

26 veterans or their spouses in accessing employment in
27 health care professions; amending s. 456.013, F.S.;
28 removing provisions relating to the waiver of certain
29 fees for veterans or their spouses; amending s.
30 456.024, F.S.; defining the term "health care
31 practitioner"; removing a limitation on the period in
32 which a member of the United States Armed Forces must
33 receive an honorable discharge from service in order
34 to be issued a license to practice a health care
35 profession in this state; requiring the appropriate
36 board or the Department of Health to expedite health
37 care licensure applications submitted by veterans and
38 to issue a license within a specified period;
39 requiring the department to waive certain fees for
40 veterans or their spouses under certain circumstances;
41 providing requirements for application for such
42 waiver; amending s. 456.0241, F.S.; removing
43 provisions relating to application and renewal fees
44 for temporary certification of an active duty military
45 health care practitioner to practice in a regulated
46 profession in this state; requiring the Department of
47 Health to waive the temporary certification fee;
48 creating s. 456.0242, F.S.; establishing the Office of
49 Veteran Licensure Services within the Division of
50 Medical Quality Assurance; requiring an executive

51 | director to be appointed by the department; providing
 52 | duties of the office; requiring an annual report to
 53 | the Governor and Legislature; providing report
 54 | requirements; authorizing the department to adopt
 55 | rules; providing an effective date.
 56 |

57 | Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:
 58 |

59 | Section 1. Paragraph (d) of subsection (2) of section
 60 | 288.0001, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

61 | 288.0001 Economic Development Programs Evaluation.—The
 62 | Office of Economic and Demographic Research and the Office of
 63 | Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA)
 64 | shall develop and present to the Governor, the President of the
 65 | Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the
 66 | chairs of the legislative appropriations committees the Economic
 67 | Development Programs Evaluation.

68 | (2) The Office of Economic and Demographic Research and
 69 | OPPAGA shall provide a detailed analysis of economic development
 70 | programs as provided in the following schedule:

71 | (d) By January 1, 2019, and every 3 years thereafter, an
 72 | analysis of the administration of the Veterans Employment and
 73 | Training Services Program under s. 295.22(3) ~~grant and~~
 74 | entrepreneur initiative programs established under s.
 75 | 295.22(3) (d) and (e).

76 Section 2. Subsections (1) and (5) of section 292.05,
 77 Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

78 292.05 Duties of Department of Veterans' Affairs.—

79 (1) The Department of Veterans' Affairs shall provide
 80 assistance to all former, present, and future members of the
 81 Armed Forces of the United States and their spouses and
 82 dependents in preparing claims for and securing such
 83 compensation, hospitalization, career training, and other
 84 benefits or privileges to which such persons or any of them are
 85 or may become entitled under any federal or state law or
 86 regulation by reason of their service in the Armed Forces of the
 87 United States. All services rendered under this subsection shall
 88 be without charge to the claimant.

89 (5) The department shall conduct an ongoing study on the
 90 problems and needs of those residents of this state who are
 91 veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States and the
 92 problems and needs of their spouses and dependents. The study
 93 shall include, but not be limited to:

94 (a) A survey of existing state and federal programs
 95 available for such persons that specifies the extent to which
 96 such programs presently are being implemented, with
 97 recommendations for the improved implementation, extension, or
 98 improvement of such programs.

99 (b) A survey of the needs of such persons in the areas of
 100 social services, health care, education, and employment, and any

101 other areas of determined need, with recommendations regarding
 102 federal, state, and community services that would meet those
 103 needs.

104 (c) A survey of federal, state, public, and private moneys
 105 available that could be used to defray the costs of state or
 106 community services needed for such persons.

107 Section 3. Subsection (2), paragraph (b) of subsection
 108 (3), paragraph (g) of subsection (4), paragraph (b) of
 109 subsection (7), and paragraph (a) of subsection (8) of section
 110 295.21, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

111 295.21 Florida Is For Veterans, Inc.—

112 (2) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the corporation is to promote
 113 Florida as a veteran-friendly state that seeks to provide
 114 veterans and their spouses with employment opportunities and
 115 that promotes the hiring of veterans and their spouses by the
 116 business community. The corporation shall encourage retired and
 117 recently separated military personnel and their spouses to
 118 remain in the state or to make the state their permanent
 119 residence. The corporation shall promote the value of military
 120 skill sets to businesses in the state, assist in tailoring the
 121 training of veterans and their spouses to match the needs of the
 122 employment marketplace, and enhance the entrepreneurial skills
 123 of veterans and their spouses.

124 (3) DUTIES.—The corporation shall:

125 (b) Advise the Florida Tourism Industry Marketing

126 Corporation, pursuant to s. 295.23, on:

127 1. The target market as identified in paragraph (a).

128 2. Development and implementation of a marketing campaign
 129 to encourage members of the target market to remain in the state
 130 or to make the state their permanent residence.

131 3. Methods for disseminating information to the target
 132 market that relates to the interests and needs of veterans of
 133 all ages and their spouses and facilitates their ~~veterans'~~
 134 knowledge of and access to benefits.

135 (4) GOVERNANCE.—

136 (g) A majority of the members of the board of directors
 137 constitutes a quorum. Board ~~Council~~ meetings may be held via
 138 teleconference or other electronic means.

139 (7) STAFFING AND ASSISTANCE.—

140 (b) All agencies of the state are authorized and directed
 141 to provide such technical assistance as the corporation may
 142 require to identify programs within each agency which provide
 143 assistance or benefits to veterans and their spouses who are
 144 located in this state or who are considering relocation to this
 145 state.

146 (8) ANNUAL REPORT.—The corporation shall submit an annual
 147 progress report and work plan by December 1 to the Governor, the
 148 President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of
 149 Representatives. The report must include:

150 (a) Status and summary of findings regarding the target

151 market, veteran and spouse benefits, and any identified gaps in
 152 services.

153 Section 4. Section 295.215, Florida Statutes, is created
 154 to read:

155 295.215 Nursing degree programs for veterans who have
 156 armed services health care training.—The Department of Veterans'
 157 Affairs shall create a grant program to provide funding to an
 158 institution, as defined in s. 1009.8962(3), to create or expand
 159 nursing degree programs for veterans who have armed services
 160 health care training. The grant program must provide academic
 161 support services to all students enrolled in a nursing degree
 162 program at the institution and must include, at a minimum, a
 163 dedicated academic advisor. The department must establish
 164 performance and accountability criteria for an institution that
 165 receives a grant, including, but not limited to:

166 (1) Measurable criteria for achieving grant objectives.

167 (2) Tracking each institution's achievement of grant
 168 objectives and compliance with grant requirements.

169 (3) Routine reporting by the institution to the Department
 170 of Veterans' Affairs.

171 Section 5. Section 295.22, Florida Statutes, is amended to
 172 read:

173 295.22 Veterans Employment and Training Services Program.—

174 (1) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND INTENT.—The Legislature finds
 175 that the state has a compelling interest in ensuring that each

176 | veteran or his or her spouse who is a resident of the state
 177 | finds employment that meets his or her professional goals and
 178 | receives the training or education necessary to meet those
 179 | goals. The Legislature also finds that connecting dedicated,
 180 | well-trained veterans or their spouses with businesses that need
 181 | a dedicated, well-trained workforce is of paramount importance.
 182 | The Legislature recognizes that veterans or their spouses may
 183 | not currently have the skills to meet the workforce needs of
 184 | Florida employers and may require assistance in obtaining
 185 | additional workforce training or in transitioning their skills
 186 | to meet the demands of the marketplace. It is the intent of the
 187 | Legislature that the Veterans Employment and Training Services
 188 | Program coordinate and meet the needs of veterans, their
 189 | spouses, and the business community to enhance the economy of
 190 | this state.

191 | (2) DEFINITIONS.—For the purposes of this section, the
 192 | term:

193 | (a) "Spouse" means a person who is married to a veteran or
 194 | a person who was married to a veteran killed in action and is
 195 | not remarried.

196 | (b) "Supplemental industry" means the health care, law
 197 | enforcement, commercial construction, or education industry.

198 | (c) "Target industry" means a target industry identified
 199 | pursuant to s. 288.106(2)(q) or the defense supply, cloud
 200 | virtualization, or aviation manufacturing industry.

201 (d) "Veteran" means a member or former member of the
 202 United States Armed Forces, the United States Reserve Forces,
 203 the National Guard, or the United States Coast Guard or its
 204 reserves.

205 (3)-(2) CREATION.—The Veterans Employment and Training
 206 Services Program is created within the Department of Veterans'
 207 Affairs to assist in linking veterans or their spouses in search
 208 of employment with businesses seeking to hire dedicated, well-
 209 trained workers. The purpose of the program is to meet the
 210 workforce demands of target industry and supplemental industry
 211 businesses in the state by facilitating access to training and
 212 education in high-demand fields for veterans or their spouses.

213 (4)-(3) ADMINISTRATION.—Florida Is For Veterans, Inc.,
 214 shall administer the Veterans Employment and Training Services
 215 Program and perform all of the following functions:

216 (a) Conduct marketing and recruiting efforts directed at
 217 veterans or their spouses who reside in or who have an interest
 218 in relocating to this state and who are seeking employment.
 219 Marketing must include information related to how a veteran's
 220 military experience can be valuable to a business. Such efforts
 221 may include attending veteran job fairs and events, hosting
 222 events for veterans, their spouses, or the business community,
 223 and using digital and social media and direct mail campaigns.
 224 The corporation shall also include such marketing as part of its
 225 main marketing campaign.

226 (b) Assist veterans or their spouses who reside in or
227 relocate to this state and who are seeking employment. The
228 corporation shall offer skills assessments to veterans or their
229 spouses and assist them in establishing employment goals and
230 applying for and achieving gainful employment.

231 1. Assessment may include skill match information, skill
232 gap analysis, resume creation, translation of military skills
233 into civilian workforce skills, and translation of military
234 achievements and experience into generally understood civilian
235 workforce skills.

236 2. Assistance may include providing the veteran or his or
237 her spouse with information on current workforce demand by
238 industry or geographic region, creating employment goals, and
239 aiding or teaching general knowledge related to completing
240 applications. The corporation may provide information related to
241 industry certifications approved by the Department of Education
242 under s. 1008.44 as well as information related to earning
243 academic college credit at public postsecondary educational
244 institutions for college-level training and education acquired
245 in the military under s. 1004.096.

246 3. The corporation shall encourage veterans or their
247 spouses to register with the state's job bank system and may
248 refer veterans or their spouses to local one-stop career centers
249 for further services. The corporation shall provide each veteran
250 or his or her spouse with information about state workforce

251 programs and shall consolidate information about all available
252 resources on one website that, if possible, includes a hyperlink
253 to each resource's website and contact information, if
254 available.

255 4. Assessment and assistance may be in person or by
256 electronic means, as determined by the corporation to be most
257 efficient and best meet the needs of veterans or their spouses.

258 (c) Assist Florida target industry and supplemental
259 industry businesses in recruiting and hiring veterans or their
260 spouses. The corporation shall provide services to Florida
261 businesses to meet their hiring needs by connecting businesses
262 with suitable ~~veteran~~ applicants for employment. Suitable
263 applicants include veterans or their spouses who have
264 appropriate job skills or may need additional training to meet
265 the specific needs of a business. The corporation shall also
266 provide information about the state and federal benefits of
267 hiring veterans.

268 (d) Create a grant program to provide funding to assist
269 veterans in meeting the workforce-skill needs of target industry
270 businesses seeking to hire, promote, or generally improve
271 specialized skills of veterans, establish criteria for approval
272 of requests for funding, and maximize the use of funding for
273 this program. Grant funds may be used only in the absence of
274 available veteran-specific federally funded programs. Grants may
275 fund specialized training specific to a particular business.

276 1. If grant funds are used to provide a technical
277 certificate, a licensure, or a degree, funds may be allocated
278 only upon a review that includes, but is not limited to,
279 documentation of accreditation and licensure. Instruction funded
280 through the program terminates when participants demonstrate
281 competence at the level specified in the request but may not
282 exceed 12 months. ~~Preference shall be given to target industry~~
283 ~~businesses, as defined in s. 288.106, and to businesses in the~~
284 ~~defense supply, cloud virtualization, or commercial aviation~~
285 ~~manufacturing industries.~~

286 2. Costs and expenditures shall be limited to \$8,000 per
287 veteran trainee. Qualified businesses must cover the entire cost
288 for all of the training provided before receiving reimbursement
289 from the corporation equal to 50 percent of the cost to train a
290 veteran who is a permanent, full-time employee. Eligible costs
291 and expenditures include:

- 292 a. Tuition and fees.
- 293 b. Books and classroom materials.
- 294 c. Rental fees for facilities.

295 3. Before funds are allocated for a request pursuant to
296 this section, the corporation shall prepare a grant agreement
297 between the business requesting funds and the corporation. Such
298 agreement must include, but need not be limited to:

- 299 a. Identification of the personnel necessary to conduct
300 the instructional program, instructional program description,

301 and any vendors used to conduct the instructional program.

302 b. Identification of the estimated duration of the
303 instructional program.

304 c. Identification of all direct, training-related costs.

305 d. Identification of special program requirements that are
306 not otherwise addressed in the agreement.

307 e. Permission to access aggregate information specific to
308 the wages and performance of participants upon the completion of
309 instruction for evaluation purposes. The agreement must specify
310 that any evaluation published subsequent to the instruction may
311 not identify the employer or any individual participant.

312 4. A business may receive a grant under the Quick-Response
313 Training Program created under s. 288.047 and a grant under this
314 section for the same veteran trainee. ~~If a business receives
315 funds under both programs, one grant agreement may be entered
316 into with CareerSource Florida, Inc., as the grant
317 administrator.~~

318 (e) Contract with one or more entities to administer an
319 entrepreneur initiative program for veterans in this state which
320 connects business leaders in the state with veterans seeking to
321 become entrepreneurs.

322 1. The corporation shall award each contract in accordance
323 with the competitive bidding requirements in s. 287.057 to one
324 or more public or private entities that:

325 a. Demonstrate the ability to implement the program and

326 | the commitment of resources, including financial resources, to
327 | such programs.

328 | b. Have a demonstrated experience working with veteran
329 | entrepreneurs.

330 | c. As determined by the corporation, have been recognized
331 | for their performance in assisting entrepreneurs to launch
332 | successful businesses in the state.

333 | 2. Each contract must include performance metrics,
334 | including a focus on employment and business creation. The
335 | entity may also work with a university or college offering
336 | related programs to refer veterans or to provide services. The
337 | entrepreneur initiative program may include activities and
338 | assistance such as peer-to-peer learning sessions, mentoring,
339 | technical assistance, business roundtables, networking
340 | opportunities, support of student organizations, speaker series,
341 | or other tools within a virtual environment.

342 | (f) As the state's principal assistance organization under
343 | the United States Department of Defense's SkillBridge program
344 | for qualified target industry and supplemental industry
345 | businesses in this state and for transitioning servicemembers
346 | who reside in, or who wish to reside in, this state, the
347 | corporation shall:

348 | 1. Establish and maintain, as applicable, its
349 | certification for the SkillBridge program or any other similar
350 | workforce training and transition programs established by the

351 United States Department of Defense;

352 2. Educate businesses, business associations, and
 353 transitioning servicemembers on the SkillBridge program and its
 354 benefits, and educate military command and personnel within the
 355 state on the opportunities available to transitioning
 356 servicemembers through the SkillBridge program;

357 3. Assist businesses in obtaining approval for skilled
 358 workforce training curricula under the SkillBridge program,
 359 including, but not limited to, apprenticeships, internships, or
 360 fellowships; and

361 4. Match transitioning servicemembers who are deemed
 362 eligible for SkillBridge participation by their military command
 363 with training opportunities offered by the corporation or
 364 participating businesses, with the intent of having
 365 transitioning servicemembers achieve gainful employment in this
 366 state upon completion of their SkillBridge training.

367 (g) Assist veterans or their spouses in accessing
 368 training, education, and employment in health care professions
 369 by:

370 1. Coordinating with the Office of Veteran Licensure
 371 Services within the Department of Health in assisting veterans
 372 or their spouses in obtaining licensure under s. 456.024.

373 2. Coordinating with health care partners and institutions
 374 participating in the Linking Industry to Nursing Education
 375 (LINE) Fund under s. 1009.8962 to promote opportunities for

376 veterans and their spouses.

377 (5)~~(4)~~ DUTIES OF ENTERPRISE FLORIDA, INC.—Enterprise
378 Florida, Inc., shall provide information about the corporation
379 and its services to prospective, new, expanding, and relocating
380 businesses seeking to conduct business in this state. Enterprise
381 Florida, Inc., shall, to the greatest extent possible,
382 collaborate with the corporation to meet the employment needs,
383 including meeting the job-creation requirements, of any business
384 receiving assistance or services from Enterprise Florida, Inc.

385 Section 6. Subsection (13) of section 456.013, Florida
386 Statutes, is amended to read:

387 456.013 Department; general licensing provisions.—

388 ~~(13) The department shall waive the initial licensing fee,~~
389 ~~the initial application fee, and the initial unlicensed activity~~
390 ~~fee for a military veteran or his or her spouse at the time of~~
391 ~~discharge, if he or she applies to the department for an initial~~
392 ~~license within 60 months after the veteran is honorably~~
393 ~~discharged from any branch of the United States Armed Forces.~~
394 ~~The applicant must apply for the fee waiver using a form~~
395 ~~prescribed by the department and must submit supporting~~
396 ~~documentation as required by the department.~~

397 Section 7. Section 456.024, Florida Statutes, is amended
398 to read:

399 456.024 Members or veterans of Armed Forces in good
400 ~~standing with administrative boards or the department; spouses;~~

401 licensure.—

402 (1) A ~~Any~~ member of the United States Armed Forces ~~of the~~
 403 ~~United States now or hereafter~~ on active duty who, at the time
 404 of becoming such a member, was in good standing with a health
 405 care practitioner ~~any administrative~~ board ~~of the state~~, or the
 406 department when there is no board, and was entitled to practice
 407 a health care ~~or engage in his or her profession or vocation~~ in
 408 the state shall be kept in good standing ~~by such administrative~~
 409 ~~board, or the department when there is no board~~, without
 410 registering, paying ~~dues or~~ fees, or performing any other act ~~on~~
 411 ~~his or her part to be performed~~, for as long as he or she is a
 412 ~~member of the Armed Forces of the United States~~ on active duty
 413 and for ~~a period of~~ 6 months after discharge from active duty ~~as~~
 414 ~~a member of the Armed Forces of the United States~~, provided that
 415 he or she is not practicing ~~engaged in~~ his or her licensed
 416 profession ~~or vocation~~ in the private sector for profit.

417 (2) As used in this subsection, the term "health care
 418 practitioner" means a health care practitioner as defined in s.
 419 456.001 or a person licensed under part III of chapter 401 or
 420 part IV of chapter 468.

421 ~~(3)~~(a) A person is eligible for licensure as a health care
 422 practitioner in this state if he or she:

- 423 1. Serves or has served as a health care practitioner in
 424 the United States Armed Forces, the United States Reserve
 425 Forces, or the National Guard;

426 2. Serves or has served on active duty with the United
 427 States Armed Forces as a health care practitioner in the United
 428 States Public Health Service; or

429 3. Is a health care practitioner in another state, the
 430 District of Columbia, or a possession or territory of the United
 431 States and is the spouse of a person serving on active duty with
 432 the United States Armed Forces.

433
 434 ~~The department shall develop an application form, and each~~
 435 ~~board, or the department if there is no board, shall waive the~~
 436 ~~application fee, licensure fee, and unlicensed activity fee for~~
 437 ~~such applicants. For purposes of this subsection, "health care~~
 438 ~~practitioner" means a health care practitioner as defined in s.~~
 439 ~~456.001 and a person licensed under part III of chapter 401 or~~
 440 ~~part IV of chapter 468.~~

441 (b) The board, or the department if there is no board,
 442 shall issue a license to practice in this state to a person who:

443 1. Submits a complete application form developed by the
 444 department.

445 2. If he or she is a member of the United States Armed
 446 Forces, the United States Reserve Forces, or the National Guard,
 447 submits proof that he or she has received an honorable discharge
 448 within 6 months before, or will receive an honorable discharge
 449 ~~within 6 months~~ after, the date of submission of the
 450 application.

451 3.a. Holds an active, unencumbered license issued by
 452 another state, the District of Columbia, or a possession or
 453 territory of the United States and who has not had disciplinary
 454 action taken against him or her in the 5 years preceding the
 455 date of submission of the application;

456 b. Is a military health care practitioner in a profession
 457 for which licensure in a state or jurisdiction is not required
 458 to practice in the United States Armed Forces, if he or she
 459 submits to the department evidence of military training or
 460 experience substantially equivalent to the requirements for
 461 licensure in this state in that profession and evidence that he
 462 or she has obtained a passing score on the appropriate
 463 examination of a national or regional standards organization if
 464 required for licensure in this state; or

465 c. Is the spouse of a person serving on active duty in the
 466 United States Armed Forces and is a health care practitioner in
 467 a profession for which licensure in another state or
 468 jurisdiction is not required, if he or she submits to the
 469 department evidence of training or experience substantially
 470 equivalent to the requirements for licensure in this state in
 471 that profession and evidence that he or she has obtained a
 472 passing score on the appropriate examination of a national or
 473 regional standards organization if required for licensure in
 474 this state.

475 4. Attests that he or she is not, at the time of

476 submission of the application, the subject of a disciplinary
477 proceeding in a jurisdiction in which he or she holds a license
478 or by the United States Department of Defense for reasons
479 related to the practice of the profession for which he or she is
480 applying.

481 5. Actively practiced the profession for which he or she
482 is applying for the 3 years preceding the date of submission of
483 the application.

484 6. Submits a set of fingerprints for a background
485 screening pursuant to s. 456.0135, if required for the
486 profession for which he or she is applying.

487
488 The department shall verify information submitted by the
489 applicant under this subsection using the National Practitioner
490 Data Bank.

491 (c) Each applicant who meets the requirements of this
492 subsection shall be licensed with all rights and
493 responsibilities as defined by law. The applicable board, or the
494 department if there is no board, may deny an application if the
495 applicant has been convicted of or pled guilty or nolo
496 contendere to, regardless of adjudication, a ~~any~~ felony or
497 misdemeanor related to the practice of a health care profession
498 regulated by this state.

499 (d) The board, or the department if there is no board,
500 shall expedite all applications submitted by a veteran of the

501 Armed Forces of the United States pursuant to this subsection
 502 and shall issue a license within 7 days after receipt of all
 503 required documentation for such application.

504 (e)~~(d)~~ An applicant for initial licensure under this
 505 subsection must submit the information required by ss.
 506 456.039(1) and 456.0391(1) no later than 1 year after the
 507 license is issued.

508 (3)~~(4)~~(a) The board, or the department if there is no
 509 board, shall issue a professional license to the spouse of an
 510 active duty member of the United States Armed Forces ~~of the~~
 511 ~~United States~~ who submits all of the following to the
 512 department:

513 1. A completed application upon a form prepared and
 514 furnished by the department in accordance with the board's
 515 rules.~~†~~

516 2. Proof that the applicant is married to a member of the
 517 United States Armed Forces ~~of the United States~~ who is on active
 518 duty.~~†~~

519 3. Proof that the applicant holds a valid license for the
 520 profession issued by another state, the District of Columbia, or
 521 a possession or territory of the United States~~†~~ and is not the
 522 subject of any disciplinary proceeding in any jurisdiction in
 523 which the applicant holds a license to practice a profession
 524 regulated by this chapter.~~†~~

525 4. Proof that the applicant's spouse is assigned to a duty

526 station in this state pursuant to the member's official active
 527 duty military orders. ~~and~~

528 5. Proof that the applicant would otherwise be entitled to
 529 full licensure under the appropriate practice act, ~~and~~ is
 530 eligible to take the respective licensure examination as
 531 required in Florida.

532 (b) The applicant must also submit to the Department of
 533 Law Enforcement a complete set of fingerprints. The Department
 534 of Law Enforcement shall conduct a statewide criminal history
 535 check and forward the fingerprints to the Federal Bureau of
 536 Investigation for a national criminal history check.

537 (c) Each board, or the department if there is no board,
 538 shall review the results of the state and federal criminal
 539 history checks according to the level 2 screening standards in
 540 s. 435.04 when granting an exemption and when granting or
 541 denying the license.

542 (d) The applicant shall pay the cost of fingerprint
 543 processing. If the fingerprints are submitted through an
 544 authorized agency or vendor, the agency or vendor shall collect
 545 the required processing fees and remit the fees to the
 546 Department of Law Enforcement.

547 ~~(e) The department shall waive the applicant's licensure~~
 548 ~~application fee.~~

549 (e) ~~(f)~~ An applicant for a license under this subsection is
 550 subject to ~~the requirements under~~ s. 456.013(3) (a) and (c).

551 ~~(f)-(g)~~ An applicant shall be deemed ineligible for a
 552 license pursuant to this section if the applicant:

553 1. Has been convicted of or pled nolo contendere to,
 554 regardless of adjudication, any felony or misdemeanor related to
 555 the practice of a health care profession;

556 2. Has had a health care provider license revoked or
 557 suspended from another of the United States, the District of
 558 Columbia, or a United States territory;

559 3. Has been reported to the National Practitioner Data
 560 Bank, unless the applicant has successfully appealed to have his
 561 or her name removed from the data bank; or

562 4. Has previously failed the Florida examination required
 563 to receive a license to practice the profession for which the
 564 applicant is seeking a license.

565 ~~(g)-(h)~~ The board, or the department if there is no board,
 566 may revoke a license upon finding that the individual violated
 567 the profession's governing practice act.

568 ~~(h)-(i)~~ The board, or the department if there is no board,
 569 shall expedite all applications submitted by the ~~a~~ spouse of an
 570 active duty member of the Armed Forces of the United States
 571 pursuant to this subsection and shall issue a license within 7
 572 days after receipt of all required documentation for such
 573 application.

574 (4) The department shall waive the initial licensing fee,
 575 the initial application fee, and the initial unlicensed activity

576 fee for a military veteran or his or her spouse at the time of
577 the veteran's discharge if the veteran is honorably discharged
578 from any branch of the United States Armed Forces. The veteran
579 or spouse must apply for the fee waiver using a form prescribed
580 by the department and must submit supporting documentation as
581 required by the department. The veteran or spouse may apply for
582 a fee waiver up to 6 months before the veteran's discharge.

583 ~~(5)-(2)~~ The boards listed in s. 20.43, or the department
584 when there is no board, shall adopt rules exempting the spouses
585 of members of the Armed Forces of the United States from
586 licensure renewal provisions, but only in cases of absence from
587 the state because of their spouses' duties with the Armed
588 Forces.

589 ~~(6)-(5)~~ The spouse of a person serving on active duty with
590 the United States Armed Forces shall have a defense to any
591 citation and related cause of action brought under s. 456.065 if
592 the following conditions are met:

593 (a) The spouse holds an active, unencumbered license
594 issued by another state or jurisdiction to provide health care
595 services for which there is no equivalent license in this state.

596 (b) The spouse is providing health care services within
597 the scope of practice of the out-of-state license.

598 (c) The training or experience required by the out-of-
599 state license is substantially similar to the license
600 requirements to practice a similar health care profession in

601 | this state.

602 | Section 8. Subsection (7) of section 456.0241, Florida
603 | Statutes, is renumbered as subsection (6), paragraph (b) of
604 | subsection (2) and present subsection (6) are amended, and a new
605 | subsection (7) is added to that section, to read:

606 | 456.0241 Temporary certificate for active duty military
607 | health care practitioners.—

608 | (2) The department may issue a temporary certificate to an
609 | active duty military health care practitioner to practice in a
610 | regulated profession in this state if the applicant:

611 | (b) Submits a complete application ~~and a nonrefundable~~
612 | ~~application fee.~~

613 |
614 | The department shall verify information submitted by the
615 | applicant under this subsection using the National Practitioner
616 | Data Bank.

617 | ~~(6) The department shall, by rule, set an application fee~~
618 | ~~not to exceed \$50 and a renewal fee not to exceed \$50.~~

619 | (7) The department shall waive the temporary certification
620 | fee for an applicant under this section.

621 | Section 9. Section 456.0242, Florida Statutes, is created
622 | to read:

623 | 456.0242 Office of Veteran Licensure Services.—

624 | (1) The Office of Veteran Licensure Services is
625 | established within the Division of Medical Quality Assurance of

626 the Department of Health. The office shall be headed by an
 627 executive director, appointed by the department, who must be a
 628 veteran.

629 (2) The office shall assist active duty members of the
 630 United States Armed Forces, the United States Reserve Forces,
 631 the National Guard, and the United States Coast Guard or its
 632 reserves, veterans, and the spouses of veterans who seek to
 633 become a licensed health care practitioner in this state. The
 634 office shall:

635 (a) Provide information, guidance, direction, and
 636 assistance with health care licensure processes.

637 (b) Coordinate with each board, or the department if there
 638 is no board, to expedite all applications submitted pursuant to
 639 s. 456.024.

640 (c) Refer an individual requesting assistance with resume
 641 writing and proofreading, job application completion, and
 642 interviewing skills and techniques to Florida Is For Veterans,
 643 Inc.

644 (d) Refer an individual requesting information about
 645 education or employment opportunities in health care professions
 646 to Florida Is For Veterans, Inc.

647 (e) Submit a report by November 11 of each year to the
 648 Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the
 649 House of Representatives which provides the number of
 650 individuals served by the office and categorizes each individual

651 as an active duty member, a veteran, or a veteran's spouse.
652 Information provided in the report must also include, but is not
653 limited to:

654 1. The educational and training background of each
655 individual seeking licensure.

656 2. Each health care license an individual holds in another
657 state, irrespective of the current status of such license.

658 3. The number of licensure applications received.

659 4. The average number of calendar days required to license
660 a qualified applicant.

661 5. The number of referrals made for vocational assistance.

662 (3) The department may adopt rules to implement this
663 section.

664 Section 10. This act shall take effect July 1, 2023.