunity;
116 directing Florida Is For Veterans, Inc., to administer
117 the program; defining terms; authorizing the
118 corporation to accept and administer moneys
119 appropriated for such grants; specifying grant
120 amounts; limiting the amount that a small business may
121 receive under the program; requiring a small business
122 to apply to and enter into an agreement with the
123 corporation to receive grants; prescribing minimum
124 criteria for such agreements; requiring the
125 corporation to notify the appropriate regional small
126 business development center of a small business'



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127 participation; authorizing the department to adopt
128 rules; prescribing reporting requirements; providing
129 for termination of the program; providing
130 appropriations; providing an effective date.