

Date: 25 February 2016
To: Commandant Cona, M.C.L. Dept. of Florida
From: Liz Black, Legislative Officer
Subject: Bills in 2016 Legislative Session Pertaining to Florida Veterans

Dear Sir Commandant:

As a recent appointee to act as the Department of Florida Legislative Officer, I have been looking through proposed veteran-related legislation awaiting action in Florida's 2016 Legislative Session. As you know, they are still in Session, and many of the bills are still awaiting review.

I have been invited to attend a "Round-Table" veteran's town hall legislative meeting on 23 March 2016 at 1800 hours at the VFW. I am rather new to this position, and hopefully I will become more knowledgeable in regard to any addition pending bills for future legislation sessions.

For now, I have made a list of proposed bills awaiting initial action:

SB 088- Relating to Gold Star License Plates – Amends s.320.0894, F.S.; expanding certain individuals as qualified for Gold Star License Plate

Last Action: 1/21/2016 H In Messages

Location: In messages from Senate

SB 0128 - Relating to Combat Veterans and Their Families – Defining the term "combat veteran;" requiring that the Department of Children and Families establish the Florida Combat Veterans' Care Coordination Program to provide combat veterans and their families with behavioral health care referral and care coordination services; requiring that the department contract with managing

entities to enter into agreements with Florida 211 Network participants for such services, etc.

Last Action: 1/12/2016 S

Introduced: - SJ13

Location: In committee/council

SB 0160 – Relating to Ad Valorem Tax Exemption For Deployed Service Members – Expands the military operations that qualify a service member deployed in support of such an operation in the previous calendar year for an additional ad valorem tax exemption; providing an extended deadline and specifying procedures for filing application for such tax exemption for qualifying deployment during the 2014 calendar year, etc.

Last Action: 2/11/2016- Laid on Table,

Refer to HB 7023-SJ 398

Location: Laid on Table

SB 0184 – Relating to Military and Veterans Affairs – Requiring the application form for an original, renewal, or replacement driver license or identification card to include a voluntary checkoff authorizing veterans to request written or electronic information on federal, state, and local benefits for veterans; creating the Military and Overseas Voting Assistance Task Force within the Department of State; providing legislative findings regarding continuing education for veterans of the United States Armed Forces, etc.

Last Action: 1/21/2016 H In

Messages

Location: In Messages from Senate

AP

SB 0222 – Related to parking for Disabled Veterans – Requiring the governing body of each publicly owned or publicly operated airport to grant free parking to any vehicle displaying specified license plates for disabled veterans; clarifying that such license plate, rather than “DV” license plates, are exempt from certain parking fees charged by a county, municipality, or an agency thereof, etc.

Last Action: 2/24/2016

Effective Date: 7/1/16 House Passed

Location: Final Passage

SB 0404 – Relating to Small Business Financial Assistance – Creates the Veterans Employment Small Business Grant Program within the Department of Veterans Affairs; requiring a small business to apply to enter into an agreement with the corporation to receive grants; requiring the corporation to notify the appropriate regional small business development center of a small business’ participation; providing for termination of the program, etc. (See House Bill 263)

Last Action: 1/12/2016 S

Introduced – SJ 32

Location: In Committee/Council

AP

SB 0518 – Relating to Bronze Star License Plates- Creates special license plate for recipients of the Bronze Star medal, etc.

Last Action: 2/10/2016 H In Messages

Location: In messages from Senate

SB 0538 – Relating to Annual Sales Tax Holiday for Veterans of the United States Armed Forces- Creates an annual sales tax holiday for veterans; specifying items that are eligible for the sales tax holiday; defining the term “veteran” for purposes of the sales tax holiday, etc. (See House Bill 279)

Last Action: 1/12/2016 S

Introduced: SJ 39

Location: In committee/council MS

SB 0604 – Relating to Mental Health Services in the Criminal Justice System – Expands eligibility for military veterans and service members for certain programs. Expanding the definition of “veteran” for the purpose of eligibility for veterans’ court, to include veterans who were discharged or released under a general discharge. (See House Bill 439)

Last Action: 2/19/2016 S Now in
Appropriations – SJ 434
Location: In committee/council AP

SB 0666 – Expanding the list of acceptable forms of identification for certain voter registration applicants to include veteran health cards, licenses to carry concealed weapon or firearm, and certain government issued employee identification cards, etc.

Last Action: 2/24/2016 House Passed
Effective: Upon becoming law
Location: Final Passage

SB 0772 – Relating to Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services- Waives specified license and registration fees for honorably discharged veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces, spouses of such veterans, or business entities that have a majority ownership by such veterans or spouses of such veterans.

Last Action: 2/18/2016 S
Retained on Calendar
Location: On 2nd Reading Calendar

SB 0778 – Relating to Homestead Tax Exemption/Spouses of Combat-related Disabled Veterans – Joint Resolution proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to authorize the discount on ad valorem taxes on homestead property which is received by certain veterans who have permanent, combat-related disabilities to carry over upon the death of the veteran to the benefit of a surviving spouse until the surviving spouse remarries or sells or otherwise disposed of the property and to specify that the discount is transferrable to another permanent residence if the surviving spouse remains unmarried, etc.

Last Action: 1/14/2016 S CS/CS
By Finance and Tax read 1st time – SJ 241
Location: In committee/council (AP)

SB 0816 – Relating to Homestead Property Tax Discount for Disabled Veterans – Providing for the transfer of a certain discount on ad valorem taxes on homestead property to the surviving spouse of a specified disabled veteran under certain circumstances; providing for the transfer of the discount by the surviving spouse to a new residence under certain circumstances, etc.

Last Action: 1/14/2016 S CS by
Finance and Tax read 1st time – SJ 210
Location: In committee/council (AP)

SB 7016 – Relating to Interstate Compact on Educational opportunity for Military Children – Reenacts provisions of law establishing and implementing the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children and provides for future legislative review and repeal of the Compact on July 1, 2019. The compact is an agreement between states that is designed to assist member states in uniformly addressing key educational transition issues in enrollment, placement, attendance, eligibility, and graduation.

Last Action: 2/23/2016 Senate ordered enrolled –SJ 481
Location: Final Passage
Effective: Except as otherwise expressly provided in this act, this act shall take effect Apr. 9, 2016, or if this act fails to become law until after that date, it shall take effect upon becoming a law and operate retroactively to April 9, 2016.

This concludes my quarterly report.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Liz Black
Dept. of Florida
Marine Corps League
Legislative Officer**