

By Senator Torres

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to the Military Corpsmen and Medics of
3 Florida Program; creating s. 295.126, F.S.; providing
4 legislative intent; defining terms; establishing the
5 Military Corpsmen and Medics of Florida (MCMF)
6 Program; providing the purposes of the program;
7 providing the components of the program; creating the
8 MCMF Program Office of Veterans Advocacy within the
9 Department of Health; providing that the MCMF Program
10 Veterans' Advocate is the head of the office;
11 providing qualifications of the advocate; prescribing
12 duties of the advocate; requiring the MCMF Program,
13 through the Department of Economic Opportunity, to
14 assist certain veterans and their spouses with
15 specified tasks; requiring Florida Is For Veterans,
16 Inc., to coordinate with specified entities to fulfill
17 the program's purposes and recruit, establish, and
18 maintain a statewide list of participating health care
19 providers; requiring the department to waive certain
20 fees for specified veterans and their spouses;
21 authorizing the department to adopt rules; amending s.
22 295.22, F.S.; requiring Florida Is for Veterans, Inc.,
23 to collaborate with specified entities to implement
24 the MCMF Program; specifying duties of Florida Is For
25 Veterans, Inc., related to the program; creating s.
26 1004.0963, F.S.; defining the term "department
27 boards"; requiring the Board of Governors and the
28 State Board Of Education, in consultation with
29 specified entities, to adopt specified regulations and

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30 rules, respectively; requiring the Articulation
31 Coordinating Committee to convene a workgroup by a
32 specified date; providing responsibilities of the
33 workgroup; providing the membership of the workgroup;
34 requiring the Office of K-20 Articulation to provide
35 administrative support to the workgroup; requiring the
36 workgroup to establish a specified process for
37 prioritizing and determining certain course
38 equivalencies and minimum credit or clock hours
39 awarded to certain individuals; requiring the
40 workgroup to provide certain recommendations to the
41 Board of Governors and the State Board of Education by
42 a specified date; requiring the Articulation
43 Coordinating Committee to approve a specified list of
44 certain course equivalencies and credits and clock
45 hours for certain veterans; requiring the committee to
46 annually update the list; requiring specified entities
47 to annually adopt the updated list; providing
48 applicability; requiring specified entities to award
49 credit and clock hours for courses taken and training
50 received by certain veterans under specified
51 conditions; authorizing postsecondary institutions to
52 award additional credit or clock hours, if
53 appropriate; providing that certain credit or clock
54 hours earned by veterans under certain conditions are
55 guaranteed to transfer to specified entities;
56 authorizing the Articulation Coordinating Committee to
57 form a certain subcommittee; providing an effective
58 date.

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

Section 1. Section 295.126, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

295.126 Military Corpsmen and Medics of Florida (MCMF) Program.—

(1) LEGISLATIVE INTENT.—It is the intent of the Legislature to assist military-trained health care veterans and their spouses in finding employment in this state's health care and health care-related industries, occupations, and professions as they transition to civilian life and to offer educational credit to military-trained health care veterans for their service in the United States military, to be applied toward the education and training required in this state to attain a health care or health care-related license to enter a health care or health care-related industry, occupation, or profession.

(2) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term:

(a) "Department" means the Department of Health.

(b) "License" has the same meaning as in s. 456.001.

(c) "Military-trained health care veteran" means a person who:

1. Has served within the preceding consecutive 12 months as an Army Combat Medic Specialist, a Navy or Fleet Marine Force Hospital Corpsman, an Air Force or Space Force Aerospace Medical Service Technician, or a Coast Guard Health Services Technician, or in other military positions similar to civilian X-ray technicians, dental assistants, medical assistants, or phlebotomists; and

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88 2. Was discharged or separated from military service under
89 conditions other than dishonorable or whose discharge was
90 upgraded to an honorable discharge.

91 (d) "Participating health care provider" means:

92 1. A physician licensed under chapter 458 or an osteopathic
93 physician licensed under chapter 459;

94 2. A professional corporation or partnership of physicians
95 licensed under chapter 458 or osteopathic physicians licensed
96 under chapter 459;

97 3. A hospital or ambulatory surgical center licensed under
98 chapter 395;

99 4. An office registered under s. 458.328 or s. 459.0138;

100 5. A commercial enterprise having medical facilities for
101 its employees which are supervised by one or more physicians
102 licensed under chapter 458 or osteopathic physicians licensed
103 under chapter 459; or

104 6. A facility licensed under chapter 395 which offers
105 medical services to the public and is supervised by one or more
106 physicians licensed under chapter 458 or osteopathic physicians
107 licensed under chapter 459.

108 (e) "Veteran" has the same meaning as in s. 1.01(14) and
109 includes a former member of the Florida National Guard who was
110 discharged or separated from service under conditions other than
111 dishonorable or was upgraded to an honorable discharge.

112 (3) ESTABLISHMENT.—The department, in collaboration with
113 the Department of Veterans' Affairs, Florida Is For Veterans,
114 Inc., and the Department of Economic Opportunity, shall
115 establish and administer the Military Corpsmen and Medics of
116 Florida (MCMF) Program.

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117 (4) PURPOSES.—The purposes of the MCMF Program include, but
118 are not limited to, the following:

119 (a) Assisting military-trained health care veterans and
120 their spouses to identify and apply for health care-related
121 employment and health care licensure and certification and to
122 connect veterans who have military health care training and are
123 seeking employment in health care fields with health care
124 organizations seeking to hire dedicated, well-trained workers.

125 (b) Meeting the health care workforce demands of this state
126 by facilitating access to training and education in health care
127 and health care-related fields for veterans and their spouses
128 and by promoting the health care licensing and certification
129 programs provided by the state.

130 (c) Assisting military-trained health care veterans and
131 their spouses to identify health care and health care-related
132 industries, occupations, and professions within this state for
133 which they may be immediately qualified to apply or to apply for
134 licensure or certification based on previous civilian or
135 military health care training.

136 (d) Assisting military-trained health care veterans and
137 their spouses to identify health care and health care-related
138 education and training programs within this state which will
139 recognize veterans' and their spouses' medical skills and which
140 will allow such veterans and spouses to build on those skills in
141 order to gain employment and work toward obtaining appropriate
142 health care licensure or certification.

143 (e) Assisting military-trained health care veterans and
144 their spouses with licensure under ss. 456.024 and 456.0241, if
145 applicable.

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146 (5) PROGRAM COMPONENTS.—The MCMF Program consists of the
147 following components:

148 (a) Office of Veterans Advocacy.—

149 1. There is created within the department the MCMF Program
150 Office of Veterans Advocacy.

151 2. The department shall designate an MCMF Program Veterans'
152 Advocate, who shall serve on a full-time basis as the head of
153 the program and carry out the purposes and functions of the
154 office in accordance with state and federal law.

155 3. The MCMF Program Veterans' Advocate shall manage the
156 implementation and administration of the program through ongoing
157 collaboration with the United States Department of Defense, the
158 Department of Veterans' Affairs, the Department of Economic
159 Opportunity, Florida Is For Veterans, Inc., the Department of
160 Education, and any other identified stakeholders to further the
161 mission of the program.

162 4. The MCMF Program Veterans' Advocate must possess
163 significant advocacy skills and an understanding of the
164 following:

165 a. The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery;

166 b. The Armed Forces Qualification Test;

167 c. United States military occupation specialty code (MOS)
168 categories;

169 d. The training received by veterans in various MOS
170 categories; and

171 e. The practice requirements of the various comparable
172 department-recognized, licensed occupations and professions.

173 5. The duties of the MCMF Program Veterans' Advocate
174 include, but are not limited to, the following:

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175 a. Providing information, guidance, direction, and
176 assistance, as needed, with the licensure or certification
177 application process or with expedited licensing or
178 certification, as appropriate, to military-trained health care
179 veterans and their spouses transitioning into civilian health
180 care and health care-related industries, occupations, and
181 professions;

182 b. Providing on the department's website and in pamphlet
183 format specific information, including available statewide
184 educational and training opportunities and resources for which
185 military-trained health care veterans and their spouses may
186 immediately qualify;

187 c. Providing guidance, direction, and assistance, as
188 needed, including specific information on the department's
189 website and in pamphlet format, for military-trained health care
190 veterans and their spouses on additional education and training
191 required to obtain licensure or certification for health care
192 and health care-related occupations and professions and whether
193 such veterans and spouses may qualify for expedited state
194 licensure or certification in the following health care and
195 health care-related occupations:

196 (I) Licensed registered or practical nurse under ss.
197 464.008, 464.009, 464.0095, and 456.024;

198 (II) Optician under s. 484.007;

199 (III) Certain radiological personnel under part IV of
200 chapter 468;

201 (IV) Emergency medical technician under chapter 401;

202 (V) Paramedic under chapter 401; and

203 (VI) Any other health care license type for which the

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204 department finds a military-trained health care veteran or his
205 or her spouse needs guidance, direction, and assistance; and

206 d. Referring any requests to the Department of Economic
207 Opportunity to assist military-trained health care veterans and
208 their spouses in resume writing and proofreading, job
209 application completion, and interviewing skills and techniques.

210 (b) No veteran left behind.—Veterans who do not meet the
211 definition of the term “military-trained health care veteran”
212 but who have served in health care-related fields must receive
213 assistance from the MCMF Program through the Department of
214 Economic Opportunity in resume writing and proofreading,
215 mentorship, and obtaining employment with participating health
216 care providers.

217 (c) Health care leadership.—The MCMF Program, through the
218 Department of Economic Opportunity, shall assist veterans and
219 their spouses who have gained management experience or have
220 completed an advanced degree in finding civilian health care
221 leadership and management employment opportunities in a variety
222 of health care and health care-related disciplines.

223 (d) Promote participating health care providers.—Florida Is
224 For Veterans, Inc., in coordination with the Department of
225 Economic Opportunity, the Department of Health, and the MCMF
226 Program Office of Veterans Advocacy, shall work to fulfill the
227 purposes of the program and to recruit, establish, and maintain
228 a statewide list of the MCMF Program participating health care
229 providers which it shall make available to the department, the
230 MCMF Program, and veterans and their spouses upon request.

231 (6) FEES.—The department shall waive all application fees,
232 certificate fees, and unlicensed activity fees for military-

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233 trained health care veterans and their spouses.

234 (7) RULEMAKING AUTHORITY.—The department may adopt rules
235 pursuant to ss. 120.536(1) and 120.54 to implement this section.

236 Section 2. Paragraph (g) is added to subsection (3) of
237 section 295.22, Florida Statutes, to read:

238 295.22 Veterans Employment and Training Services Program.—

239 (3) ADMINISTRATION.—Florida Is For Veterans, Inc., shall
240 administer the Veterans Employment and Training Services Program
241 and perform all of the following functions:

242 (g) Assist the Department of Health in fulfilling the
243 purposes of the Military Corpsmen and Medics of Florida (MCMF)
244 Program as set forth in s. 295.126(4). The corporation shall:

245 1. Recruit health care providers to participate in the MCMF
246 Program and establish and maintain a statewide list, by
247 geographical area, of such participating health care providers
248 as defined in s. 295.126(2) in furtherance of the Legislature's
249 intent to provide preference, priority, and available waivers to
250 military-trained health care veterans as defined in s.
251 295.126(2) and their spouses for certain educational
252 requirements in the hiring practices set forth in ss. 295.065,
253 295.07, 295.08, and 295.085. The corporation shall make the list
254 available to military-trained health care veterans and their
255 spouses upon request.

256 2. Assist participating health care providers in recruiting
257 and hiring military-trained health care veterans and their
258 spouses by connecting such health care providers with suitable
259 applicants for employment.

260 3. Assist a military-trained health care veteran
261 participating in the program, or the veteran's spouse, in

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262 identifying participating health care providers for potential
263 employment, including providing assistance with resume writing
264 and proofreading, application completion, and interviewing
265 skills. The corporation may consult and coordinate with the
266 Department of Economic Opportunity to make referrals for such
267 assistance.

268 4. Assist MCMF Program military-trained health care
269 veterans and their spouses who have gained management experience
270 or have completed an advanced degree in finding civilian health
271 care leadership and management employment in a variety of health
272 care and health care-related disciplines. The corporation may
273 consult and coordinate with the Department of Economic
274 Opportunity to make referrals for such assistance.

275 Section 3. Section 1004.0963, Florida Statutes, is created
276 to read:

277 1004.0963 Postsecondary credit for health care and health
278 care-related military training and education courses.-

279 (1) As used in this section, the term "department boards"
280 means any Department of Health board or the department if there
281 is no board.

282 (2) In consultation with the Department of Veterans'
283 Affairs and the Department of Health, the Board of Governors
284 shall adopt regulations, and the State Board of Education shall
285 adopt rules, to create a process that enables eligible military-
286 trained health care veterans as defined in s. 295.126(2) to earn
287 uniform postsecondary educational credit across all public
288 postsecondary educational institutions in this state for
289 college-level education and training acquired while serving in
290 the military. The regulations and rules must include procedures

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291 for credential evaluation and the uniform award of postsecondary
292 educational credit and career education academic and clinical
293 clock hours, including, but not limited to, equivalency and
294 alignment of military coursework with appropriate postsecondary
295 educational courses and course descriptions. The regulations and
296 rules must provide for procedures to develop systematically
297 coordinated educational course equivalencies to be included in
298 the statewide articulation agreement required by s. 1007.23(1)
299 which enable eligible military-trained health care veterans to
300 earn uniform educational course credit and uniform academic and
301 clinical clock hours across all public colleges, universities,
302 training schools, and training programs in this state for
303 education and training acquired in the military.

304 (3) The Articulation Coordinating Committee shall convene a
305 workgroup by July 15, 2024, which is responsible for developing
306 a process for determining postsecondary educational course
307 equivalencies and the minimum postsecondary educational credit
308 for career education and academic and clinical clock hours which
309 must be awarded for courses taken and occupations performed by
310 individuals during their service in the military.

311 (a) The workgroup shall be composed of the following
312 members:

313 1. The chair of the Articulation Coordinating Committee or
314 his or her designee, who shall serve as chair.

315 2. One member representing academic affairs administrators
316 and faculty from state universities with expertise in health
317 care and health care-related industries, occupations, and
318 professions, appointed by the chair of the Board of Governors.

319 3. One member representing academic affairs administrators

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320 and faculty from Florida College System institutions with
321 expertise in health care and health care-related industries,
322 occupations, and professions, appointed by the chair of the
323 State Board of Education.

324 4. One member representing faculty from career centers with
325 expertise in health care and health care-related industries,
326 occupations, and professions, appointed by the State Board of
327 Education.

328 5. Two members representing veterans familiar with the
329 Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery; the Armed Forces
330 Qualification Test; the military occupation specialty code (MOS)
331 categories; and the training received by veterans in various MOS
332 categories, appointed by the executive director of the
333 Department of Veterans' Affairs.

334 6. Four faculty members, appointed by the appropriate
335 department boards, who represent, respectively, state
336 universities, Florida College System institutions, career
337 centers, training schools, and training programs in this state
338 which train emergency medical technicians, opticians,
339 paramedics, licensed practical nurses, registered nurses, and
340 radiologic technologists, or other health care or health care-
341 related industries, occupations, or professions as deemed
342 appropriate by the Department of Health.

343 (b) The Office of K-20 Articulation shall provide
344 administrative support to the workgroup.

345 (c) The workgroup shall establish a process for
346 prioritizing and determining postsecondary educational course
347 equivalencies and the minimum postsecondary educational credit
348 or career education and academic and clinical clock hours that

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349 must be awarded for courses taken and training received for
350 occupations performed by individuals during their service in the
351 military. The workgroup shall provide recommendations to the
352 Board of Governors and the State Board of Education by December
353 1, 2025, for approval at the next meeting of each applicable
354 department board to allow for adequate public notice.

355 (d) Upon approval of the workgroup's recommendations, the
356 Articulation Coordinating Committee shall facilitate the review
357 of courses taken and occupations performed by individuals during
358 their service in the military for postsecondary educational
359 course equivalencies and the minimum postsecondary educational
360 credit or career education and academic and clinical clock hours
361 that must be awarded in accordance with the approved process.

362 (e) Within 1 year after approval of the workgroup's
363 recommendations, the Articulation Coordinating Committee shall
364 approve a prioritized list of systematically coordinated
365 postsecondary educational course equivalencies and the minimum
366 postsecondary educational credit for military career education
367 and training and academic and clinical clock hours that must be
368 awarded for courses taken and occupations performed by
369 individuals during their service in the military. The list must
370 be updated annually. The Board of Governors, the applicable
371 department boards, and the State Board of Education must timely
372 adopt the list approved by the Articulation Coordinating
373 Committee at the next meeting of each applicable board to allow
374 for adequate public notice. For the purpose of statewide
375 application, postsecondary educational course equivalencies and
376 the minimum postsecondary educational credit, career education,
377 and academic and clinical clock hours that must be awarded for

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378 courses taken and the training received for occupations
379 performed by individuals during service in the military must be
380 delineated by the State Board of Education and the Board of
381 Governors in the statewide articulation agreement required by s.
382 1007.23(1).

383 (f) State universities, Florida College System
384 institutions, career centers, training schools, and training
385 programs must award postsecondary educational credit and
386 academic and clinical clock hours for courses taken and training
387 received for occupations performed by individuals during service
388 in the military based on the list adopted by the Board of
389 Governors, the State Board of Education, and the applicable
390 department boards pursuant to paragraph (e) if the educational
391 credit or career education and academic and clinical clock hours
392 can be applied toward the student's degree or certificate.

393 (g) Postsecondary educational institutions may award
394 additional educational credit and academic and clinical clock
395 hours, if appropriate. Educational credit or academic and
396 clinical clock hours awarded in accordance with minimum
397 postsecondary educational credit and academic and clinical clock
398 hour requirements, respectively, are guaranteed to transfer to
399 other state universities, Florida College System institutions,
400 career centers, training schools, and training programs.

401 (h) The Articulation Coordinating Committee may form a
402 subcommittee to carry out the committee's duties under this
403 subsection.

404 Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2023.