

## **CS/CS/SB 644 — Direct Support Organization/Department of Military Affairs**

by Transportation and Economic Development Appropriations Committee; Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee; and Senators Justice, Baker, Gaetz, and Wilson (CS/HB 395 by Military and Local Affairs Policy Committee; and Rep. Abruzzo and others)

The bill establishes the Soldiers and Airmen Assistance Program to provide need-based financial assistance to eligible Florida National Guard members and their dependents and families. In addition, the bill authorizes the Department of Military Affairs' existing direct support organization to support the program.

The Soldiers and Airmen Assistance Program is funded by the department's direct support organization. Assistance available under the program may include:

- Housing assistance;
- Living expenses;
- Repairs of the servicemember's primary vehicle;
- Health care; and
- Other reasonable expenses.

Members of the Florida National Guard who are serving in the Global War on Terrorism, Overseas Contingency Operations, or deployed by the federal government for homeland defense are eligible for program participation. Eligibility is extended to Guard members' families and dependents.

The direct support organization is required to conduct a quarterly review of financial transactions and submit this review to the department.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2010.

*Vote: Senate 36-0; House 112-0*