

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES BILL ANALYSIS

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BILL #: [CS/HB 555](#)

TITLE: Marijuana

SPONSOR(S): Andrade

COMPANION BILL: None

LINKED BILLS: None

RELATED BILLS: None

Committee References

[Health Professions & Programs](#)

16 Y, 0 N, As CS

SUMMARY

Effect of the Bill:

The bill exempts an individual who can prove their status as an honorably discharged veteran from the medical marijuana use registry identification card fee. The bill also extends the period of time for renewal of marijuana use registry identification cards from annually to biennially.

Fiscal or Economic Impact:

The bill has an indeterminate, negative fiscal impact on the Department of Health and no fiscal impact local government.

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ANALYSIS

EFFECT OF THE BILL:

A patient must have a valid medical marijuana use registry identification card to obtain medical marijuana and medical marijuana delivery devices from a medical marijuana treatment center. A patient must apply to the Office of Medical Marijuana Use (OMMU), within Department of Health (DOH), to obtain a medical marijuana use registry identification card. The annual application fee is \$75 and OMMU does not currently offer a reduction or waiver of this fee. As of March 28, 2025, there were 905,556 qualified patients with active medical marijuana use registry identification cards.

Florida is home to 21 military installations and 69,290 military personnel. Florida also has the nation's third-largest veteran population with more than 1.4 million veterans. Many of these veterans are recently transitioned servicemembers.

The bill exempts an individual who can prove their status as an honorably discharged veteran from the \$75 medical marijuana use registry identification card fee. The number of veterans who hold active medical marijuana use registry identification cards is unknown however, OMMU will no longer be able to collect fees from these patients.

The bill also requires patients to renew their marijuana use registry identification cards biennially rather than annually, as required by current law. This will result in a reduction in the frequency of how often a patient must be renew their marijuana use registry identification card but will not reduce the cost for the identification card.

FISCAL OR ECONOMIC IMPACT:

STATE GOVERNMENT:

The bill has an indeterminate, negative fiscal impact on DOH. Currently, there are 905,556 qualified patients with active medical marijuana use registry identification cards who must pay \$75 annually to retain an active

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DATE: 4/3/2025

identification card. The number of veterans who hold active medical marijuana use registry identification cards is unknown; however, DOH will no longer be able to collect fees from these patients.

PRIVATE SECTOR:

The bill will have a positive fiscal impact on veterans who will not be required to pay the annual \$75 identification card fee.

RELEVANT INFORMATION

SUBJECT OVERVIEW:

Marijuana for Medical Use

Section 381.986, F.S., authorizes patients with any of the following debilitating medical conditions to obtain medical marijuana from Medical Marijuana Treatment Centers (MMTC):

- Cancer
- Epilepsy
- Glaucoma
- Positive status for human immunodeficiency virus
- Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis
- Crohn's disease
- Parkinson's disease
- Multiple sclerosis
- Medical conditions of the same kind or class as or comparable to those enumerated above

To obtain marijuana for medical use from a MMTC, and maintain the immunity from criminal prosecution, a patient must obtain a physician certification from a qualified physician¹ and an identification card from the Office of Medical Marijuana Use (OMMU).

Physician Certification

To certify a patient for medical use of marijuana, a qualified physician must conduct a physical examination of the patient and determine that the patient has a qualifying medical condition and that medical marijuana would likely outweigh the health risks to the patient.² A qualified physician must be physically present in the same room when conducting the initial examination on a qualified patient.³ The physician must evaluate an existing patient at least once every 30 weeks before issuing a renewal physician certification.⁴ Under current law, the physician must conduct the in-person⁵ physical examination of the patient to issue the initial certification and may conduct any subsequent examinations for renewal certifications through telehealth.⁶

After diagnosing a patient with a qualifying condition, a qualified physician must review and enter certain data into the medical marijuana use registry. The physician must review the medical marijuana use registry and confirm that the patient does not have an active physician certification from another qualified physician.⁷ The physician must then register as the issuer of the physician certification for the named qualified patient in the medical marijuana

¹ To certify patients for medical use of marijuana, a physician must hold an active, unrestricted license as an allopathic physician under chapter 458 or as an osteopathic physician under chapter 459 and comply with certain physician education requirements. See ss. 381.986(1)(m), F.S. and 381.986(3)(a), F.S.

² S. 381.986, F.S.

³ S. 381.986(a), F.S.

⁴ S. 381.986(4)(g), F.S.

⁵ This means that the physician must be physically present and in the same room as the patient. S. 381.986(4)(a)1, F.S.

⁶ S. 381.986, F.S.

⁷ *Id.*

use registry and enter into the registry the contents of the physician certification, including the patient’s qualifying condition, the dosage, the amount and forms of marijuana authorized, and any types of marijuana delivery devices needed by the patient.⁸

Medical Marijuana Use Registry Identification Card

A qualified patient must have a physician certification in the medical marijuana use registry and have a valid medical marijuana use registry identification card to obtain medical marijuana and medical marijuana delivery devices from a MMTC. OMMU must issue medical marijuana use registry identification cards to qualified patients and caregivers who are residents of this state. The identification cards must be resistant to counterfeiting and tampering and must include, at a minimum, the following:

- The name, address, and date of birth of the qualified patient or caregiver;
- A full-face, passport-type, color photograph of the qualified patient or caregiver taken within the 90 days immediately preceding registration or the Florida driver license or Florida identification card photograph of the qualified patient or caregiver obtained directly from the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles;
- Identification as a qualified patient or a caregiver;
- The unique numeric identifier used for the qualified patient in the medical marijuana use registry;
- For a caregiver, the name and unique numeric identifier of the caregiver and the qualified patient or patients that the caregiver is assisting; and
- The expiration date of the identification card.

As of As of March 28, 2025, there were 905,556 qualified patients with active medical marijuana use registry identification cards.⁹ The Office of Medical Marijuana Use (OMMU) processes applications for identification cards within 5 business days of receipt of a complete application. The annual application fee is \$75 and OMMU does not currently offer a reduction or waiver of this fee.

Veterans

Florida is home to 21 military installations¹⁰ and 69,290 military personnel.¹¹ Florida also has the nation’s third-largest veteran¹² population with almost 1.4 million veterans.¹³ Many of these veterans are recently transitioned servicemembers.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has issued informational guidance for the use of medical marijuana by veterans:¹⁴

- Veterans will not be denied VA benefits because of marijuana use.

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ *Office of Medical Marijuana Use Weekly Updates, March 28, 2025*, DOH, Office of Medical Marijuana Use, available at https://knowthefactsmmj.com/wp-content/uploads/ommu_updates/2025/032825-OMMU-Update.pdf (last visited on March 30, 2025).

¹⁰ Select Florida, *Defense & Homeland Security*, 2, <https://selectflorida.org/wp-content/uploads/defense-and-homeland-security-industry-profile.pdf> (last visited March 30, 2025).

¹¹ Data from September 2021. Florida Military & Defense, *Economic Impact Summary* (2022), 2, available at <https://selectflorida.org/wp-content/uploads/Florida-2022-EIS-Summary-Book-Final.pdf> (last visited March 30, 2025).

¹² S. 1.01(14), F.S., defines a “veteran” as a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released under honorable conditions, or who later received an upgraded discharge under honorable conditions. The definition in s. 1.01(14), F.S., is cited in numerous statutes, including ss. 117.02, 265.003, 292.055, 295.02, 295.07, 295.187, 295.188, 296.02, 296.08, 296.33, 296.36, 409.1664, 548.06, 943.17, and 1009.26, F.S.

¹³ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, *VetPop2020 by State, Age Group, Gender, 2020-2050*, available at https://www.va.gov/vetdata/veteran_population.asp (last visited March 30, 2025). The Veteran Population Projection Model 2020 (VetPop2020) provides an official veteran population projection from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

¹⁴ *VA and Marijuana – What Veterans need to know*, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, <https://www.publichealth.va.gov/marijuana.asp> (last visited on March 30, 2025).

- Veterans are encouraged to discuss marijuana use with their VA providers.
- VA health care providers will record marijuana use in the Veteran's VA medical record in order to have the information available in treatment planning. As with all clinical information, this is part of the confidential medical record and protected under patient privacy and confidentiality laws and regulations.
- VA clinicians may not recommend medical marijuana.
- VA clinicians may only prescribe medications that have been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for medical use. At present most products containing tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), cannabidiol (CBD), or other cannabinoids are not approved for this purpose by the FDA.
- VA clinicians may not complete paperwork/forms required for Veteran patients to participate in state-approved marijuana programs.
- VA pharmacies may not fill prescriptions for medical marijuana.
- VA will not pay for medical marijuana prescriptions from any source.
- VA scientists may conduct research on marijuana benefits and risks, and potential for abuse, under regulatory approval.
- The use or possession of marijuana is prohibited at all VA medical centers, locations and grounds. When you are on VA grounds it is federal law that is in force, not the laws of the state.
- Veterans who are VA employees are subject to drug testing under the terms of employment.

The number of veterans who hold active medical marijuana use registry identification cards is currently unknown.

BILL HISTORY

COMMITTEE REFERENCE	ACTION	DATE	STAFF DIRECTOR/ POLICY CHIEF	ANALYSIS PREPARED BY
Health Professions & Programs Subcommittee	16 Y, 0 N, As CS	4/3/2025	McElroy	McElroy

THE CHANGES ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

THIS BILL ANALYSIS HAS BEEN UPDATED TO INCORPORATE ALL OF THE CHANGES DESCRIBED ABOVE.
