



371270

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate	.	House
Comm: RCS	.	
01/30/2024	.	
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The Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security (Collins) recommended the following:

**Senate Amendment (with title amendment)**

Delete lines 130 - 448

and insert:

(b) "Servicemember" has the same meaning as in 250.01.

(c) "Spouse" means a person who is married to a veteran, or an unremarried surviving spouse of a veteran.

(d) "Target industry business" is a business as defined in s. 288.005.

(e) "Target market" has the same meaning as in s.



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11 295.21(3)(a).

12 (f) "Veteran" means, irrespective of discharge status, a  
13 person who otherwise meets the definition of veteran in s.  
14 1.01(14) or who is a servicemember.

15 (3) CREATION.—The Veterans Employment and Training Services  
16 Program is created within the Department of Veterans' Affairs to  
17 assist in ~~connecting~~ ~~linking~~ veterans or their spouses ~~in search~~  
18 ~~of employment~~ with businesses seeking to hire dedicated, well-  
19 trained workers ~~and with opportunities for entrepreneurship~~  
20 education, training, and resources. The purpose of the program  
21 is to meet the workforce demands of businesses in ~~this~~ ~~the~~ state  
22 by facilitating access to training and education in high-demand  
23 fields for veterans or their spouses ~~and to inspire the growth~~  
24 and development of veteran-owned small businesses.

25 (4) ~~(3)~~ ADMINISTRATION.—Florida Is For Veterans, Inc., shall  
26 administer the Veterans Employment and Training Services Program  
27 and perform all of the following functions:

28 (a) Conduct marketing and recruiting efforts directed at  
29 veterans or their spouses within the target market who reside in  
30 or ~~who~~ have an interest in relocating to this state and who are  
31 seeking employment. Marketing must include information related  
32 to how a veteran's military experience can be valuable to a  
33 target industry or secondary industry business. Such efforts may  
34 include attending veteran job fairs and events, hosting events  
35 for veterans and their spouses or the business community, and  
36 using digital and social media and direct mail campaigns. The  
37 corporation shall also include such marketing as part of its  
38 main marketing campaign.

39 (b) Assist veterans or their spouses who reside in or



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40 relocate to this state and who are seeking employment with  
41 target industry or secondary industry businesses. The  
42 corporation shall offer skills assessments to veterans or their  
43 spouses and assist them in establishing employment goals and  
44 applying for and achieving gainful employment.

45 1. Assessment may include skill match information, skill  
46 gap analysis, résumé creation, translation of military skills  
47 into civilian workforce skills, and translation of military  
48 achievements and experience into generally understood civilian  
49 workforce skills.

50 2. Assistance may include providing the veteran or his or  
51 her spouse with information on current workforce demand by  
52 industry or geographic region, creating employment goals, and  
53 aiding or teaching general knowledge related to completing  
54 applications. ~~The corporation may provide information related to~~  
55 ~~industry certifications approved by the Department of Education~~  
56 ~~under s. 1008.44 as well as information related to earning~~  
57 ~~academic college credit at public postsecondary educational~~  
58 ~~institutions for college-level training and education acquired~~  
59 ~~in the military under s. 1004.096.~~

60 3. ~~The corporation shall encourage veterans or their~~  
61 ~~spouses to register with the state's job bank system and may~~  
62 ~~refer veterans to local one-stop career centers for further~~  
63 ~~services. The corporation shall provide each veteran with~~  
64 ~~information about state workforce programs and shall consolidate~~  
65 ~~information about all available resources on one website that,~~  
66 ~~if possible, includes a hyperlink to each resource's website and~~  
67 ~~contact information, if available.~~

68 4. Assessment and assistance may be in person or by



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69 electronic means, as determined by the corporation to be most  
70 efficient and best meet the needs of veterans or their spouses.

71 (c) Assist Florida target industry and secondary industry  
72 businesses in recruiting and hiring veterans and veterans'  
73 spouses. The corporation shall provide services to Florida  
74 businesses to meet their hiring needs by connecting businesses  
75 with suitable veteran applicants for employment. Suitable  
76 applicants include veterans or veterans' spouses who have  
77 appropriate job skills or may need additional training to meet  
78 the specific needs of a business. The corporation shall also  
79 provide information about the state and federal benefits of  
80 hiring veterans.

81 (d) Create a grant program to provide funding to assist  
82 veterans in meeting the workforce-skill needs of target industry  
83 and secondary industry businesses seeking to hire, promote, or  
84 generally improve specialized skills of veterans, establish  
85 criteria for approval of requests for funding, and maximize the  
86 use of funding for this program. Grant funds may be used only in  
87 the absence of available veteran-specific federally funded  
88 programs. Grants may fund specialized training specific to a  
89 particular business.

90 1. The program may prioritize ~~if~~ grant funds to be ~~are~~ used  
91 to provide a ~~technical~~ certificate, a license ~~licensure~~, or  
92 nondegree training from the Master Credentials List pursuant to  
93 s. 445.004(4) (h); any federally created certifications or  
94 licenses; and any skills-based industry certifications or  
95 licenses deemed relevant or necessary by the corporation. ~~a~~  
96 ~~degree~~, Funds may be allocated only upon a review that includes,  
97 but is not limited to, documentation of accreditation and



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98 ~~licensure. Instruction funded through the program terminates~~  
99 ~~when participants demonstrate competence at the level specified~~  
100 ~~in the request but may not exceed 12 months. Preference shall be~~  
101 ~~given to target industry businesses, as defined in s. 288.005,~~  
102 ~~and to businesses in the defense supply, cloud virtualization,~~  
103 ~~health care, or commercial aviation manufacturing industries.~~

104 2. Costs and expenditures are ~~shall be~~ limited to \$8,000  
105 per veteran trainee. Qualified businesses must cover the entire  
106 cost for all of the training provided before receiving  
107 reimbursement from the corporation equal to 50 percent of the  
108 cost to train a veteran who is a permanent, full-time employee.  
109 Eligible costs and expenditures include, but are not limited to:

- 110 a. Tuition and fees.
- 111 b. Books and classroom materials.
- 112 c. Rental fees for facilities.

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

117 a. Identification of the personnel necessary to conduct the  
118 instructional program, instructional program description, and  
119 any vendors used to conduct the instructional program.

120 b. Identification of the estimated duration of the  
121 instructional program.

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

123 d. Identification of special program requirements that are  
124 not otherwise addressed in the agreement.

125 e. Permission to access aggregate information specific to  
126 the wages and performance of participants upon the completion of



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127 instruction for evaluation purposes. The agreement must specify  
128 that any evaluation published subsequent to the instruction may  
129 not identify the employer or any individual participant.

130 4. A business may receive a grant under any state program  
131 ~~the Quick-Response Training Program created under s. 288.047~~ and  
132 a grant under this section for the same veteran trainee.

133 5. A portion of grant funds, as determined by the  
134 corporation, may be used for veterans who are not active members  
135 of the United States Armed Forces for educational stipends while  
136 training at any location of the University of Florida's  
137 Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences within this state.  
138 The corporation and the University of Florida shall enter into a  
139 grant agreement before funds are expended. The corporation must  
140 determine the amount of the stipend. The training for any  
141 individual may not be less than 4 months and not more than 6  
142 months.

143 (e) Contract with one or more entities to administer an  
144 entrepreneur initiative program for veterans in this state which  
145 connects business leaders in the state with veterans seeking to  
146 become entrepreneurs.

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

150 a. Demonstrate the ability to implement the program and the  
151 commitment of resources, including financial resources, to such  
152 programs.

153 b. Have a demonstrated experience working with veteran  
154 entrepreneurs.

155 c. As determined by the corporation, have been recognized



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156 for their performance in assisting entrepreneurs to launch  
157 successful businesses in this ~~the~~ state.

158         2. Each contract must include performance metrics,  
159 including a focus on employment and business creation. The  
160 entity may also work with a university or college offering  
161 related programs to refer veterans or to provide services. The  
162 entrepreneur initiative program may include activities and  
163 assistance such as peer-to-peer learning sessions, mentoring,  
164 technical assistance, business roundtables, networking  
165 opportunities, support of student organizations, speaker series,  
166 or other tools within a virtual environment.

167         (f) Administer a ~~As the state's principal assistance~~  
168 ~~organization under the United States Department of Defense's~~  
169 SkillBridge initiative program for target industry and secondary  
170 industry ~~qualified~~ businesses in this state and for eligible  
171 veterans ~~transitioning servicemembers~~ who reside in, or who wish  
172 to reside in, this state. In administering the initiative, the  
173 corporation shall:

174             1. Establish and maintain, as applicable, its certification  
175 for the SkillBridge initiative program or any other similar  
176 workforce training and transition programs established by the  
177 United States Department of Defense;

178             2. Educate businesses, business associations, and eligible  
179 veterans ~~transitioning servicemembers~~ on the SkillBridge  
180 initiative program and its benefits, and educate military  
181 command and personnel within the state on the opportunities  
182 available to eligible veterans ~~transitioning servicemembers~~  
183 ~~through the SkillBridge program~~;

184             3. Assist businesses in obtaining approval for skilled



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185 workforce training curricula under the SkillBridge initiative  
186 ~~program~~, including, but not limited to, apprenticeships,  
187 internships, or fellowships; and

188 4. Match eligible veterans ~~transitioning servicemembers who~~  
189 ~~are deemed eligible for SkillBridge participation by their~~  
190 ~~military command~~ with training opportunities offered by the  
191 corporation or participating businesses, with the intent of  
192 having them ~~transitioning servicemembers~~ achieve gainful  
193 employment in this state upon completion of their SkillBridge  
194 training.

195 ~~(g) Assist veterans and their spouses in accessing~~  
196 ~~training, education, and employment in health care professions.~~

197 ~~(h) Coordinate with the Office of Veteran Licensure~~  
198 ~~Services within the Department of Health to assist veterans and~~  
199 ~~their spouses in obtaining licensure pursuant to s. 456.024.~~

200 (5) COLLABORATION.—The corporation may assist state  
201 agencies and entities with recruiting veteran talent into their  
202 workforce. The corporation is encouraged to, and may collaborate  
203 with state agencies and other entities in efforts to, maximize  
204 access to and provide information on one website that, if  
205 possible, includes hyperlinks to the websites of and contact  
206 information, if available, for state agencies and other entities  
207 that maintain benefits, services, training, education, and other  
208 resources that are available to veterans and their spouses.

209 (a) Outreach, information exchange, marketing, and  
210 referrals between agencies, entities, and the corporation  
211 regarding programs and initiatives that may be conducted  
212 include, but are not limited to, the Veterans Employment and  
213 Training Services Program and those within any of the following:





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- 214        1. The Department of Veterans' Affairs:
- 215        a. Access to benefits and assistance programs.
- 216        b. Hope Navigators Program.
- 217        2. The Department of Commerce:
- 218        a. The Disabled Veteran Outreach Program and Local Veteran
- 219 Employment Representatives.
- 220        b. CareerSource Florida, Inc., and local workforce boards
- 221 employment and recruitment services.
- 222        c. The Quick-Response Training Program.
- 223        d. Select Florida.
- 224        3. The Department of Business and Professional Regulation,
- 225 reciprocity and the availability of certain license and fee
- 226 waivers.
- 227        4. The Department of Education:
- 228        a. CAPE industry certifications under s. 1008.44.
- 229        b. Information related to earning postsecondary credit at
- 230 public postsecondary educational institutions for college-level
- 231 training and education acquired in the military under s.
- 232 1004.096.
- 233        5. The Department of Health:
- 234        a. The Office of Veteran Licensure Services.
- 235        b. The Florida Veterans Application for Licensure Online
- 236 Response expedited licensing.
- 237        (b) The corporation may coordinate and collaborate with the
- 238 Office of Reimagining Education and Career Help, the State
- 239 University System, the Florida College System, the Florida
- 240 Defense Support Task Force, the Florida Small Business
- 241 Development Center Network, and the Florida Talent Development
- 242 Council, as necessary.



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243           Section 3. Section 295.25, Florida Statutes, is created to  
244 read:

245           295.25 Veterans exempt from certain filing fees.—The  
246 Department of State may not charge veterans who reside in this  
247 state the applicable fees for filing articles of organization,  
248 articles of incorporation, a certificate of limited partnership,  
249 or a partnership registration statement, or for the designation  
250 of a registered agent, if applicable, as provided in s.  
251 605.0213, s. 607.0122, s. 617.0122, s. 620.1109, or s.  
252 620.81055.

253           Section 4. Subsection (1) of section 379.353, Florida  
254 Statutes, is amended to read:

255           379.353 Recreational licenses and permits; exemptions from  
256 fees and requirements.—

257           (1) The commission shall issue without fee hunting,  
258 freshwater fishing, and saltwater fishing licenses and permits  
259 ~~shall be issued without fee~~ to any resident who is certified or  
260 determined to be:

261           (a) ~~To be~~ Totally and permanently disabled for purposes of  
262 workers' compensation under chapter 440 as verified by an order  
263 of a judge of compensation claims or written confirmation by the  
264 carrier providing workers' compensation benefits, or to be  
265 totally and permanently disabled by the Railroad Retirement  
266 Board, by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs or  
267 its predecessor, or by any branch of the United States Armed  
268 Forces, or who holds a valid identification card issued under  
269 ~~the provisions of~~ s. 295.17, upon proof of such certification or  
270 determination ~~same~~. Any license issued under this paragraph  
271 after January 1, 1997, expires after 5 years and must be



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272 reissued, upon request, every 5 years thereafter.

273 (b) ~~To be~~ Disabled by the United States Social Security  
274 Administration, upon proof of such certification or  
275 determination same. Any license issued under this paragraph  
276 after October 1, 1999, expires after 2 years and must be  
277 reissued, upon proof of certification of disability, every 2  
278 years thereafter.

279 (c) A disabled veteran of the United States Armed Forces  
280 who was honorably discharged upon separation from service and  
281 who is certified by the United States Department of Veterans  
282 Affairs or its predecessor or by any branch of the United States  
283 Armed Forces as having a service-connected disability percentage  
284 rating of 50 percent or greater, upon proof of such  
285 certification or determination. Any license issued under this  
286 paragraph after July 1, 2024, expires after 5 years and must be  
287 reissued, upon request, every 5 years thereafter.

288  
289 A disability license issued after July 1, 1997, and before July  
290 1, 2000, retains the rights vested thereunder until the license  
291 has expired.

292 Section 5. Subsections (1), (2), and (3) of section 381.78,  
293 Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

294 381.78 Advisory council on brain and spinal cord injuries.-

295 (1) There is created within the department a 16-member  
296 advisory council on brain and spinal cord injuries. The council  
297 shall be composed of a minimum of:

298 (a) Two ~~four~~ individuals who have brain injuries or are  
299 family members of individuals who have brain injuries, with one  
300 individual appointed by the President of the Senate and the



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301 other individual appointed by the Speaker of the House of  
302 Representatives., ~~a minimum of four~~

303 (b) Two individuals who have spinal cord injuries or are  
304 family members of individuals who have spinal cord injuries,  
305 with one individual appointed by the President of the Senate and  
306 the other individual appointed by the Speaker of the House of  
307 Representatives., ~~and a minimum of~~

308 (c) Two individuals who represent the special needs of  
309 children who have brain or spinal cord injuries, with one  
310 individual appointed by the President of the Senate and the  
311 other individual appointed by the Speaker of the House of  
312 Representatives.

313 (d) Two individuals who have, or who are family members of  
314 individuals who have or had, a traumatic brain injury, chronic  
315 traumatic encephalopathy, or subconcussive impacts due to  
316 sports, with one individual appointed the President of the  
317 Senate and the other individual appointed by the Speaker of the  
318 House of Representatives.

319 (e) Two veterans as defined in s. 1.01(14) who have or have  
320 had a traumatic brain injury, chronic traumatic encephalopathy,  
321 or subconcussive impacts due to military service, or family  
322 members of such veterans, with one veteran or family member  
323 appointed by the President of the Senate and the other veteran  
324 or family member appointed by the Speaker of the House of  
325 Representatives.

326 (f) Six individuals, appointed by the State Surgeon  
327 General, who are ~~The balance of the council members shall be~~  
328 physicians, other allied health professionals, administrators of  
329 brain and spinal cord injury programs, or ~~and~~ representatives



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330 from support groups who ~~that~~ have expertise in areas related to  
331 the rehabilitation of individuals who have brain or spinal cord  
332 injuries.

333 (2) ~~Members of the council shall be appointed to serve by~~  
334 ~~the State Surgeon General.~~ All members' terms shall be staggered  
335 terms of ~~for~~ 4 years. An

336  
337 ===== T I T L E A M E N D M E N T =====

338 And the title is amended as follows:

339 Delete line 38

340 and insert:

341 certain disabled veterans; providing that specified  
342 licenses issued to such veterans expire periodically  
343 and must be reissued upon request after such time  
344 period; amending s. 381.78, F.S.;