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CS/CS/HB 139

2023 Legislature

1
 2 An act relating to benefits, training, and employment
 3 for veterans and their spouses; amending s. 288.0001,
 4 F.S.; requiring the Economic Development Programs
 5 Evaluation to include a periodic analysis of the
 6 Veterans Employment and Training Services Program;
 7 amending ss. 292.05 and 295.21, F.S.; revising the
 8 duties of the Department of Veterans' Affairs and
 9 Florida Is For Veterans, Inc., respectively, to
 10 include provision of certain assistance to veterans'
 11 spouses; amending s. 295.22, F.S.; revising
 12 legislative findings and intent; revising the purpose
 13 and duties of the Veterans Employment and Training
 14 Services Program to include provision of certain
 15 assistance to veterans' spouses; requiring priority
 16 for the award of certain grants to be given to
 17 businesses in the health care industry; removing
 18 provisions authorizing grant administration by
 19 CareerSource Florida, Inc.; requiring Florida Is For
 20 Veterans, Inc., to assist veterans or their spouses in
 21 accessing employment and licensure in health care
 22 professions; amending s. 456.013, F.S.; removing
 23 provisions relating to the waiver of certain fees for
 24 veterans or their spouses; amending s. 456.024, F.S.;
 25 requiring the Department of Health to waive certain

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CS/CS/HB 139

2023 Legislature

26 | fees for veterans and their spouses under certain
 27 | circumstances; providing requirements for application
 28 | for such waiver; removing a limitation on the period
 29 | in which a member of the United States Armed Forces
 30 | must receive an honorable discharge from service in
 31 | order to be issued a license to practice a health care
 32 | profession in this state; requiring the appropriate
 33 | board or the department to expedite health care
 34 | licensure applications submitted by veterans and to
 35 | issue a license within a specified period; amending s.
 36 | 456.0241, F.S.; removing provisions relating to
 37 | application and renewal fees for temporary
 38 | certification of an active duty military health care
 39 | practitioner to practice in a regulated profession in
 40 | this state; requiring the department to waive the
 41 | temporary licensing fee; creating s. 456.0242, F.S.;
 42 | establishing the Office of Veteran Licensure Services
 43 | within the Division of Medical Quality Assurance;
 44 | requiring the office to designate a veteran as
 45 | executive director of the office; providing duties of
 46 | the office; requiring an annual report to the Governor
 47 | and Legislature; providing report requirements;
 48 | authorizing the department to adopt rules; providing
 49 | appropriations and authorizing positions; providing an
 50 | effective date.

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CS/CS/HB 139

2023 Legislature

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

Section 1. Paragraph (d) of subsection (2) of section 288.0001, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

288.0001 Economic Development Programs Evaluation.—The Office of Economic and Demographic Research and the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) shall develop and present to the Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the chairs of the legislative appropriations committees the Economic Development Programs Evaluation.

(2) The Office of Economic and Demographic Research and OPPAGA shall provide a detailed analysis of economic development programs as provided in the following schedule:

(d) By January 1, 2019, and every 3 years thereafter, an analysis of the program ~~grant and entrepreneur initiative programs~~ established under s. 295.22(2) ~~s. 295.22(3)(d) and (e)~~.

Section 2. Subsections (1) and (5) of section 292.05, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

292.05 Duties of Department of Veterans' Affairs.—

(1) The Department of Veterans' Affairs shall provide assistance to all former, present, and future members of the Armed Forces of the United States and their spouses and dependents in preparing claims for and securing such

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CS/CS/HB 139

2023 Legislature

76 compensation, hospitalization, career training, and other
77 benefits or privileges to which such persons or any of them are
78 or may become entitled under any federal or state law or
79 regulation by reason of their service in the Armed Forces of the
80 United States. All services rendered under this subsection shall
81 be without charge to the claimant.

82 (5) The department shall conduct an ongoing study on the
83 problems and needs of those residents of this state who are
84 veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States and the
85 problems and needs of their spouses and dependents. The study
86 shall include, but not be limited to:

87 (a) A survey of existing state and federal programs
88 available for such persons that specifies the extent to which
89 such programs presently are being implemented, with
90 recommendations for the improved implementation, extension, or
91 improvement of such programs.

92 (b) A survey of the needs of such persons in the areas of
93 social services, health care, education, and employment, and any
94 other areas of determined need, with recommendations regarding
95 federal, state, and community services that would meet those
96 needs.

97 (c) A survey of federal, state, public, and private moneys
98 available that could be used to defray the costs of state or
99 community services needed for such persons.

100 Section 3. Subsection (2), paragraph (b) of subsection

ENROLLED

CS/CS/HB 139

2023 Legislature

101 (3), paragraph (g) of subsection (4), and paragraph (a) of
 102 subsection (8) of section 295.21, Florida Statutes, are amended
 103 to read:

104 295.21 Florida Is For Veterans, Inc.—

105 (2) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the corporation is to promote
 106 Florida as a veteran-friendly state that seeks to provide
 107 veterans and their spouses with employment opportunities and
 108 that promotes the hiring of veterans and their spouses by the
 109 business community. The corporation shall encourage retired and
 110 recently separated military personnel to remain in the state or
 111 to make the state their permanent residence. The corporation
 112 shall promote the value of military skill sets to businesses in
 113 the state, assist in tailoring the training of veterans and
 114 their spouses to match the needs of the employment marketplace,
 115 and enhance the entrepreneurial skills of veterans and their
 116 spouses.

117 (3) DUTIES.—The corporation shall:

118 (b) Advise the Florida Tourism Industry Marketing
 119 Corporation, pursuant to s. 295.23, on:

120 1. The target market as identified in paragraph (a).

121 2. Development and implementation of a marketing campaign
 122 to encourage members of the target market to remain in the state
 123 or to make the state their permanent residence.

124 3. Methods for disseminating information to the target
 125 market that relates to the interests and needs of veterans and

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CS/CS/HB 139

2023 Legislature

126 | their spouses of all ages and facilitates veterans' knowledge of
 127 | and access to benefits.

128 | (4) GOVERNANCE.—

129 | (g) A majority of the members of the board of directors
 130 | constitutes a quorum. Board Council meetings may be held via
 131 | teleconference or other electronic means.

132 | (8) ANNUAL REPORT.—The corporation shall submit an annual
 133 | progress report and work plan by December 1 to the Governor, the
 134 | President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of
 135 | Representatives. The report must include:

136 | (a) Status and summary of findings regarding the target
 137 | market, veteran and spouse benefits, and any identified gaps in
 138 | services.

139 | Section 4. Subsections (1), (2), and (3) of section
 140 | 295.22, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

141 | 295.22 Veterans Employment and Training Services Program.—

142 | (1) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND INTENT.—The Legislature finds
 143 | that the state has a compelling interest in ensuring that each
 144 | veteran or his or her spouse who is a resident of the state
 145 | finds employment that meets his or her professional goals and
 146 | receives the training or education necessary to meet those
 147 | goals. The Legislature also finds that connecting dedicated,
 148 | well-trained veterans with businesses that need a dedicated,
 149 | well-trained workforce is of paramount importance. The
 150 | Legislature recognizes that veterans or their spouses may not

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CS/CS/HB 139

2023 Legislature

151 currently have the skills to meet the workforce needs of Florida
152 employers and may require assistance in obtaining additional
153 workforce training or in transitioning their skills to meet the
154 demands of the marketplace. It is the intent of the Legislature
155 that the Veterans Employment and Training Services Program
156 coordinate and meet the needs of veterans and their spouses and
157 the business community to enhance the economy of this state.

158 (2) CREATION.—The Veterans Employment and Training
159 Services Program is created within the Department of Veterans'
160 Affairs to assist in linking veterans or their spouses in search
161 of employment with businesses seeking to hire dedicated, well-
162 trained workers. The purpose of the program is to meet the
163 workforce demands of businesses in the state by facilitating
164 access to training and education in high-demand fields for
165 veterans or their spouses.

166 (3) ADMINISTRATION.—Florida Is For Veterans, Inc., shall
167 administer the Veterans Employment and Training Services Program
168 and perform all of the following functions:

169 (a) Conduct marketing and recruiting efforts directed at
170 veterans or their spouses who reside in or who have an interest
171 in relocating to this state and who are seeking employment.
172 Marketing must include information related to how a veteran's
173 military experience can be valuable to a business. Such efforts
174 may include attending veteran job fairs and events, hosting
175 events for veterans and their spouses or the business community,

ENROLLED

CS/CS/HB 139

2023 Legislature

176 and using digital and social media and direct mail campaigns.
177 The corporation shall also include such marketing as part of its
178 main marketing campaign.

179 (b) Assist veterans or their spouses who reside in or
180 relocate to this state and who are seeking employment. The
181 corporation shall offer skills assessments to veterans or their
182 spouses and assist them in establishing employment goals and
183 applying for and achieving gainful employment.

184 1. Assessment may include skill match information, skill
185 gap analysis, resume creation, translation of military skills
186 into civilian workforce skills, and translation of military
187 achievements and experience into generally understood civilian
188 workforce skills.

189 2. Assistance may include providing the veteran or his or
190 her spouse with information on current workforce demand by
191 industry or geographic region, creating employment goals, and
192 aiding or teaching general knowledge related to completing
193 applications. The corporation may provide information related to
194 industry certifications approved by the Department of Education
195 under s. 1008.44 as well as information related to earning
196 academic college credit at public postsecondary educational
197 institutions for college-level training and education acquired
198 in the military under s. 1004.096.

199 3. The corporation shall encourage veterans or their
200 spouses to register with the state's job bank system and may

ENROLLED

CS/CS/HB 139

2023 Legislature

201 refer veterans to local one-stop career centers for further
 202 services. The corporation shall provide each veteran with
 203 information about state workforce programs and shall consolidate
 204 information about all available resources on one website that,
 205 if possible, includes a hyperlink to each resource's website and
 206 contact information, if available.

207 4. Assessment and assistance may be in person or by
 208 electronic means, as determined by the corporation to be most
 209 efficient and best meet the needs of veterans or their spouses.

210 (c) Assist Florida businesses in recruiting and hiring
 211 veterans and veterans' spouses. The corporation shall provide
 212 services to Florida businesses to meet their hiring needs by
 213 connecting businesses with suitable veteran applicants for
 214 employment. Suitable applicants include veterans or veterans'
 215 spouses who have appropriate job skills or may need additional
 216 training to meet the specific needs of a business. The
 217 corporation shall also provide information about the state and
 218 federal benefits of hiring veterans.

219 (d) Create a grant program to provide funding to assist
 220 veterans in meeting the workforce-skill needs of businesses
 221 seeking to hire, promote, or generally improve specialized
 222 skills of veterans, establish criteria for approval of requests
 223 for funding, and maximize the use of funding for this program.
 224 Grant funds may be used only in the absence of available
 225 veteran-specific federally funded programs. Grants may fund

ENROLLED

CS/CS/HB 139

2023 Legislature

226 specialized training specific to a particular business.

227 1. If grant funds are used to provide a technical
 228 certificate, a licensure, or a degree, funds may be allocated
 229 only upon a review that includes, but is not limited to,
 230 documentation of accreditation and licensure. Instruction funded
 231 through the program terminates when participants demonstrate
 232 competence at the level specified in the request but may not
 233 exceed 12 months. Preference shall be given to target industry
 234 businesses, as defined in s. 288.106, and to businesses in the
 235 defense supply, cloud virtualization, health care, or commercial
 236 aviation manufacturing industries.

237 2. Costs and expenditures shall be limited to \$8,000 per
 238 veteran trainee. Qualified businesses must cover the entire cost
 239 for all of the training provided before receiving reimbursement
 240 from the corporation equal to 50 percent of the cost to train a
 241 veteran who is a permanent, full-time employee. Eligible costs
 242 and expenditures include:

- 243 a. Tuition and fees.
- 244 b. Books and classroom materials.
- 245 c. Rental fees for facilities.

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

- 250 a. Identification of the personnel necessary to conduct

ENROLLED

CS/CS/HB 139

2023 Legislature

251 the instructional program, instructional program description,
 252 and any vendors used to conduct the instructional program.

253 b. Identification of the estimated duration of the
 254 instructional program.

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

256 d. Identification of special program requirements that are
 257 not otherwise addressed in the agreement.

258 e. Permission to access aggregate information specific to
 259 the wages and performance of participants upon the completion of
 260 instruction for evaluation purposes. The agreement must specify
 261 that any evaluation published subsequent to the instruction may
 262 not identify the employer or any individual participant.

263 4. A business may receive a grant under the Quick-Response
 264 Training Program created under s. 288.047 and a grant under this
 265 section for the same veteran trainee. ~~If a business receives~~
 266 ~~funds under both programs, one grant agreement may be entered~~
 267 ~~into with CareerSource Florida, Inc., as the grant~~
 268 ~~administrator.~~

269 (e) Contract with one or more entities to administer an
 270 entrepreneur initiative program for veterans in this state which
 271 connects business leaders in the state with veterans seeking to
 272 become entrepreneurs.

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

ENROLLED

CS/CS/HB 139

2023 Legislature

276 a. Demonstrate the ability to implement the program and
 277 the commitment of resources, including financial resources, to
 278 such programs.

279 b. Have a demonstrated experience working with veteran
 280 entrepreneurs.

281 c. As determined by the corporation, have been recognized
 282 for their performance in assisting entrepreneurs to launch
 283 successful businesses in the state.

284 2. Each contract must include performance metrics,
 285 including a focus on employment and business creation. The
 286 entity may also work with a university or college offering
 287 related programs to refer veterans or to provide services. The
 288 entrepreneur initiative program may include activities and
 289 assistance such as peer-to-peer learning sessions, mentoring,
 290 technical assistance, business roundtables, networking
 291 opportunities, support of student organizations, speaker series,
 292 or other tools within a virtual environment.

293 (f) As the state's principal assistance organization under
 294 the United States Department of Defense's SkillBridge program
 295 for qualified businesses in this state and for transitioning
 296 servicemembers who reside in, or who wish to reside in, this
 297 state, the corporation shall:

298 1. Establish and maintain, as applicable, its
 299 certification for the SkillBridge program or any other similar
 300 workforce training and transition programs established by the

ENROLLED

CS/CS/HB 139

2023 Legislature

301 United States Department of Defense;

302 2. Educate businesses, business associations, and
 303 transitioning servicemembers on the SkillBridge program and its
 304 benefits, and educate military command and personnel within the
 305 state on the opportunities available to transitioning
 306 servicemembers through the SkillBridge program;

307 3. Assist businesses in obtaining approval for skilled
 308 workforce training curricula under the SkillBridge program,
 309 including, but not limited to, apprenticeships, internships, or
 310 fellowships; and

311 4. Match transitioning servicemembers who are deemed
 312 eligible for SkillBridge participation by their military command
 313 with training opportunities offered by the corporation or
 314 participating businesses, with the intent of having
 315 transitioning servicemembers achieve gainful employment in this
 316 state upon completion of their SkillBridge training.

317 (g) Assist veterans and their spouses in accessing
 318 training, education, and employment in health care professions.

319 (h) Coordinate with the Office of Veteran Licensure
 320 Services within the Department of Health to assist veterans and
 321 their spouses in obtaining licensure pursuant to s. 456.024.

322 Section 5. Subsection (13) of section 456.013, Florida
 323 Statutes, is amended to read:

324 456.013 Department; general licensing provisions.—

325 ~~(13) The department shall waive the initial licensing fee,~~

ENROLLED

CS/CS/HB 139

2023 Legislature

326 ~~the initial application fee, and the initial unlicensed activity~~
 327 ~~fee for a military veteran or his or her spouse at the time of~~
 328 ~~discharge, if he or she applies to the department for an initial~~
 329 ~~license within 60 months after the veteran is honorably~~
 330 ~~discharged from any branch of the United States Armed Forces.~~
 331 ~~The applicant must apply for the fee waiver using a form~~
 332 ~~prescribed by the department and must submit supporting~~
 333 ~~documentation as required by the department.~~

334 Section 6. Section 456.024, Florida Statutes, is amended
 335 to read:

336 456.024 Members of Armed Forces and veterans in good
 337 ~~standing with administrative boards or the department;~~ spouses;
 338 licensure.—

339 (1) A ~~Any~~ member of the United States Armed Forces ~~of the~~
 340 ~~United States now or hereafter~~ on active duty who, at the time
 341 of becoming such a member, was in good standing with a health
 342 care practitioner ~~any administrative board of the state,~~ or the
 343 department when there is no board, and was entitled to practice
 344 a health care ~~or engage in his or her profession or vocation in~~
 345 this ~~the~~ state shall be kept in good standing ~~by such~~
 346 ~~administrative board, or the department when there is no board,~~
 347 without registering, paying ~~dues or fees,~~ or performing any
 348 other act ~~on his or her part to be performed,~~ as long as the
 349 member is ~~he or she is a member of the Armed Forces of the~~
 350 ~~United States~~ on active duty and for a ~~period of~~ 6 months after

ENROLLED

CS/CS/HB 139

2023 Legislature

351 discharge and ~~from active duty as a member of the Armed Forces~~
 352 ~~of the United States, provided he or she is not practicing~~
 353 ~~engaged in~~ his or her licensed profession ~~or vocation~~ in the
 354 private sector for profit.

355 (2) The department shall waive the initial licensing fee,
 356 the initial application fee, and the initial unlicensed activity
 357 fee for a veteran or his or her spouse if the veteran is
 358 honorably discharged from any branch of the United States Armed
 359 Forces. The applicant must apply for the fee waiver using a form
 360 prescribed by the department and must submit supporting
 361 documentation as required by the department. The applicant may
 362 apply for a fee waiver up to 6 months before discharge.

363 (3)~~(2)~~ The boards listed in s. 20.43, or the department
 364 when there is no board, shall adopt rules exempting the spouses
 365 of members of the Armed Forces of the United States from
 366 licensure renewal provisions, but only in cases of absence from
 367 the state because of their spouses' duties with the Armed
 368 Forces.

369 (4)~~(3)~~(a) A person is eligible for licensure as a health
 370 care practitioner in this state if he or she:

371 1. Serves or has served as a health care practitioner in
 372 the United States Armed Forces, the United States Reserve
 373 Forces, or the National Guard;

374 2. Serves or has served on active duty with the United
 375 States Armed Forces as a health care practitioner in the United

ENROLLED

CS/CS/HB 139

2023 Legislature

376 States Public Health Service; or

377 3. Is a health care practitioner in another state, the
 378 District of Columbia, or a possession or territory of the United
 379 States and is the spouse of a person serving on active duty with
 380 the United States Armed Forces.

381
 382 The department shall develop an application form, and each
 383 board, or the department if there is no board, shall waive the
 384 application fee, licensure fee, and unlicensed activity fee for
 385 such applicants. For purposes of this subsection, "health care
 386 practitioner" means a health care practitioner as defined in s.
 387 456.001 and a person licensed under part III of chapter 401 or
 388 part IV of chapter 468.

389 (b) The board, or the department if there is no board,
 390 shall issue a license to practice in this state to a person who:

391 1. Submits a complete application.

392 2. If he or she is a member of the United States Armed
 393 Forces, the United States Reserve Forces, or the National Guard,
 394 submits proof that he or she has received an honorable discharge
 395 within 6 months before, or will receive an honorable discharge
 396 ~~within 6 months~~ after, the date of submission of the
 397 application.

398 3.a. Holds an active, unencumbered license issued by
 399 another state, the District of Columbia, or a possession or
 400 territory of the United States and who has not had disciplinary

ENROLLED

CS/CS/HB 139

2023 Legislature

401 action taken against him or her in the 5 years preceding the
 402 date of submission of the application;

403 b. Is a military health care practitioner in a profession
 404 for which licensure in a state or jurisdiction is not required
 405 to practice in the United States Armed Forces, if he or she
 406 submits to the department evidence of military training or
 407 experience substantially equivalent to the requirements for
 408 licensure in this state in that profession and evidence that he
 409 or she has obtained a passing score on the appropriate
 410 examination of a national or regional standards organization if
 411 required for licensure in this state; or

412 c. Is the spouse of a person serving on active duty in the
 413 United States Armed Forces and is a health care practitioner in
 414 a profession for which licensure in another state or
 415 jurisdiction is not required, if he or she submits to the
 416 department evidence of training or experience substantially
 417 equivalent to the requirements for licensure in this state in
 418 that profession and evidence that he or she has obtained a
 419 passing score on the appropriate examination of a national or
 420 regional standards organization if required for licensure in
 421 this state.

422 4. Attests that he or she is not, at the time of
 423 submission of the application, the subject of a disciplinary
 424 proceeding in a jurisdiction in which he or she holds a license
 425 or by the United States Department of Defense for reasons

ENROLLED

CS/CS/HB 139

2023 Legislature

426 related to the practice of the profession for which he or she is
 427 applying.

428 5. Actively practiced the profession for which he or she
 429 is applying for the 3 years preceding the date of submission of
 430 the application.

431 6. Submits a set of fingerprints for a background
 432 screening pursuant to s. 456.0135, if required for the
 433 profession for which he or she is applying.

434
 435 The department shall verify information submitted by the
 436 applicant under this subsection using the National Practitioner
 437 Data Bank.

438 (c) Each applicant who meets the requirements of this
 439 subsection shall be licensed with all rights and
 440 responsibilities as defined by law. The applicable board, or the
 441 department if there is no board, may deny an application if the
 442 applicant has been convicted of or pled guilty or nolo
 443 contendere to, regardless of adjudication, a ~~any~~ felony or
 444 misdemeanor related to the practice of a health care profession
 445 regulated by this state.

446 (d) An applicant for initial licensure under this
 447 subsection must submit the information required by ss.
 448 456.039(1) and 456.0391(1) no later than 1 year after the
 449 license is issued.

450 (5)~~(4)~~(a) The board, or the department if there is no

ENROLLED

CS/CS/HB 139

2023 Legislature

451 board, shall issue a professional license to the spouse of an
 452 active duty member of the United States Armed Forces ~~of the~~
 453 ~~United States~~ who submits all of the following to the
 454 department:

455 1. A completed application upon a form prepared and
 456 furnished by the department in accordance with the board's
 457 rules.†

458 2. Proof that the applicant is married to a member of the
 459 United States Armed Forces ~~of the United States~~ who is on active
 460 duty.†

461 3. Proof that the applicant holds a valid license for the
 462 profession issued by another state, the District of Columbia, or
 463 a possession or territory of the United States~~†~~ and is not the
 464 subject of any disciplinary proceeding in any jurisdiction in
 465 which the applicant holds a license to practice a profession
 466 regulated by this chapter.†

467 4. Proof that the applicant's spouse is assigned to a duty
 468 station in this state pursuant to the member's official active
 469 duty military orders.†~~and~~

470 5. Proof that the applicant would otherwise be entitled to
 471 full licensure under the appropriate practice act~~†~~ and is
 472 eligible to take the respective licensure examination as
 473 required in Florida.

474 (b) The applicant must also submit to the Department of
 475 Law Enforcement a complete set of fingerprints. The Department

ENROLLED

CS/CS/HB 139

2023 Legislature

476 of Law Enforcement shall conduct a statewide criminal history
 477 check and forward the fingerprints to the Federal Bureau of
 478 Investigation for a national criminal history check.

479 (c) Each board, or the department if there is no board,
 480 shall review the results of the state and federal criminal
 481 history checks according to the level 2 screening standards in
 482 s. 435.04 when granting an exemption and when granting or
 483 denying the license.

484 (d) The applicant shall pay the cost of fingerprint
 485 processing. If the fingerprints are submitted through an
 486 authorized agency or vendor, the agency or vendor shall collect
 487 the required processing fees and remit the fees to the
 488 Department of Law Enforcement.

489 (e) The department shall waive the applicant's licensure
 490 application fee.

491 (f) An applicant for a license under this subsection is
 492 subject to ~~the requirements under~~ s. 456.013(3) (a) and (c).

493 (g) An applicant shall be deemed ineligible for a license
 494 pursuant to this section if the applicant:

495 1. Has been convicted of or pled nolo contendere to,
 496 regardless of adjudication, any felony or misdemeanor related to
 497 the practice of a health care profession;

498 2. Has had a health care provider license revoked or
 499 suspended from another of the United States, the District of
 500 Columbia, or a United States territory;

ENROLLED

CS/CS/HB 139

2023 Legislature

501 3. Has been reported to the National Practitioner Data
502 Bank, unless the applicant has successfully appealed to have his
503 or her name removed from the data bank; or

504 4. Has previously failed the Florida examination required
505 to receive a license to practice the profession for which the
506 applicant is seeking a license.

507 (h) The board, or the department if there is no board, may
508 revoke a license upon finding that the individual violated the
509 profession's governing practice act.

510 (i) The board, or the department if there is no board,
511 shall expedite all applications submitted by a spouse of an
512 active duty member or veteran of the United States Armed Forces
513 ~~of the United States~~ pursuant to this subsection and shall issue
514 a license within 7 days after receipt of all required
515 documentation for such application.

516 (6) ~~(5)~~ The spouse of a person serving on active duty with
517 the United States Armed Forces shall have a defense to any
518 citation and related cause of action brought under s. 456.065 if
519 the following conditions are met:

520 (a) The spouse holds an active, unencumbered license
521 issued by another state or jurisdiction to provide health care
522 services for which there is no equivalent license in this state.

523 (b) The spouse is providing health care services within
524 the scope of practice of the out-of-state license.

525 (c) The training or experience required by the out-of-

ENROLLED

CS/CS/HB 139

2023 Legislature

526 | state license is substantially similar to the license
 527 | requirements to practice a similar health care profession in
 528 | this state.

529 | Section 7. Subsection (7) of section 456.0241, Florida
 530 | Statutes, is renumbered as subsection (6), paragraph (b) of
 531 | subsection (2) and present subsection (6) are amended, and a new
 532 | subsection (7) is added to that section, to read:

533 | 456.0241 Temporary certificate for active duty military
 534 | health care practitioners.—

535 | (2) The department may issue a temporary certificate to an
 536 | active duty military health care practitioner to practice in a
 537 | regulated profession in this state if the applicant:

538 | (b) Submits a complete application ~~and a nonrefundable~~
 539 | ~~application fee.~~

540 |
 541 | The department shall verify information submitted by the
 542 | applicant under this subsection using the National Practitioner
 543 | Data Bank.

544 | ~~(6) The department shall, by rule, set an application fee~~
 545 | ~~not to exceed \$50 and a renewal fee not to exceed \$50.~~

546 | (7) The department shall waive the temporary licensing
 547 | fee.

548 | Section 8. Section 456.0242, Florida Statutes, is created
 549 | to read:

550 | 456.0242 Office of Veteran Licensure Services.—

ENROLLED

CS/CS/HB 139

2023 Legislature

551 (1) The Office of Veteran Licensure Services is
552 established within the Division of Medical Quality Assurance.
553 The office shall assist active duty members of the United States
554 Armed Forces, the United States Reserve Forces, and the National
555 Guard, veterans, and the spouses of veterans who seek to become
556 a licensed health care practitioner in this state.

557 (2) The office shall be headed by an executive director,
558 designated by the department, who must be a veteran.

559 (3) The office shall:

560 (a) Provide information, guidance, direction, and
561 assistance with the licensure process.

562 (b) Coordinate with each board, or the department if there
563 is no board, to expedite all applications submitted pursuant to
564 s. 456.024.

565 (c) Refer an individual requesting assistance with resume
566 writing and proofreading, job application completion, and
567 interviewing skills and techniques to Florida Is For Veterans,
568 Inc.

569 (d) Refer an individual requesting information about
570 educational or employment opportunities in health care
571 professions to Florida Is For Veterans, Inc.

572 (e) Submit a report by November 11 of each year to the
573 Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the
574 House of Representatives. The report must categorize each
575 individual as an active duty member, a veteran, or a veteran's

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CS/CS/HB 139

2023 Legislature

576 spouse and must include, but is not limited to:

577 1. The number of individuals served.

578 2. The educational and training background of each
 579 individual seeking licensure.

580 3. Each health care license an individual holds in another
 581 state, irrespective of the current status of such license.

582 4. The number of licensure applications received.

583 5. The average number of calendar days required to license
 584 a qualified applicant.

585 6. The number of referrals made for vocational assistance.

586 (4) The department may adopt rules necessary to implement
 587 this section.

588 Section 9. For the 2023-2024 fiscal year, four full-time
 589 equivalent positions with associated salary rate of 223,879 are
 590 authorized and the sums of \$380,209 in recurring funds and
 591 \$19,356 in nonrecurring funds from the Medical Quality Assurance
 592 Trust Fund are appropriated to the Department of Health for the
 593 purpose of implementing this act.

594 Section 10. This act shall take effect July 1, 2023.