

**By Senator Jones**

34-01094-26

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A bill to be entitled

An act relating to business development incentives for veterans and military spouses; creating s. 295.189, F.S.; providing a short title; providing legislative findings and intent; providing definitions; requiring the Department of State to waive specified fees for certain businesses; providing eligibility and registration requirements for such waivers; providing applicability; providing tax exemptions for certain businesses; providing eligibility requirements for such exemptions; requiring the Department of Revenue to establish procedures for claiming such exemptions; providing applicability; providing for rulemaking and interagency cooperation; providing annual reporting requirements; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Section 295.189, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

295.189 Business development incentives for veterans and military spouses.—

(1) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the "Florida Veterans and Military Spouses Business Development Act."

(2) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND INTENT.—

(a) The Legislature finds that veterans and military spouses contribute significantly to this state's economy through their skills, expertise, and entrepreneurial efforts.

(b) The Legislature recognizes the challenges of frequent

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30 relocations and economic instability faced by many military  
31 spouses.

32 (c) It is the intent of the Legislature that this act  
33 attract and support veteran-owned and military spouse-owned  
34 businesses by providing incentives.

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

36 (a) "Military spouse" means a spouse of:

37 1. An active duty member of the United States Armed Forces;

38 or

39 2. A veteran.

40 (b) "Veteran" has the same meaning as in s. 1.01(14).

41 (c) "Veteran-owned or military spouse-owned business" means  
42 a business entity:

43 1. That employs 200 or fewer permanent full-time employees.

44 2. That, together with its affiliates, has a net worth of  
45 \$5 million or less or, if a sole proprietorship, has a net worth  
46 of \$5 million or less including personal and business  
47 investments.

48 3. That is organized to engage in commercial transactions.

49 4. That is domiciled in this state.

50 5. That is at least 51 percent owned and operated by one or  
51 more veterans or military spouses.

52 6. The management and daily business operations of which  
53 are controlled by one or more veterans or military spouses.

54 7. That has a professional license, if required by the  
55 industry, in the name of a veteran or military spouse who owns  
56 the business entity.

57 (4) FEE WAIVER.—

58 (a) The Department of State shall waive all fees for:

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59       1. A new business established by a veteran or military  
60       spouse.

61       2. An existing veteran-owned or military spouse-owned  
62       business that relocates to this state.

63       (b) The Department of State shall establish registration  
64       requirements for such fee waivers, which must include:

65       1. For veterans, a DD Form 214 or another acceptable form  
66       of identification as specified by the United States Department  
67       of Veterans' Affairs; or

68       2. For military spouses, verification of a military spouse  
69       relationship and that the other spouse is on active duty or a  
70       veteran.

71       (c) The fee waivers apply to veteran-owned or military  
72       spouse-owned businesses established between July 1, 2026, and  
73       June 30, 2031.

74       (5) TAX EXEMPTIONS.—

75       (a) Eligible veteran-owned or military spouse-owned  
76       businesses shall receive:

77       1. A 5-year tax exemption from the corporate income tax and  
78       the franchise tax.

79       a. A business that is 100 percent veteran-owned or military  
80       spouse-owned shall receive the 5-year tax exemption after being  
81       in business for at least 5 years.

82       b. A business that is at least 51 percent veteran-owned or  
83       military spouse-owned but does not qualify for the tax exemption  
84       under sub subparagraph a. shall receive the 5-year tax exemption  
85       after being in business for at least 7 years.

86       2. A one-time sales tax exemption on equipment and supplies  
87       directly related to business operations.

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88        (b) The Department of Revenue shall establish procedures  
89        for claiming the tax exemptions.

90        (c) For veteran-owned or military spouse-owned businesses  
91        relocating to this state, the tax exemptions apply for 5 years  
92        after the date on which the business is established.

93        (6) ADMINISTRATION.—The Department of Veterans' Affairs and  
94        the Department of State shall:

95        (a) Develop rules for administering this section.  
96        (b) Ensure interagency cooperation for seamless  
97        implementation of this section.

98        (7) ANNUAL REPORTING.—Beginning December 31, 2026, and each  
99        December 31 thereafter, the Department of Veterans' Affairs  
100       shall submit a report to the Governor, the President of the  
101       Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives which  
102       includes:

103       (a) The number of veteran-owned or military spouse-owned  
104       businesses that were established in this state or that relocated  
105       to this state.

106       (b) Economic metrics such as job creation and tax revenue  
107       impact from veteran-owned and military spouse-owned businesses.

108       (c) Demographic data for the participating veterans and  
109       military spouses.

110       Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.