

By the Committee on Health Policy; and Senators Torres, Wright, Avila, Brodeur, Simon, Powell, Stewart, Osgood, Thompson, and Collins

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to benefits, training, and employment
3 for veterans and their spouses; amending s. 288.0001,
4 F.S.; requiring the Economic Development Programs
5 Evaluation to include a periodic analysis of the
6 Veterans Employment and Training Services Program;
7 amending ss. 292.05 and 295.21, F.S.; revising the
8 duties of the Department of Veterans' Affairs and
9 Florida Is For Veterans, Inc., respectively, to
10 include the provision of certain assistance to
11 veterans' spouses; amending s. 295.22, F.S.; revising
12 legislative findings and intent; revising the purpose
13 and duties of the Veterans Employment and Training
14 Services Program to include provision of certain
15 assistance to veterans' spouses; requiring priority
16 for the award of certain grants to be given to
17 businesses in the health care industry; removing
18 provisions authorizing grant administration by
19 CareerSource Florida, Inc.; requiring Florida Is For
20 Veterans, Inc., to assist veterans or their spouses in
21 accessing employment and licensure in health care
22 professions; amending s. 456.013, F.S.; deleting
23 provisions relating to the waiver of certain fees for
24 veterans or their spouses; amending s. 456.024, F.S.;
25 requiring the Department of Health to waive certain
26 fees for veterans and their spouses under certain
27 circumstances; providing requirements for application
28 for such waiver; deleting a limitation on the period
29 in which a member of the United States Armed Forces

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30 must receive an honorable discharge from service in
31 order to be issued a license to practice a health care
32 profession in this state; requiring the appropriate
33 board or the department to expedite health care
34 licensure applications submitted by veterans and to
35 issue a license within a specified period; amending s.
36 456.0241, F.S.; deleting provisions relating to
37 application and renewal fees for temporary
38 certification of an active duty military health care
39 practitioner to practice in a regulated profession in
40 this state; requiring the department to waive the
41 temporary licensing fee; creating s. 456.0242, F.S.;
42 establishing the Office of Veteran Licensure Services
43 within the Division of Medical Quality Assurance;
44 requiring the office to designate a veteran as
45 executive director of the office; providing duties of
46 the office; requiring an annual report to the Governor
47 and Legislature; providing report requirements;
48 authorizing the department to adopt rules; providing
49 appropriations and authorizing positions; providing an
50 effective date.

51
52 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

53
54 Section 1. Paragraph (d) of subsection (2) of section
55 288.0001, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

56 288.0001 Economic Development Programs Evaluation.—The
57 Office of Economic and Demographic Research and the Office of
58 Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA)

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59 shall develop and present to the Governor, the President of the
60 Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the
61 chairs of the legislative appropriations committees the Economic
62 Development Programs Evaluation.

63 (2) The Office of Economic and Demographic Research and
64 OPPAGA shall provide a detailed analysis of economic development
65 programs as provided in the following schedule:

66 (d) By January 1, 2019, and every 3 years thereafter, an
67 analysis of the program ~~grant and entrepreneur initiative~~
68 ~~programs~~ established under s. 295.22(2) ~~s. 295.22(3)(d) and (e)~~.

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

71 292.05 Duties of Department of Veterans' Affairs.—

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

82 (5) The department shall conduct an ongoing study on the
83 problems and needs of those residents of this state who are
84 veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States and the
85 problems and needs of their spouses and dependents. The study
86 shall include, but not be limited to:

87 (a) A survey of existing state and federal programs

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88 available for such persons that specifies the extent to which
89 such programs presently are being implemented, with
90 recommendations for the improved implementation, extension, or
91 improvement of such programs.

92 (b) A survey of the needs of such persons in the areas of
93 social services, health care, education, and employment, and any
94 other areas of determined need, with recommendations regarding
95 federal, state, and community services that would meet those
96 needs.

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

100 Section 3. Subsection (2), paragraph (b) of subsection (3),
101 paragraph (g) of subsection (4), and paragraph (a) of subsection
102 (8) of section 295.21, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

103 295.21 Florida Is For Veterans, Inc.—

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

116 (3) DUTIES.—The corporation shall:

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117 (b) Advise the Florida Tourism Industry Marketing
118 Corporation, pursuant to s. 295.23, on:

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

120 2. Development and implementation of a marketing campaign
121 to encourage members of the target market to remain in the state
122 or to make the state their permanent residence.

123 3. Methods for disseminating information to the target
124 market that relates to the interests and needs of veterans and
125 their spouses of all ages and facilitates veterans' knowledge of
126 and access to benefits.

127 (4) GOVERNANCE.—

128 (g) A majority of the members of the board of directors
129 constitutes a quorum. Board Council meetings may be held via
130 teleconference or other electronic means.

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

135 (a) Status and summary of findings regarding the target
136 market, veteran and spouse benefits, and any identified gaps in
137 services.

138 Section 4. Subsections (1), (2), and (3) of section 295.22,
139 Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

140 295.22 Veterans Employment and Training Services Program.—

141 (1) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND INTENT.—The Legislature finds
142 that the state has a compelling interest in ensuring that each
143 veteran or his or her spouse who is a resident of the state
144 finds employment that meets his or her professional goals and
145 receives the training or education necessary to meet those

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146 goals. The Legislature also finds that connecting dedicated,
147 well-trained veterans with businesses that need a dedicated,
148 well-trained workforce is of paramount importance. The
149 Legislature recognizes that veterans or their spouses may not
150 currently have the skills to meet the workforce needs of Florida
151 employers and may require assistance in obtaining additional
152 workforce training or in transitioning their skills to meet the
153 demands of the marketplace. It is the intent of the Legislature
154 that the Veterans Employment and Training Services Program
155 coordinate and meet the needs of veterans and their spouses and
156 the business community to enhance the economy of this state.

157 (2) CREATION.—The Veterans Employment and Training Services
158 Program is created within the Department of Veterans' Affairs to
159 assist in linking veterans or their spouses in search of
160 employment with businesses seeking to hire dedicated, well-
161 trained workers. The purpose of the program is to meet the
162 workforce demands of businesses in the state by facilitating
163 access to training and education in high-demand fields for
164 veterans or their spouses.

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

168 (a) Conduct marketing and recruiting efforts directed at
169 veterans or their spouses who reside in or who have an interest
170 in relocating to this state and who are seeking employment.
171 Marketing must include information related to how a veteran's
172 military experience can be valuable to a business. Such efforts
173 may include attending veteran job fairs and events, hosting
174 events for veterans and their spouses or the business community,

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175 and using digital and social media and direct mail campaigns.
176 The corporation shall also include such marketing as part of its
177 main marketing campaign.

178 (b) Assist veterans or their spouses who reside in or
179 relocate to this state and who are seeking employment. The
180 corporation shall offer skills assessments to veterans or their
181 spouses and assist them in establishing employment goals and
182 applying for and achieving gainful employment.

183 1. Assessment may include skill match information, skill
184 gap analysis, resume creation, translation of military skills
185 into civilian workforce skills, and translation of military
186 achievements and experience into generally understood civilian
187 workforce skills.

188 2. Assistance may include providing the veteran or his or
189 her spouse with information on current workforce demand by
190 industry or geographic region, creating employment goals, and
191 aiding or teaching general knowledge related to completing
192 applications. The corporation may provide information related to
193 industry certifications approved by the Department of Education
194 under s. 1008.44 as well as information related to earning
195 academic college credit at public postsecondary educational
196 institutions for college-level training and education acquired
197 in the military under s. 1004.096.

198 3. The corporation shall encourage veterans or their
199 spouses to register with the state's job bank system and may
200 refer veterans to local one-stop career centers for further
201 services. The corporation shall provide each veteran with
202 information about state workforce programs and shall consolidate
203 information about all available resources on one website that,

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204 if possible, includes a hyperlink to each resource's website and
205 contact information, if available.

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

209 (c) Assist Florida businesses in recruiting and hiring
210 veterans and veterans' spouses. The corporation shall provide
211 services to Florida businesses to meet their hiring needs by
212 connecting businesses with suitable veteran applicants for
213 employment. Suitable applicants include veterans or veterans'
214 spouses who have appropriate job skills or may need additional
215 training to meet the specific needs of a business. The
216 corporation shall also provide information about the state and
217 federal benefits of hiring veterans.

218 (d) Create a grant program to provide funding to assist
219 veterans in meeting the workforce-skill needs of businesses
220 seeking to hire, promote, or generally improve specialized
221 skills of veterans, establish criteria for approval of requests
222 for funding, and maximize the use of funding for this program.
223 Grant funds may be used only in the absence of available
224 veteran-specific federally funded programs. Grants may fund
225 specialized training specific to a particular business.

226 1. If grant funds are used to provide a technical
227 certificate, a licensure, or a degree, funds may be allocated
228 only upon a review that includes, but is not limited to,
229 documentation of accreditation and licensure. Instruction funded
230 through the program terminates when participants demonstrate
231 competence at the level specified in the request but may not
232 exceed 12 months. Preference shall be given to target industry

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233 businesses, as defined in s. 288.106, and to businesses in the
234 defense supply, cloud virtualization, health care, or commercial
235 aviation manufacturing industries.

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

- 242 a. Tuition and fees.
- 243 b. Books and classroom materials.
- 244 c. Rental fees for facilities.

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

- 249 a. Identification of the personnel necessary to conduct the
250 instructional program, instructional program description, and
251 any vendors used to conduct the instructional program.

- 252 b. Identification of the estimated duration of the
253 instructional program.

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

- 255 d. Identification of special program requirements that are
256 not otherwise addressed in the agreement.

- 257 e. Permission to access aggregate information specific to
258 the wages and performance of participants upon the completion of
259 instruction for evaluation purposes. The agreement must specify
260 that any evaluation published subsequent to the instruction may
261 not identify the employer or any individual participant.

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262 4. A business may receive a grant under the Quick-Response
263 Training Program created under s. 288.047 and a grant under this
264 section for the same veteran trainee. ~~If a business receives~~
265 ~~funds under both programs, one grant agreement may be entered~~
266 ~~into with CareerSource Florida, Inc., as the grant~~
267 ~~administrator.~~

268 (e) Contract with one or more entities to administer an
269 entrepreneur initiative program for veterans in this state which
270 connects business leaders in the state with veterans seeking to
271 become entrepreneurs.

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

275 a. Demonstrate the ability to implement the program and the
276 commitment of resources, including financial resources, to such
277 programs.

278 b. Have a demonstrated experience working with veteran
279 entrepreneurs.

280 c. As determined by the corporation, have been recognized
281 for their performance in assisting entrepreneurs to launch
282 successful businesses in the state.

283 2. Each contract must include performance metrics,
284 including a focus on employment and business creation. The
285 entity may also work with a university or college offering
286 related programs to refer veterans or to provide services. The
287 entrepreneur initiative program may include activities and
288 assistance such as peer-to-peer learning sessions, mentoring,
289 technical assistance, business roundtables, networking
290 opportunities, support of student organizations, speaker series,

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291 or other tools within a virtual environment.

292 (f) As the state's principal assistance organization under
293 the United States Department of Defense's SkillBridge program
294 for qualified businesses in this state and for transitioning
295 servicemembers who reside in, or who wish to reside in, this
296 state, the corporation shall:

297 1. Establish and maintain, as applicable, its certification
298 for the SkillBridge program or any other similar workforce
299 training and transition programs established by the United
300 States Department of Defense;

301 2. Educate businesses, business associations, and
302 transitioning servicemembers on the SkillBridge program and its
303 benefits, and educate military command and personnel within the
304 state on the opportunities available to transitioning
305 servicemembers through the SkillBridge program;

306 3. Assist businesses in obtaining approval for skilled
307 workforce training curricula under the SkillBridge program,
308 including, but not limited to, apprenticeships, internships, or
309 fellowships; and

310 4. Match transitioning servicemembers who are deemed
311 eligible for SkillBridge participation by their military command
312 with training opportunities offered by the corporation or
313 participating businesses, with the intent of having
314 transitioning servicemembers achieve gainful employment in this
315 state upon completion of their SkillBridge training.

316 (g) Assist veterans and their spouses in accessing
317 training, education, and employment in health care professions.

318 (h) Coordinate with the Office of Veteran Licensure
319 Services within the Department of Health to assist veterans and

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320 their spouses in obtaining licensure pursuant to s. 456.024.

321 Section 5. Subsection (13) of section 456.013, Florida
322 Statutes, is amended to read:

323 456.013 Department; general licensing provisions.—

324 ~~(13) The department shall waive the initial licensing fee,~~
325 ~~the initial application fee, and the initial unlicensed activity~~
326 ~~fee for a military veteran or his or her spouse at the time of~~
327 ~~discharge, if he or she applies to the department for an initial~~
328 ~~license within 60 months after the veteran is honorably~~
329 ~~discharged from any branch of the United States Armed Forces.~~
330 ~~The applicant must apply for the fee waiver using a form~~
331 ~~prescribed by the department and must submit supporting~~
332 ~~documentation as required by the department.~~

333 Section 6. Section 456.024, Florida Statutes, is amended to
334 read:

335 456.024 Members of Armed Forces and veterans in good
336 ~~standing with administrative boards or the department;~~ spouses;
337 licensure.—

338 (1) A ~~Any~~ member of the United States Armed Forces ~~of the~~
339 ~~United States now or hereafter~~ on active duty who, at the time
340 of becoming such a member, was in good standing with a health
341 care practitioner ~~any administrative board of the state,~~ or the
342 department when there is no board, and was entitled to practice
343 a health care ~~or engage in his or her profession or vocation in~~
344 this ~~the~~ state shall be kept in good standing ~~by such~~
345 ~~administrative board, or the department when there is no board,~~
346 without registering, paying ~~dues or fees,~~ or performing any
347 other act ~~on his or her part to be performed,~~ as long as the
348 member is ~~he or she is a member of the Armed Forces of the~~

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349 ~~United States~~ on active duty and for a ~~period of~~ 6 months after
350 discharge and from active duty as a member of the Armed Forces
351 ~~of the United States, provided he or she is not practicing~~
352 ~~engaged in~~ his or her licensed profession ~~or vocation~~ in the
353 private sector for profit.

354 (2) The department shall waive the initial licensing fee,
355 the initial application fee, and the initial unlicensed activity
356 fee for a veteran or his or her spouse if the veteran is
357 honorably discharged from any branch of the United States Armed
358 Forces. The applicant must apply for the fee waiver using a form
359 prescribed by the department and must submit supporting
360 documentation as required by the department. The applicant may
361 apply for a fee waiver up to 6 months before discharge.

362 (3) The boards listed in s. 20.43, or the department when
363 there is no board, shall adopt rules exempting the spouses of
364 members of the Armed Forces of the United States from licensure
365 renewal provisions, but only in cases of absence from the state
366 because of their spouses' duties with the Armed Forces.

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

369 1. Serves or has served as a health care practitioner in
370 the United States Armed Forces, the United States Reserve
371 Forces, or the National Guard;

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

375 3. Is a health care practitioner in another state, the
376 District of Columbia, or a possession or territory of the United
377 States and is the spouse of a person serving on active duty with

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378 the United States Armed Forces.

379

380 The department shall develop an application form, and each
381 board, or the department if there is no board, shall waive the
382 application fee, licensure fee, and unlicensed activity fee for
383 such applicants. For purposes of this subsection, "health care
384 practitioner" means a health care practitioner as defined in s.
385 456.001 and a person licensed under part III of chapter 401 or
386 part IV of chapter 468.

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

389 1. Submits a complete application.

390 2. If he or she is a member of the United States Armed
391 Forces, the United States Reserve Forces, or the National Guard,
392 submits proof that he or she has received an honorable discharge
393 within 6 months before, or will receive an honorable discharge
394 ~~within 6 months~~ after, the date of submission of the
395 application.

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

401 b. Is a military health care practitioner in a profession
402 for which licensure in a state or jurisdiction is not required
403 to practice in the United States Armed Forces, if he or she
404 submits to the department evidence of military training or
405 experience substantially equivalent to the requirements for
406 licensure in this state in that profession and evidence that he

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407 or she has obtained a passing score on the appropriate
408 examination of a national or regional standards organization if
409 required for licensure in this state; or

410 c. Is the spouse of a person serving on active duty in the
411 United States Armed Forces and is a health care practitioner in
412 a profession for which licensure in another state or
413 jurisdiction is not required, if he or she submits to the
414 department evidence of training or experience substantially
415 equivalent to the requirements for licensure in this state in
416 that profession and evidence that he or she has obtained a
417 passing score on the appropriate examination of a national or
418 regional standards organization if required for licensure in
419 this state.

420 4. Attests that he or she is not, at the time of submission
421 of the application, the subject of a disciplinary proceeding in
422 a jurisdiction in which he or she holds a license or by the
423 United States Department of Defense for reasons related to the
424 practice of the profession for which he or she is applying.

425 5. Actively practiced the profession for which he or she is
426 applying for the 3 years preceding the date of submission of the
427 application.

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

431
432 The department shall verify information submitted by the
433 applicant under this subsection using the National Practitioner
434 Data Bank.

435 (c) Each applicant who meets the requirements of this

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436 subsection shall be licensed with all rights and
437 responsibilities as defined by law. The applicable board, or the
438 department if there is no board, may deny an application if the
439 applicant has been convicted of or pled guilty or nolo
440 contendere to, regardless of adjudication, a ~~any~~ felony or
441 misdemeanor related to the practice of a health care profession
442 regulated by this state.

443 (d) An applicant for initial licensure under this
444 subsection must submit the information required by ss.
445 456.039(1) and 456.0391(1) no later than 1 year after the
446 license is issued.

447 (5) (a) ~~(4) (a)~~ The board, or the department if there is no
448 board, shall issue a professional license to the spouse of an
449 active duty member of the United States Armed Forces ~~of the~~
450 ~~United States~~ who submits all of the following to the
451 department:

452 1. A completed application upon a form prepared and
453 furnished by the department in accordance with the board's
454 rules. †

455 2. Proof that the applicant is married to a member of the
456 United States Armed Forces ~~of the United States~~ who is on active
457 duty. †

458 3. Proof that the applicant holds a valid license for the
459 profession issued by another state, the District of Columbia, or
460 a possession or territory of the United States, † and is not the
461 subject of any disciplinary proceeding in any jurisdiction in
462 which the applicant holds a license to practice a profession
463 regulated by this chapter. †

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

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

467 5. Proof that the applicant would otherwise be entitled to
468 full licensure under the appropriate practice act, ~~and~~ is
469 eligible to take the respective licensure examination as
470 required in Florida.

471 (b) The applicant must also submit to the Department of Law
472 Enforcement a complete set of fingerprints. The Department of
473 Law Enforcement shall conduct a statewide criminal history check
474 and forward the fingerprints to the Federal Bureau of
475 Investigation for a national criminal history check.

476 (c) Each board, or the department if there is no board,
477 shall review the results of the state and federal criminal
478 history checks according to the level 2 screening standards in
479 s. 435.04 when granting an exemption and when granting or
480 denying the license.

481 (d) The applicant shall pay the cost of fingerprint
482 processing. If the fingerprints are submitted through an
483 authorized agency or vendor, the agency or vendor shall collect
484 the required processing fees and remit the fees to the
485 Department of Law Enforcement.

486 (e) The department shall waive the applicant's licensure
487 application fee.

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

490 (g) An applicant shall be deemed ineligible for a license
491 pursuant to this section if the applicant:

492 1. Has been convicted of or pled nolo contendere to,
493 regardless of adjudication, any felony or misdemeanor related to

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494 the practice of a health care profession;

495 2. Has had a health care provider license revoked or
496 suspended from another of the United States, the District of
497 Columbia, or a United States territory;

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

501 4. Has previously failed the Florida examination required
502 to receive a license to practice the profession for which the
503 applicant is seeking a license.

504 (h) The board, or the department if there is no board, may
505 revoke a license upon finding that the individual violated the
506 profession's governing practice act.

507 (i) The board, or the department if there is no board,
508 shall expedite all applications submitted by a spouse of an
509 active duty member or veteran of the United States Armed Forces
510 ~~of the United States~~ pursuant to this subsection and shall issue
511 a license within 7 days after receipt of all required
512 documentation for such application.

513 (6) ~~(5)~~ The spouse of a person serving on active duty with
514 the United States Armed Forces shall have a defense to any
515 citation and related cause of action brought under s. 456.065 if
516 the following conditions are met:

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

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

522 (c) The training or experience required by the out-of-state

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523 license is substantially similar to the license requirements to
524 practice a similar health care profession in this state.

525 Section 7. Paragraph (b) of subsection (2) and subsection
526 (6) of section 456.0241, Florida Statutes, are amended, and a
527 new subsection (7) is added to that section, to read:

528 456.0241 Temporary certificate for active duty military
529 health care practitioners.—

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

533 (b) Submits a complete application ~~and a nonrefundable~~
534 ~~application fee.~~

535

536 The department shall verify information submitted by the
537 applicant under this subsection using the National Practitioner
538 Data Bank.

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

541 (7) The department shall waive the temporary licensing fee.

542 Section 8. Section 456.0242, Florida Statutes, is created
543 to read:

544 456.0242 Office of Veteran Licensure Services.—

545 (1) The Office of Veteran Licensure Services is established
546 within the Division of Medical Quality Assurance. The office
547 shall assist active duty members of the United States Armed
548 Forces, the United States Reserve Forces, and the National
549 Guard, veterans, and the spouses of veterans who seek to become
550 a licensed health care practitioner in this state.

551 (2) The office shall be headed by an executive director,

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552 designated by the department, who must be a veteran.

553 (3) The office shall:

554 (a) Provide information, guidance, direction, and
555 assistance with the licensure process.

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

559 (c) Refer an individual requesting assistance with resume
560 writing and proofreading, job application completion, and
561 interviewing skills and techniques to Florida Is For Veterans,
562 Inc.

563 (d) Refer an individual requesting information about
564 educational or employment opportunities in health care
565 professions to Florida Is For Veterans, Inc.

566 (e) Submit a report by November 11 of each year to the
567 Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the
568 House of Representatives. The report must categorize each
569 individual as an active duty member, a veteran, or a veteran's
570 spouse and must include, but is not limited to:

571 1. The number of individuals served.

572 2. The educational and training background of each
573 individual seeking licensure.

574 3. Each health care license an individual holds in another
575 state, irrespective of the current status of such license.

576 4. The number of licensure applications received.

577 5. The average number of calendar days required to license
578 a qualified applicant.

579 6. The number of referrals made for vocational assistance.

580 (4) The department may adopt rules necessary to implement

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581 this section.

582 Section 9. For the 2023-2024 fiscal year, four full-time
583 equivalent positions with associated salary rate of 223,879 are
584 authorized and the sums of \$380,209 in recurring funds and
585 \$19,356 in nonrecurring funds from the Medical Quality Assurance
586 Trust Fund are appropriated to the Department of Health for the
587 purpose of implementing this act.

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