

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

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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 ~~grant and entrepreneur initiative~~ programs established under 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

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. Section 295.21, Florida Statutes, is amended to

101 read:

102 295.21 Florida Is For Veterans, Inc.—

103 (1) CREATION.—There is created within the Department of
 104 Veterans' Affairs a nonprofit corporation, to be known as
 105 "Florida Is For Veterans, Inc.," which shall be registered,
 106 incorporated, organized, and operated in compliance with chapter
 107 617, and which is not a unit or entity of state government. As
 108 used in this section and s. 295.22, unless the context indicates
 109 otherwise, the term "corporation" means Florida Is For Veterans,
 110 Inc. The corporation shall be a separate budget entity and is
 111 not subject to the control, supervision, or direction of the
 112 department in any manner, including, but not limited to,
 113 personnel, purchasing, transactions involving real or personal
 114 property, or budgetary matters.

115 (2) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the corporation is to promote
 116 Florida as a veteran-friendly state that seeks to provide
 117 veterans and their spouses with employment opportunities and
 118 that promotes the hiring of veterans and their spouses by the
 119 business community. The corporation shall encourage retired and
 120 recently separated military personnel to remain in the state or
 121 to make the state their permanent residence. The corporation
 122 shall promote the value of military skill sets to businesses in
 123 the state, assist in tailoring the training of veterans and
 124 their spouses to match the needs of the employment marketplace,
 125 and enhance the entrepreneurial skills of veterans and their

126 | spouses.

127 | (3) DUTIES.—The corporation shall:

128 | (a) Conduct research to identify the target market and the
 129 | educational and employment needs of those in the target market.
 130 | The corporation shall contract with at least one entity pursuant
 131 | to the competitive bidding requirements in s. 287.057 and the
 132 | provisions of s. 295.187 to perform the research. Such entity
 133 | must have experience conducting market research on the veteran
 134 | demographic. The corporation shall seek input from the Florida
 135 | Tourism Industry Marketing Corporation on the scope, process,
 136 | and focus of such research.

137 | (b) Advise the Florida Tourism Industry Marketing
 138 | Corporation, pursuant to s. 295.23, on:

- 139 | 1. The target market as identified in paragraph (a).
 140 | 2. Development and implementation of a marketing campaign
 141 | to encourage members of the target market to remain in the state
 142 | or to make the state their permanent residence.
 143 | 3. Methods for disseminating information to the target
 144 | market that relates to the interests and needs of veterans and
 145 | their spouses of all ages and facilitates veterans' knowledge
 146 | of and access to benefits.

147 | (c) Promote and enhance the value of military skill sets
 148 | to businesses.

149 | (d) Implement the Veterans Employment and Training
 150 | Services Program established by s. 295.22.

151 (e) Responsibly and prudently manage all funds received
 152 and ensure that the use of such funds conforms to all applicable
 153 laws, bylaws, or contractual requirements.

154 (f) Administer the programs created in this section and s.
 155 295.22.

156 (g) Serve as the state's principal assistance organization
 157 under the United States Department of Defense's SkillBridge
 158 program for employers and transitioning servicemembers.

159 (4) GOVERNANCE.—

160 (a) The corporation shall be governed by a nine-member
 161 board of directors. The Governor, the President of the Senate,
 162 and the Speaker of the House of Representatives shall each
 163 appoint three members to the board. In making appointments, the
 164 Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the
 165 House of Representatives must consider representation by active
 166 or retired military personnel and their spouses representing a
 167 range of ages and persons with expertise in business, education,
 168 marketing, and information management.

169 (b) The board of directors shall annually elect a chair
 170 from among the board's members.

171 (c) Each member of the board of directors shall be
 172 appointed for a term of 4 years, except that, to achieve
 173 staggered terms, the initial appointees of the Governor shall
 174 serve terms of 2 years. A member is eligible for reappointment
 175 to the board for one additional term of 4 years. Vacancies on

176 the board shall be filled in the same manner as the original
177 appointment. A vacancy that occurs before the scheduled
178 expiration of the term of the member shall be filled for the
179 remainder of the unexpired term.

180 (d) The Legislature finds that it is in the public
181 interest for the members of the board of directors to be subject
182 to the requirements of ss. 112.313, 112.3135, and 112.3143.
183 Notwithstanding the fact that they are not public officers or
184 employees, for purposes of ss. 112.313, 112.3135, and 112.3143,
185 the board members shall be considered to be public officers or
186 employees. In addition to the postemployment restrictions of s.
187 112.313(9), a person appointed to the board of directors may not
188 have direct interest in a contract, franchise, privilege,
189 project, program, or other benefit arising from an award by the
190 corporation during the appointment term and for 2 years after
191 the termination of such appointment. A person who accepts
192 appointment to the board of directors in violation of this
193 subsection, or accepts a direct interest in a contract,
194 franchise, privilege, project, program, or other benefit granted
195 by the corporation to an awardee within 2 years after the
196 termination of his or her service on the board, commits a
197 misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided in s.
198 775.082 or s. 775.083. Further, each member of the board of
199 directors who is not otherwise required to file financial
200 disclosure under s. 8, Art. II of the State Constitution or s.

201 112.3144 shall file a statement of financial interests under s.
 202 112.3145.

203 (e) Each member of the board of directors shall serve
 204 without compensation but is entitled to reimbursement for travel
 205 and per diem expenses as provided in s. 112.061 while performing
 206 his or her duties.

207 (f) Each member of the board of directors is accountable
 208 for the proper performance of the duties of office and owes a
 209 fiduciary duty to the people of this state to ensure that awards
 210 provided are disbursed and used as prescribed by law and
 211 contract. An appointed member of the board of directors may be
 212 removed by the officer who appointed the member for malfeasance,
 213 misfeasance, neglect of duty, incompetence, permanent inability
 214 to perform official duties, unexcused absence from three
 215 consecutive board meetings, arrest or indictment for a crime
 216 that is a felony or a misdemeanor involving theft or a crime of
 217 dishonesty, or pleading guilty or nolo contendere to or being
 218 found guilty of any crime.

219 (g) A majority of the members of the board of directors
 220 constitutes a quorum. Board ~~Council~~ meetings may be held via
 221 teleconference or other electronic means.

222 (5) POWERS.—In addition to the powers and duties
 223 prescribed in chapter 617 and the articles and bylaws adopted
 224 thereunder, the board of directors may:

225 (a) Make and enter into contracts and other instruments

226 necessary or convenient for the exercise of its powers and
 227 functions. However, notwithstanding s. 617.0302, the corporation
 228 may not issue bonds.

229 (b) Make expenditures, including any necessary
 230 administrative expenditure.

231 (c) Adopt, amend, and repeal bylaws, consistent with the
 232 powers granted to it under this section or the articles of
 233 incorporation, for the administration of the activities of the
 234 corporation, and the exercise of its corporate powers.

235 (d) Accept funding for its programs and activities from
 236 federal, state, local, and private sources.

237 (e) Adopt and register a fictitious name for use in its
 238 marketing activities.

239

240 The credit of the State of Florida may not be pledged on behalf
 241 of the corporation.

242 (6) PUBLIC RECORDS AND MEETINGS.—The corporation is
 243 subject to the provisions of chapters 119 and 286 relating to
 244 public records and meetings, respectively.

245 (7) STAFFING AND ASSISTANCE.—

246 (a) The corporation is authorized to hire or contract for
 247 all staff necessary for the proper execution of its powers and
 248 duties. All employees of the corporation shall comply with the
 249 Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees under part III
 250 of chapter 112. Corporation staff must agree to refrain from

251 | having any direct interest in any contract, franchise,
 252 | privilege, project, program, or other benefit arising from an
 253 | award by the corporation during the term of their appointment
 254 | and for 2 years after the termination of such appointment.

255 | (b) All agencies of the state are authorized and directed
 256 | to provide such technical assistance as the corporation may
 257 | require to identify programs within each agency which provide
 258 | assistance or benefits to veterans who are located in this state
 259 | or who are considering relocation to this state.

260 | (c) The Department of Veterans' Affairs may authorize the
 261 | corporation's use of the department's property, facilities, and
 262 | personnel services, subject to this section. The department may
 263 | prescribe by contract any condition with which the corporation
 264 | must comply in order to use the department's property,
 265 | facilities, or personnel services.

266 | (d) The department may not authorize the use of its
 267 | property, facilities, or personnel services if the corporation
 268 | does not provide equal employment opportunities to all persons
 269 | regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, or national
 270 | origin.

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

275 | (a) Status and summary of findings regarding the target

276 market, veteran and spouse benefits, and any identified gaps in
 277 services.

278 (b) Status of the marketing campaign, delivery systems of
 279 the marketing campaign, and outreach to the target market.

280 (c) Status of the Veterans Employment and Training
 281 Services Program administered under s. 295.22.

282 (d) Proposed revisions or additions to performance
 283 measurements for the programs administered by the corporation.

284 (e) Identification of contracts that the corporation has
 285 entered into to carry out its duties.

286 (f) An annual compliance and financial audit of accounts
 287 and records for the previous fiscal year prepared by an
 288 independent certified public accountant pursuant to rules
 289 adopted by the Auditor General.

290 (9) DISSOLUTION.—All moneys and property held by the
 291 corporation shall revert to the state if the corporation ceases
 292 to exist.

293 Section 4. Section 295.22, Florida Statutes, is amended to
 294 read:

295 295.22 Veterans Employment and Training Services Program.—

296 (1) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND INTENT.—The Legislature finds
 297 that the state has a compelling interest in ensuring that each
 298 veteran or their spouse who is a resident of the state finds
 299 employment that meets his or her professional goals and receives
 300 the training or education necessary to meet those goals. The

301 Legislature also finds that connecting dedicated, well-trained
 302 veterans with businesses that need a dedicated, well-trained
 303 workforce is of paramount importance. The Legislature recognizes
 304 that veterans or their spouses may not currently have the skills
 305 to meet the workforce needs of Florida employers and may require
 306 assistance in obtaining additional workforce training or in
 307 transitioning their skills to meet the demands of the
 308 marketplace. It is the intent of the Legislature that the
 309 Veterans Employment and Training Services Program coordinate and
 310 meet the needs of veterans and their spouses and the business
 311 community to enhance the economy of this state.

312 (2) CREATION.—The Veterans Employment and Training
 313 Services Program is created within the Department of Veterans'
 314 Affairs to assist in linking veterans or their spouses in search
 315 of employment with businesses seeking to hire dedicated, well-
 316 trained workers. The purpose of the program is to meet the
 317 workforce demands of businesses in the state by facilitating
 318 access to training and education in high-demand fields for
 319 veterans or their spouses.

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

323 (a) Conduct marketing and recruiting efforts directed at
 324 veterans or their spouses who reside in or who have an interest
 325 in relocating to this state and who are seeking employment.

326 Marketing must include information related to how a veteran's
 327 military experience can be valuable to a business. Such efforts
 328 may include attending veteran job fairs and events, hosting
 329 events for veterans and their spouses or the business community,
 330 and using digital and social media and direct mail campaigns.
 331 The corporation shall also include such marketing as part of its
 332 main marketing campaign.

333 (b) Assist veterans or their spouses who reside in or
 334 relocate to this state and who are seeking employment. The
 335 corporation shall offer skills assessments to veterans or their
 336 spouses and assist them in establishing employment goals and
 337 applying for and achieving gainful employment.

338 1. Assessment may include skill match information, skill
 339 gap analysis, resume creation, translation of military skills
 340 into civilian workforce skills, and translation of military
 341 achievements and experience into generally understood civilian
 342 workforce skills.

343 2. Assistance may include providing the veteran or their
 344 spouse with information on current workforce demand by industry
 345 or geographic region, creating employment goals, and aiding or
 346 teaching general knowledge related to completing applications.
 347 The corporation may provide information related to industry
 348 certifications approved by the Department of Education under s.
 349 1008.44 as well as information related to earning academic
 350 college credit at public postsecondary educational institutions

351 for college-level training and education acquired in the
 352 military under s. 1004.096.

353 3. The corporation shall encourage veterans or their
 354 spouses to register with the state's job bank system and may
 355 refer veterans to local one-stop career centers for further
 356 services. The corporation shall provide each veteran with
 357 information about state workforce programs and shall consolidate
 358 information about all available resources on one website that,
 359 if possible, includes a hyperlink to each resource's website and
 360 contact information, if available.

361 4. Assessment and assistance may be in person or by
 362 electronic means, as determined by the corporation to be most
 363 efficient and best meet the needs of veterans or spouses.

364 (c) Assist Florida businesses in recruiting and hiring
 365 veterans and spouses. The corporation shall provide services to
 366 Florida businesses to meet their hiring needs by connecting
 367 businesses with suitable veteran applicants for employment.
 368 Suitable applicants include veterans or spouses who have
 369 appropriate job skills or may need additional training to meet
 370 the specific needs of a business. The corporation shall also
 371 provide information about the state and federal benefits of
 372 hiring veterans.

373 (d) Create a grant program to provide funding to assist
 374 veterans in meeting the workforce-skill needs of businesses
 375 seeking to hire, promote, or generally improve specialized

376 skills of veterans, establish criteria for approval of requests
377 for funding, and maximize the use of funding for this program.
378 Grant funds may be used only in the absence of available
379 veteran-specific federally funded programs. Grants may fund
380 specialized training specific to a particular business.

381 1. If grant funds are used to provide a technical
382 certificate, a licensure, or a degree, funds may be allocated
383 only upon a review that includes, but is not limited to,
384 documentation of accreditation and licensure. Instruction funded
385 through the program terminates when participants demonstrate
386 competence at the level specified in the request but may not
387 exceed 12 months. Preference shall be given to target industry
388 businesses, as defined in s. 288.106, and to businesses in the
389 defense supply, cloud virtualization, health care or commercial
390 aviation manufacturing industries.

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

- 397 a. Tuition and fees.
398 b. Books and classroom materials.
399 c. Rental fees for facilities.
400 3. Before funds are allocated for a request pursuant to

401 | this section, the corporation shall prepare a grant agreement
 402 | between the business requesting funds and the corporation. Such
 403 | agreement must include, but need not be limited to:

404 | a. Identification of the personnel necessary to conduct
 405 | the instructional program, instructional program description,
 406 | and any vendors used to conduct the instructional program.

407 | b. Identification of the estimated duration of the
 408 | instructional program.

409 | c. Identification of all direct, training-related costs.

410 | d. Identification of special program requirements that are
 411 | not otherwise addressed in the agreement.

412 | e. Permission to access aggregate information specific to
 413 | the wages and performance of participants upon the completion of
 414 | instruction for evaluation purposes. The agreement must specify
 415 | that any evaluation published subsequent to the instruction may
 416 | not identify the employer or any individual participant.

417 | 4. A business may receive a grant under the Quick-Response
 418 | Training Program created under s. 288.047 and a grant under this
 419 | section for the same veteran trainee. ~~If a business receives~~
 420 | ~~funds under both programs, one grant agreement may be entered~~
 421 | ~~into with CareerSource Florida, Inc., as the grant~~
 422 | ~~administrator.~~

423 | (e) Contract with one or more entities to administer an
 424 | entrepreneur initiative program for veterans in this state which
 425 | connects business leaders in the state with veterans seeking to

426 | become entrepreneurs.

427 | 1. The corporation shall award each contract in accordance
 428 | with the competitive bidding requirements in s. 287.057 to one
 429 | or more public or private entities that:

430 | a. Demonstrate the ability to implement the program and
 431 | the commitment of resources, including financial resources, to
 432 | such programs.

433 | b. Have a demonstrated experience working with veteran
 434 | entrepreneurs.

435 | c. As determined by the corporation, have been recognized
 436 | for their performance in assisting entrepreneurs to launch
 437 | successful businesses in the state.

438 | 2. Each contract must include performance metrics,
 439 | including a focus on employment and business creation. The
 440 | entity may also work with a university or college offering
 441 | related programs to refer veterans or to provide services. The
 442 | entrepreneur initiative program may include activities and
 443 | assistance such as peer-to-peer learning sessions, mentoring,
 444 | technical assistance, business roundtables, networking
 445 | opportunities, support of student organizations, speaker series,
 446 | or other tools within a virtual environment.

447 | (f) As the state's principal assistance organization under
 448 | the United States Department of Defense's SkillBridge program
 449 | for qualified businesses in this state and for transitioning
 450 | servicemembers who reside in, or who wish to reside in, this

451 state, the corporation shall:

452 1. Establish and maintain, as applicable, its
 453 certification for the SkillBridge program or any other similar
 454 workforce training and transition programs established by the
 455 United States Department of Defense;

456 2. Educate businesses, business associations, and
 457 transitioning servicemembers on the SkillBridge program and its
 458 benefits, and educate military command and personnel within the
 459 state on the opportunities available to transitioning
 460 servicemembers through the SkillBridge program;

461 3. Assist businesses in obtaining approval for skilled
 462 workforce training curricula under the SkillBridge program,
 463 including, but not limited to, apprenticeships, internships, or
 464 fellowships; and

465 4. Match transitioning servicemembers who are deemed
 466 eligible for SkillBridge participation by their military command
 467 with training opportunities offered by the corporation or
 468 participating businesses, with the intent of having
 469 transitioning servicemembers achieve gainful employment in this
 470 state upon completion of their SkillBridge training.

471 (g) Assist veterans and their spouses to access training,
 472 education and employment in health care professions.

473 (h) Coordinate with the Department of Health Office of
 474 Veteran Licensure Services to assist veterans and their spouses
 475 to obtain licensure pursuant to s. 456.024.

476
 477 (4) DUTIES OF ENTERPRISE FLORIDA, INC.—Enterprise Florida,
 478 Inc., shall provide information about the corporation and its
 479 services to prospective, new, expanding, and relocating
 480 businesses seeking to conduct business in this state. Enterprise
 481 Florida, Inc., shall, to the greatest extent possible,
 482 collaborate with the corporation to meet the employment needs,
 483 including meeting the job-creation requirements, of any business
 484 receiving assistance or services from Enterprise Florida, Inc.

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

487 456.013 Department; general licensing provisions.—

488 ~~(13) The department shall waive the initial licensing fee,~~
 489 ~~the initial application fee, and the initial unlicensed activity~~
 490 ~~fee for a military veteran or his or her spouse at the time of~~
 491 ~~discharge, if he or she applies to the department for an initial~~
 492 ~~license within 60 months after the veteran is honorably~~
 493 ~~discharged from any branch of the United States Armed Forces.~~
 494 ~~The applicant must apply for the fee waiver using a form~~
 495 ~~prescribed by the department and must submit supporting~~
 496 ~~documentation as required by the department.~~

497 Section 6. Subsections (1), (2), (3), and (4) of section
 498 456.024, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

499 456.024 Members of Armed Forces and military veterans ~~in~~
 500 ~~good standing with administrative boards or the department;~~

501 spouses; licensure.—

502 (1) Any member of the Armed Forces of the United States
 503 now or hereafter on active duty who, at the time of becoming
 504 such a member, was in good standing with any health care
 505 practitioner ~~administrative board of the state,~~ or the
 506 department when there is no board, and was entitled to practice
 507 ~~or engage in his or her~~ a health care profession ~~or vocation~~ in
 508 this ~~the~~ state shall be kept in good standing ~~by such~~
 509 ~~administrative board, or the department when there is no board,~~
 510 without registering, paying ~~dues or~~ fees, or performing any
 511 other act ~~on his or her part to be performed,~~ as long as ~~he or~~
 512 ~~she is a~~ the service member ~~of the Armed Forces of the United~~
 513 ~~States~~ is on active duty or is within ~~and for a period of 6~~
 514 months ~~after of~~ discharge ~~from active duty as a member of the~~
 515 ~~Armed Forces of the United States,~~ provided he or she ~~and~~ is not
 516 engaged in his or her licensed profession ~~or vocation~~ in the
 517 private sector for profit.

518 (2) The department shall waive the initial licensing fee,
 519 the initial application fee, and the initial unlicensed activity
 520 fee for a military veteran or his or her spouse, if the veteran
 521 is honorably discharged from any branch of the United States
 522 Armed Forces. The applicant must apply for the fee waiver using
 523 a form prescribed by the department and must submit supporting
 524 documentation as required by the department. The applicant may
 525 apply for a fee waiver up to 6 months prior to discharge.

526 (3) The boards listed in s. 20.43, or the department when
 527 there is no board, shall adopt rules exempting the spouses of
 528 members of the Armed Forces of the United States from licensure
 529 renewal provisions, but only in cases of absence from the state
 530 because of their spouses' duties with the Armed Forces.

531 (4)~~(3)~~(a) A person is eligible for licensure as a health
 532 care practitioner in this state if he or she:

533 1. Serves or has served as a health care practitioner in
 534 the United States Armed Forces, the United States Reserve
 535 Forces, or the National Guard;

536 2. Serves or has served on active duty with the United
 537 States Armed Forces as a health care practitioner in the United
 538 States Public Health Service; or

539 3. Is a health care practitioner in another state, the
 540 District of Columbia, or a possession or territory of the United
 541 States and is the spouse of a person serving on active duty with
 542 the United States Armed Forces.

543
 544 The department shall develop an application form, and each
 545 board, or the department if there is no board, shall waive the
 546 application fee, licensure fee, and unlicensed activity fee for
 547 such applicants. For purposes of this subsection, "health care
 548 practitioner" means a health care practitioner as defined in s.
 549 456.001 and a person licensed under part III of chapter 401 or
 550 part IV of chapter 468.

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

553 1. Submits a complete application.

554 2. If he or she is a member of the United States Armed
 555 Forces, the United States Reserve Forces, or the National Guard,
 556 submits proof that he or she has received an honorable discharge
 557 within 6 months before, or will receive an honorable discharge
 558 ~~within 6 months~~ after, the date of submission of the
 559 application.

560 3.a. Holds an active, unencumbered license issued by
 561 another state, the District of Columbia, or a possession or
 562 territory of the United States and who has not had disciplinary
 563 action taken against him or her in the 5 years preceding the
 564 date of submission of the application;

565 b. Is a military health care practitioner in a profession
 566 for which licensure in a state or jurisdiction is not required
 567 to practice in the United States Armed Forces, if he or she
 568 submits to the department evidence of military training or
 569 experience substantially equivalent to the requirements for
 570 licensure in this state in that profession and evidence that he
 571 or she has obtained a passing score on the appropriate
 572 examination of a national or regional standards organization if
 573 required for licensure in this state; or

574 c. Is the spouse of a person serving on active duty in the
 575 United States Armed Forces and is a health care practitioner in

576 a profession for which licensure in another state or
 577 jurisdiction is not required, if he or she submits to the
 578 department evidence of training or experience substantially
 579 equivalent to the requirements for licensure in this state in
 580 that profession and evidence that he or she has obtained a
 581 passing score on the appropriate examination of a national or
 582 regional standards organization if required for licensure in
 583 this state.

584 4. Attests that he or she is not, at the time of
 585 submission of the application, the subject of a disciplinary
 586 proceeding in a jurisdiction in which he or she holds a license
 587 or by the United States Department of Defense for reasons
 588 related to the practice of the profession for which he or she is
 589 applying.

590 5. Actively practiced the profession for which he or she
 591 is applying for the 3 years preceding the date of submission of
 592 the application.

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

596
 597 The department shall verify information submitted by the
 598 applicant under this subsection using the National Practitioner
 599 Data Bank.

600 (c) Each applicant who meets the requirements of this

601 subsection shall be licensed with all rights and
 602 responsibilities as defined by law. The applicable board, or the
 603 department if there is no board, may deny an application if the
 604 applicant has been convicted of or pled guilty or nolo
 605 contendere to, regardless of adjudication, any felony or
 606 misdemeanor related to the practice of a health care profession
 607 regulated by this state.

608 (d) An applicant for initial licensure under this
 609 subsection must submit the information required by ss.
 610 456.039(1) and 456.0391(1) no later than 1 year after the
 611 license is issued.

612 (5)~~(4)~~(a) The board, or the department if there is no
 613 board, shall issue a professional license to the spouse of an
 614 active duty member of the Armed Forces of the United States who
 615 submits to the department:

616 1. A completed application upon a form prepared and
 617 furnished by the department in accordance with the board's
 618 rules;

619 2. Proof that the applicant is married to a member of the
 620 Armed Forces of the United States who is on active duty;

621 3. Proof that the applicant holds a valid license for the
 622 profession issued by another state, the District of Columbia, or
 623 a possession or territory of the United States, and is not the
 624 subject of any disciplinary proceeding in any jurisdiction in
 625 which the applicant holds a license to practice a profession

626 regulated by this chapter;

627 4. Proof that the applicant's spouse is assigned to a duty
628 station in this state pursuant to the member's official active
629 duty military orders; and

630 5. Proof that the applicant would otherwise be entitled to
631 full licensure under the appropriate practice act, and is
632 eligible to take the respective licensure examination as
633 required in Florida.

634 (b) The applicant must also submit to the Department of
635 Law Enforcement a complete set of fingerprints. The Department
636 of Law Enforcement shall conduct a statewide criminal history
637 check and forward the fingerprints to the Federal Bureau of
638 Investigation for a national criminal history check.

639 (c) Each board, or the department if there is no board,
640 shall review the results of the state and federal criminal
641 history checks according to the level 2 screening standards in
642 s. 435.04 when granting an exemption and when granting or
643 denying the license.

644 (d) The applicant shall pay the cost of fingerprint
645 processing. If the fingerprints are submitted through an
646 authorized agency or vendor, the agency or vendor shall collect
647 the required processing fees and remit the fees to the
648 Department of Law Enforcement.

649 (e) The department shall waive the applicant's licensure
650 application fee.

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

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

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

658 2. Has had a health care provider license revoked or
 659 suspended from another of the United States, the District of
 660 Columbia, or a United States territory;

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

664 4. Has previously failed the Florida examination required
 665 to receive a license to practice the profession for which the
 666 applicant is seeking a license.

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

670 (i) The board, or the department if there is no board,
 671 shall expedite all applications submitted by a spouse of an
 672 active duty member or veteran of the Armed Forces of the United
 673 States pursuant to this subsection and shall issue a license
 674 within 7 days after receipt of all required documentation for
 675 such application.

676 Section 7. Subsections (2), (3), (4), (5), (6), and (7) of
 677 section 456.0241, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

678 456.0241 Temporary certificate for active duty military
 679 health care practitioners.—

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

683 (a) Submits proof that he or she will be practicing
 684 pursuant to a military platform.

685 (b) Submits a complete application ~~and a nonrefundable~~
 686 ~~application fee.~~

687 (c) Holds an active, unencumbered license to practice as a
 688 health care professional issued by another state, the District
 689 of Columbia, or a possession or territory of the United States
 690 or is a military health care practitioner in a profession for
 691 which licensure in a state or jurisdiction is not required for
 692 practice in the United States Armed Forces and provides evidence
 693 of military training and experience substantially equivalent to
 694 the requirements for licensure in this state in that profession.

695 (d) Attests that he or she is not, at the time of
 696 submission of the application, the subject of a disciplinary
 697 proceeding in a jurisdiction in which he or she holds a license
 698 or by the United States Department of Defense for reasons
 699 related to the practice of the profession for which he or she is
 700 applying.

701 (e) Has been determined to be competent in the profession
 702 for which he or she is applying.

703 (f) Submits a set of fingerprints for a background
 704 screening pursuant to s. 456.0135, if required for the
 705 profession for which he or she is applying.

706

707 The department shall verify information submitted by the
 708 applicant under this subsection using the National Practitioner
 709 Data Bank.

710 (3) A temporary certificate issued under this section
 711 expires 6 months after issuance but may be renewed upon proof of
 712 continuing military orders for active duty assignment in this
 713 state and evidence that the military health care practitioner
 714 continues to be a military platform participant.

715 (4) A military health care practitioner applying for a
 716 temporary certificate under this section is exempt from ss.
 717 456.039-456.046. All other provisions of this chapter apply to
 718 such military health care practitioner.

719 (5) An applicant for a temporary certificate under this
 720 section is deemed ineligible if he or she:

721 (a) Has been convicted of or pled guilty or nolo
 722 contendere to, regardless of adjudication, any felony or
 723 misdemeanor related to the practice of a health care profession;

724 (b) Has had a health care provider license revoked or
 725 suspended in another state, the District of Columbia, or a

726 possession or territory of the United States;

727 (c) Has failed to obtain a passing score on the ~~Florida~~
 728 examination required to receive a license to practice the
 729 profession for which he or she is applying; or

730 (d) Is under investigation in another jurisdiction for an
 731 act that would constitute a violation of the applicable
 732 licensing chapter or this chapter until the investigation is
 733 complete and all charges against him or her are disposed of by
 734 dismissal, nolle prosequi, or acquittal.

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

737 (6)(7) Application shall be made on a form prescribed and
 738 furnished by the department.

739 (7) The department shall waive the temporary licensing fee.

740 Section 8. Section 456.0242, Florida Statutes, is created
 741 to read:

742 456.0242 .-- Section 1. Section 456.0242, Florida
 743 Statutes, is created to read:

744 456.0242 Office of Veteran Licensure Services.--

745 (1) There is established the Office of Veteran Licensure
 746 Services in the Division of Medical Quality Assurance. The
 747 Office shall assist active duty members of the United States
 748 Armed Forces, the United States Reserved Forces, the National
 749 Guard, veterans, and their spouses who seek to become a licensed
 750 health care practitioner in this state.

751 (2) The office shall be headed by an Executive Director,
 752 designated by the department, who must be a veteran.

753 (3) The office shall:

754 (a) Provide information, guidance, direction, and
 755 assistance with the licensure processes;

756 (b) Coordinate with each board, or the department if there
 757 is no board, to expedite all applications submitted pursuant to
 758 s. 456.024;

759 (c) Refer any individual requesting assistance with resume
 760 writing and proofreading, job application completion, and
 761 interviewing skills and techniques to Florida is for Veterans,
 762 Inc.;

763 (d) Refer any individual requesting information on
 764 educational or employment opportunities in health care
 765 professions to Florida is For Veterans, Inc.; and

766 (e) The office shall submit a report annually by November
 767 11 to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker
 768 of the House of Representatives. The report must categorize
 769 individuals as active duty member, veteran or spouse and must
 770 include, but is not limited to:

771 1. The number of individuals served;

772 2. The educational and training background for any
 773 individual seeking licensure;

774 3. Health care licenses an individual holds in another
 775 state, irrespective of the current status of such license;

776 4. Number of licensure applications received;
 777 5. The average days to license a qualified applicant; and
 778 6. Number of referrals for vocational assistance.
 779 (4) The department may adopt rules necessary to implement
 780 this section.
 781 Section 9. This act shall take effect July 1, 2023.