

By the Committee on Governmental Oversight and Accountability;
and Senator Wright

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30 Guard be governed by a specified provision; amending
31 s. 250.10, F.S.; deleting a requirement that the
32 Adjutant General administer youth About Face programs
33 and adult Forward March programs; deleting provisions
34 governing the programs; amending s. 250.116, F.S.;
35 revising eligibility for the Soldiers and Airmen
36 Assistance Program to include traditional drilling
37 guardsmen on state active duty or on Title 32 United
38 States Code duty and their eligible beneficiaries
39 experiencing valid financial need; defining the term
40 "beneficiary"; revising the review process for
41 requests for assistance to be reviewed, processed, and
42 approved by the Florida National Guard Foundation's
43 board of directors; revising the criteria to review
44 and evaluate requests for assistance; requiring an
45 annual external audit of the program; requiring the
46 board of directors to review annually the bylaws that
47 govern the program; requiring the board of directors
48 to provide a report to the Department of Military
49 Affairs to be approved by the Adjutant General;
50 reenacting s. 115.06, F.S., relating to resumption of
51 duties for officers returning from the service of the
52 United States, to incorporate the amendment made to s.
53 115.01, F.S., in a reference thereto; providing an
54 effective date.

55
56 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

57
58 Section 1. Section 115.01, Florida Statutes, is amended to

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59 read:

60 115.01 Leave of absence for military service.—Any county or
61 state official of the state, subject to the provisions and
62 conditions hereinafter set forth, may be granted leave of
63 absence from his or her office, to serve in the volunteer forces
64 of the United States, or in the National Guard of any state, or
65 in the regular Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard,
66 or Space Force of the United States, when the same shall be
67 called into active service of the United States ~~during war~~
68 ~~between the United States and a foreign government.~~

69 Section 2. Subsections (1) and (4) of section 115.07,
70 Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

71 115.07 Officers and employees' leaves of absence for
72 reserve or guard training.—

73 (1) All officers or employees of the state, of the several
74 counties of the state, and of the municipalities or political
75 subdivisions of the state who are commissioned reserve officers
76 or reserve enlisted personnel in the United States military or
77 naval service or members of the National Guard or the Florida
78 State Guard are entitled to leaves of absence from their
79 respective duties, without loss of vacation leave, pay, time, or
80 efficiency rating, on all days during which they are engaged in
81 training ordered under the provisions of the United States
82 military or naval training regulations or the applicable laws of
83 this state for such personnel when assigned to active or
84 inactive duty.

85 (4) It is the intent of the Legislature that the state, its
86 several counties, and its municipalities and political
87 subdivisions shall grant leaves of absence for active or

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88 inactive training to all employees who are members of the United
89 States Reserve Forces, or the National Guard, or the Florida
90 State Guard, to ensure the state and national security at all
91 times through a strong armed force of qualified and
92 mobilization-ready personnel.

93 Section 3. Subsection (1) of section 115.08, Florida
94 Statutes, is amended to read:

95 115.08 Definitions.—

96 (1) The term "active military service" as used in this
97 chapter means shall signify active duty in the Florida State
98 Guard defense force or federal service in training or on active
99 duty with any branch of the Armed Forces or Reservists of the
100 Armed Forces, the Florida National Guard, the Coast Guard of the
101 United States, and service of all officers of the United States
102 Public Health Service detailed by proper authority for duty with
103 the Armed Forces, and includes shall include the period during
104 which a person in military service is absent from duty on
105 account of sickness, wounds, leave, or other lawful cause.

106 Section 4. Section 115.09, Florida Statutes, is amended to
107 read:

108 115.09 Leave to public officials for military service.—All
109 officials of the state, the several counties of the state, and
110 the municipalities or political subdivisions of the state,
111 including district school and Florida community College System
112 officers, which officials are also servicemembers in the
113 National Guard or a reserve component of the Armed Forces of the
114 United States, must be granted leave of absence from their
115 respective offices and duties to perform active military
116 service, with the first 30 days of any such leave of absence to

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117 be with full pay for active federal military service that is
118 equal to or greater than 90 consecutive days on a single order.

119 Section 5. Section 115.14, Florida Statutes, is amended to
120 read:

121 115.14 Employees.—All employees of the state, the several
122 counties of the state, and the municipalities or political
123 subdivisions of the state, including district school and Florida
124 College System employees, must be granted leave of absence under
125 the terms of this law; upon such leave of absence being granted,
126 such employee must enjoy the same rights and privileges as are
127 granted to officials under this law, including, without
128 limitation, receiving full pay for the first 30 days for federal
129 military service that is equal to or greater than 90 consecutive
130 days on a single order. Notwithstanding s. 115.09, the employing
131 authority may supplement the military pay of its officials and
132 employees who are reservists called to active military service
133 after the first 30 days in an amount necessary to bring their
134 total salary, inclusive of their base military pay, to the level
135 earned at the time they were called to active military duty. The
136 employing authority shall continue to provide all health
137 insurance and other existing benefits to such officials and
138 employees as required by the Uniformed Services Employment and
139 Reemployment Rights Act, chapter 43 of Title 38 U.S.C.

140 Section 6. Paragraph (g) of subsection (1) of section
141 121.055, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

142 121.055 Senior Management Service Class.—There is hereby
143 established a separate class of membership within the Florida
144 Retirement System to be known as the "Senior Management Service
145 Class," which shall become effective February 1, 1987.

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146 (1)

147 (g) Effective July 1, 1996, participation in the Senior
148 Management Service Class shall be compulsory for any member of
149 the Florida Retirement System employed with the Department of
150 Military Affairs in the positions of the Adjutant General,
151 Assistant Adjutant General-Army, Assistant Adjutant General-Air,
152 and State Quartermaster, Director of Human Resources, Director
153 of Legislative Affairs, Inspector General, Executive Officer,
154 and additional directors as designated by the agency head, not
155 to exceed a total of 10 positions. In lieu of participation in
156 the Senior Management Service Class, such members may
157 participate in the Senior Management Service Optional Annuity
158 Program as established in subsection (6). Eligibility for
159 participation in the Senior Management Service Class for all
160 other members of the Florida Retirement System employed within
161 the Department of Military Affairs or within the Division of the
162 State Guard is separately governed by s. 110.205.

163 Section 7. Paragraph (m) of subsection (2) of section
164 250.10, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

165 250.10 Appointment and duties of the Adjutant General.—

166 (2) The Adjutant General shall:

167 ~~(m) Subject to annual appropriations, administer youth~~
168 ~~About Face programs and adult Forward March programs at sites to~~
169 ~~be selected by the Adjutant General. Both programs must provide~~
170 ~~schoolwork assistance, focusing on the skills needed to master~~
171 ~~basic high school competencies and functional life skills,~~
172 ~~including teaching students to work effectively in groups,~~
173 ~~providing basic instruction in computer skills; teaching basic~~
174 ~~problem solving, decisionmaking, and reasoning skills; teaching~~

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175 ~~how the business world and free enterprise work through computer~~
176 ~~simulations; and teaching home finance and budgeting and other~~
177 ~~daily living skills.~~

178 ~~1. About Face is a summer and year-round after-school life-~~
179 ~~preparation program for economically disadvantaged and at-risk~~
180 ~~youths from 13 through 17 years of age. The program must provide~~
181 ~~training in academic study skills, and the basic skills that~~
182 ~~businesses require for employment consideration.~~

183 ~~2. Forward March is a job-readiness program for~~
184 ~~economically disadvantaged participants who are directed to~~
185 ~~Forward March by the local workforce development boards. The~~
186 ~~Forward March program shall provide training on topics that~~
187 ~~directly relate to the skills required for real-world success.~~
188 ~~The program shall emphasize functional life skills, computer~~
189 ~~literacy, interpersonal relationships, critical thinking skills,~~
190 ~~business skills, preemployment and work maturity skills, job-~~
191 ~~search skills, exploring careers activities, how to be a~~
192 ~~successful and effective employee, and some job-specific skills.~~
193 ~~The program also shall provide extensive opportunities for~~
194 ~~participants to practice generic job skills in a supervised work~~
195 ~~setting. Upon completion of the program, Forward March shall~~
196 ~~return participants to the local workforce development boards~~
197 ~~for placement in a job placement pool.~~

198 Section 8. Subsections (4), (5), and (6) of section
199 250.116, Florida Statutes, are amended, and subsection (7) is
200 added to that section, to read:

201 250.116 Soldiers and Airmen Assistance Program.—

202 (4) ~~ELIGIBILITY.—Persons eligible for assistance from the~~
203 ~~program include:~~

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(a) Persons eligible for assistance from the program
include servicemembers who are members of the Florida National
Guard who are:

1. traditional drilling guardsmen on state active duty or on Title 32 United States Code duty, who otherwise do not qualify for the assistance programs available to servicemembers serving under Title 10 United States Code, and who demonstrate valid financial need, and their eligible beneficiaries, and such persons are authorized to apply for and receive financial assistance from the program, as administered by the Florida National Guard Foundation's board of directors and its governing bylaws, contingent upon the availability of funds serving in the Global War on Terrorism or Overseas Contingency Operation or who request assistance within 120 days after the termination of orders for such service and return to their home of record.

2. Deployed by the Federal Government and participating in state operations for homeland defense or request assistance within 120 days after the termination of orders for such service and return to their home of record.

(b) 1. As used in this subsection, the term "beneficiary" means the current spouse, dependent children, or other beneficiaries as designated in the servicemember's service component records. Beneficiaries of an eligible servicemember designated on United States Department of Defense Form 93.

2. Individuals demonstrating a financial need for authorized assistance who are dependents or family members of an eligible servicemember.

(5) REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE; REVIEW; AWARDS.—

(a) A request for assistance must ~~shall~~ be reviewed, and

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233 processed, and approved by the Florida National Guard
234 Foundation's board of directors at the local level by an
235 official designated by the Adjutant General. During the initial
236 review and processing of the request, the Department of Military
237 Affairs may accept assistance from the direct support
238 organization. Final review and approval of requests for
239 assistance shall be made by the Department of Military Affairs.

240 (b) Requests for assistance must shall be reviewed and
241 evaluated based on the following criteria:

242 1. The impact of a servicemember's financial situation
243 ~~absence and inability to provide quality of life and other~~
244 ~~qualifying life-impacting assist in home and vehicle repairs or~~
245 ~~meet other family needs;~~
246 2. The ~~economic impact of deployment;~~
247 3. The ~~overall financial situation of the applicant;~~
248 4. The assistance authorized under the program; and
249 3.5. Any other consideration dictated in the bylaws of the
250 Florida National Guard Foundation ~~Other relevant information.~~

251 (6) ANNUAL QUARTERLY FINANCIAL REVIEW.—The financial
252 committee of the board of directors of the direct-support
253 organization shall review financial transactions of the program
254 each quarter. The board of directors also must ensure an annual
255 external audit is completed and published on the publicly
256 available website of the direct-support organization. This audit
257 must review shall be provided to the Department of Military
258 Affairs in order to determine whether the direct-support
259 organization is being operated in a manner that is consistent
260 with the purposes of the Soldiers and Airmen Assistance Fund,
261 and in the best interests of the department. The financial

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262 committee may request the Office of Inspector General to conduct
263 additional reviews.

264 (7) ANNUAL BYLAW REVIEW.—The board of directors of the
265 direct-support organization shall annually review its bylaws
266 that govern the Soldiers and Airmen Assistance Program. This
267 review shall be provided in a report to the Department of
268 Military Affairs and subject to approval by the Adjutant
269 General.

270 Section 9. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment
271 made by this act to section 115.01, Florida Statutes, in a
272 reference thereto, section 115.06, Florida Statutes, is
273 reenacted to read:

274 115.06 Reassumption of duties.—Upon being mustered out of
275 the service of the United States, such officer granted leave
276 under s. 115.01 shall immediately enter into the duties of his
277 or her office for the remainder of the term for which he or she
278 was elected.

279 Section 10. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.