

CHAPTER 2016-242

Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 184

An act relating to military and veterans affairs; creating s. 83.683, F.S.; requiring a landlord, a condominium association, a cooperative association, or a homeowners' association to complete the processing of a rental application submitted by a servicemember within a specified timeframe; providing applicability; amending s. 322.08, F.S.; 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 and services for veterans; requiring the requested information to be delivered by a third-party provider; requiring the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles to report monthly to the Department of Veterans' Affairs the names and mailing or e-mail addresses of veterans who request information; requiring the Department of Veterans' Affairs to disseminate veteran contact information to the third-party provider; requiring that the third-party provider be a nonprofit organization; defining the term "nonprofit organization"; requiring that the Department of Veterans' Affairs provide veteran contact information to the appropriate county or city veteran service officer; specifying that a third-party provider may use veteran contact information only as authorized; prohibiting a third-party provider from selling veteran contact information; requiring a third-party provider to maintain confidentiality of veteran contact information under specified provisions; providing a penalty; amending s. 265.003, F.S.; defining the term "veteran" or "military veteran" for purposes of determining persons the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame Council may consider as nominees for the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame; creating s. 489.1131, F.S.; directing the Department of Business and Professional Regulation to provide a method by which honorably discharged veterans may apply for construction contracting licensure; authorizing the Construction Industry Licensing Board to adopt rules; directing the department, in conjunction with the board, to annually prepare and submit a specified report to the Governor and Legislature; amending s. 489.511, F.S.; revising eligibility criteria for taking the electrical or alarm system contractor certification examination; creating s. 489.5161, F.S.; directing the Department of Business and Professional Regulation to provide a method by which honorably discharged veterans may apply for electrical or alarm system contracting licensure; authorizing the Electrical Contractors' Licensing Board to adopt rules; directing the department, in conjunction with the board, to annually prepare and submit a specified report to the Governor and Legislature; creating s. 493.61035, F.S.; directing the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to provide a method by which honorably discharged veterans may apply for private investigative, private security, and repossession services licensure; authorizing the department to adopt rules; directing the department to annually prepare and submit a specified report to the

Governor and Legislature; directing the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles and the Department of Military Affairs to conduct a commercial motor vehicle driver license testing pilot program; specifying testing locations and funding; requiring the departments to submit a report to the Legislature by a specified date; providing for repeal of the program; creating the Military and Overseas Voting Assistance Task Force within the Department of State; specifying membership of the task force; authorizing reimbursement for per diem and travel expenses; prescribing duties of the task force; requiring submission of a report to the Governor and the Legislature by a specified date; providing for expiration of the task force; providing for staffing; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Section 83.683, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

83.683 Rental application by a servicemember.—

(1) If a landlord requires a prospective tenant to complete a rental application before residing in a rental unit, the landlord must complete processing of a rental application submitted by a prospective tenant who is a servicemember, as defined in s. 250.01, within 7 days after submission and must, within that 7-day period, notify the servicemember in writing of an application approval or denial and, if denied, the reason for denial. Absent a timely denial of the rental application, the landlord must lease the rental unit to the servicemember if all other terms of the application and lease are complied with.

(2) If a condominium association, as defined in chapter 718, a cooperative association, as defined in chapter 719, or a homeowners' association, as defined in chapter 720, requires a prospective tenant of a condominium unit, cooperative unit, or parcel within the association's control to complete a rental application before residing in a rental unit or parcel, the association must complete processing of a rental application submitted by a prospective tenant who is a servicemember, as defined in s. 250.01, within 7 days after submission and must, within that 7-day period, notify the servicemember in writing of an application approval or denial and, if denied, the reason for denial. Absent a timely denial of the rental application, the association must allow the unit or parcel owner to lease the rental unit or parcel to the servicemember and the landlord must lease the rental unit or parcel to the servicemember if all other terms of the application and lease are complied with.

(3) The provisions of this section may not be waived or modified by the agreement of the parties under any circumstances.

Section 2. Present subsection (9) of section 322.08, Florida Statutes, is renumbered as subsection (10), and a new subsection (9) is added to that section, to read:

322.08 Application for license; requirements for license and identification card forms.—

(9)(a) To support the carrying out of the duties of the Department of Veterans' Affairs prescribed in s. 292.05 and to facilitate its outreach to veterans residing in this state, the application form for an original, a renewal, or a replacement driver license or identification card must include a voluntary checkoff authorizing a veteran of the United States Armed Forces to request written or electronic information on federal, state, and local benefits and services available to veterans. The veteran may elect to receive requested information through United States mail or by e-mail. The requested information shall be delivered to the veteran by any third-party provider selected by the Department of Veterans' Affairs to act on its behalf.

(b) The department shall collaborate with the Department of Veterans' Affairs to administer this subsection. The department shall report monthly to the Department of Veterans' Affairs the name and mailing address or e-mail address of each veteran who requests information as provided in paragraph (a). Following receipt of the monthly report, the Department of Veterans' Affairs shall disseminate the contact information for each such veteran to the third-party provider acting on its behalf. The third-party provider must be a nonprofit organization with sufficient ability to communicate with veterans residing throughout this state. For purposes of this paragraph, the term "nonprofit organization" means an organization exempt from the federal income tax under s. 501 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or any federal, state, or local governmental entity.

(c) In addition to the requirements of paragraph (b), the Department of Veterans' Affairs shall disseminate the contact information for a veteran who selects the voluntary checkoff to the appropriate county or city veteran service officer in order to facilitate further outreach to veterans.

(d)1. The contact information of a veteran which is obtained by a third-party provider pursuant to this subsection may be used only as authorized by this subsection. The third-party provider may not sell such contact information. Except as otherwise provided, the third-party provider must maintain the confidentiality of the contact information in accordance with chapter 119 and the federal Driver's Privacy Protection Act of 1994, 18 U.S.C. ss. 2721 et seq.

2. A person who willfully and knowingly violates this paragraph commits a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083.

Section 3. Subsection (4) of section 265.003, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

265.003 Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame.—

(4)(a) The Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame Council shall annually accept nominations of persons to be considered for induction into the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame and shall transmit a list of up to 20 nominees to the Department of Veterans' Affairs for submission to the Governor and the Cabinet who will select the nominees to be inducted.

(b) In selecting its nominees for submission to the Governor and the Cabinet, the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame council shall give preference to veterans who were born in Florida or adopted Florida as their home state or base of operation and who have made a significant contribution to the state in civic, business, public service, or other pursuits.

(c) For purposes of this section, the term "veteran" or "military veteran" means a person who meets the definition of the term in s. 1.01(14) or a former member of the Florida National Guard.

Section 4. Section 489.1131, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

489.1131 Credit for relevant military training and education.—

(1) The department shall provide a method by which honorably discharged veterans may apply for licensure. The method must include a veteran-specific application and provide:

(a) To the fullest extent possible, credit toward the requirements for licensure for military experience, training, and education received and completed during service in the United States Armed Forces if the military experience, training, or education is substantially similar to the experience, training, or education required for licensure.

(b) Acceptance of up to 3 years of active duty service in the United States Armed Forces, regardless of duty or training, to meet the experience requirements of s. 489.111(2)(c). At least 1 additional year of active experience as a foreman in the trade, either civilian or military, is required to fulfill the experience requirement of s. 489.111(2)(c).

The board may adopt rules pursuant to s. 120.536(1) and s. 120.54 to implement this subsection.

(2) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, beginning October 1, 2017, and annually thereafter, the department, in conjunction with the board, is directed to prepare and submit a report titled "Construction and Electrical Contracting Veteran Applicant Statistics" to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The report must include statistics and information relating to this section and s. 489.5161 which detail:

(a) The number of applicants who identified themselves as veterans.

(b) The number of veterans whose application for a license was approved.

(c) The number of veterans whose application for a license was denied, including the reasons for denial.

(d) Data on the application processing times for veterans.

(e) Recommendations on ways to improve the department's ability to meet the needs of veterans which would effectively address the challenges that veterans face when separating from military service and seeking a license regulated by the department pursuant to part I of chapter 489.

Section 5. Paragraph (b) of subsection (1) of section 489.511, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

489.511 Certification; application; examinations; endorsement.—

(1)

(b) Any person desiring to be certified as a contractor shall apply to the department in writing and must meet the following criteria:

1. Be of good moral character;
2. Pass the certification examination, achieving a passing grade as established by board rule; and
3. Meet eligibility requirements according to one of the following criteria:
 - a. Has, within the 6 years immediately preceding the filing of the application, at least 3 years of years² proven management experience in the trade or education equivalent thereto, or a combination thereof, but not more than one-half of such experience may be educational equivalent;
 - b. Has, within the 8 years immediately preceding the filing of the application, at least 4 years of years² experience as a supervisor or contractor in the trade for which he or she is making application, or at least 4 years of experience as a supervisor in electrical or alarm system work with the United States Armed Forces;
 - c. Has, within the 12 years immediately preceding the filing of the application, at least 6 years of comprehensive training, technical education, or supervisory experience associated with an electrical or alarm system contracting business, or at least 6 years of technical experience, education, or training in electrical or alarm system work with the United States Armed Forces or a governmental entity;
 - d. Has, within the 12 years immediately preceding the filing of the application, been licensed for 3 years as a professional engineer who is qualified by education, training, or experience to practice electrical engineering; or
 - e. Has any combination of qualifications under sub-subparagraphs a.-c. totaling 6 years of experience.

Section 6. Section 489.5161, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

489.5161 Credit for relevant military training and education.—

(1) The department shall provide a method by which honorably discharged veterans may apply for licensure. The method must include a veteran-specific application and provide, to the fullest extent possible, credit toward the requirements for licensure for military experience, training, and education received and completed during service in the United States Armed Forces if the military experience, training, or education is substantially similar to the experience, training, or education required for licensure. The board may adopt rules pursuant to s. 120.536(1) and s. 120.54 to implement this subsection.

(2) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, beginning October 1, 2017, and annually thereafter, the department, in conjunction with the board, is directed to prepare and submit a report titled “Construction and Electrical Contracting Veteran Applicant Statistics” to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The report shall include statistics and information relating to this section and s. 489.1131 which detail:

- (a) The number of applicants who identified themselves as veterans.
- (b) The number of veterans whose application for a license was approved.
- (c) The number of veterans whose application for a license was denied, including data on the reasons for denial.
- (d) Data on the application processing times for veterans.
- (e) Recommendations on ways to improve the department’s ability to meet the needs of veterans which would effectively address the challenges that veterans face when separating from military service and seeking a license regulated by the department pursuant to part II of chapter 489.

Section 7. Section 493.61035, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

493.61035 Credit for relevant military training and education.—

(1) The department shall provide a method by which honorably discharged veterans may apply for licensure. The method must include:

(a) To the fullest extent possible, credit toward the requirements for licensure for military training and education received and completed during service in the United States Armed Forces if the military training or education is substantially similar to the training or education required for licensure.

(b) Identification of overlaps and gaps between the requirements for licensure and the military training or education received and completed by

the veteran, and subsequent notification to the veteran of the overlaps and gaps.

(c) Assistance in identifying programs that offer training and education needed to meet the requirements for licensure.

(2) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, beginning October 1, 2017, and annually thereafter, the department is directed to prepare and submit a report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. In addition to any other information that the Legislature may require, the report must include statistics and relevant information which detail:

(a) The number of applicants who identified themselves as veterans.

(b) The number of veterans whose application for a license was approved.

(c) The number of veterans whose application for a license was denied, including the reasons for denial.

(d) Data on the application processing times for veterans.

(e) The department’s efforts to assist veterans in identifying programs that offer training and education needed to meet the requirements for licensure.

(f) The department’s identification of the most common overlaps and gaps between the requirements for licensure and the military training and education received and completed by the veterans.

(g) Recommendations on ways to improve the department’s ability to meet the needs of veterans which would effectively address the challenges that veterans face when separating from military service and seeking a license for a profession or occupation regulated by the department pursuant to chapter 493.

Section 8. (1) The Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles and the Department of Military Affairs shall jointly conduct a pilot program to provide onsite commercial motor vehicle driver license testing opportunities to qualified members of the Florida National Guard pursuant to the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles commercial motor vehicle driver license skills test waiver under s. 322.12, Florida Statutes. Testing must be held at a Florida National Guard Armory, a Florida United States Armed Forces Reserve Center, or the Camp Blanding Joint Training Center. The pilot program shall be accomplished using existing funds appropriated to each department.

(2) By June 30, 2017, the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles and the Department of Military Affairs shall jointly submit a report on the results of the pilot program to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

(3) This section is repealed October 1, 2017, and shall not be codified in the Florida Statutes.

Section 9. Military and Overseas Voting Assistance Task Force.—The Military and Overseas Voting Assistance Task Force, a task force as defined in s. 20.03, Florida Statutes, is created within the Department of State. The task force is created for the express purpose of studying issues involving the development and implementation of an online voting system that allows absent uniformed services voters who are overseas to electronically submit voted ballots.

(1) The task force is composed of 11 members, as follows:

(a) The Secretary of State or his or her designee, who shall serve as chair of the task force.

(b) The Adjutant General or his or her designee.

(c) The executive director of the Agency for State Technology or his or her designee.

(d) One member of the Senate appointed by the President of the Senate.

(e) One member of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

(f) Three supervisors of elections appointed by the Florida State Association of Supervisors of Elections.

(g) Three individuals appointed by the Secretary of State, with relevant expertise in computers, the Internet, or other associated technologies.

(2) Members of the task force shall serve without compensation, but are entitled to reimbursement for per diem and travel expenses pursuant to s. 112.061, Florida Statutes.

(3) The task force, at a minimum, shall study and report on the following issues:

(a) Any factor that limits the ability of absent uniformed services voters who are overseas to request, receive, and return absentee ballots within the current statutory time period for casting absentee ballots.

(b) The costs associated with the development and implementation of an online voting system.

(c) The feasibility of absent uniformed services voters who are overseas using an online voting system to electronically submit a voted ballot.

(d) The security of electronically submitting a voted ballot through an online voting system.

(e) Procedures adopted by other states to facilitate greater electoral participation among absent uniformed services voters who are overseas.

(4) The Secretary of State shall submit a report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by July 1, 2017, containing the task force's recommendation concerning whether the state should pursue the development and implementation of an online voting system that allows absent uniformed services voters who are overseas to electronically submit voted ballots. If the task force favorably recommends an online voting system, the report must include recommended steps for developing and implementing such a system. Upon submission of the report, the task force shall expire.

(5) The Division of Elections of the Department of State shall provide support staff for the task force. The Agency for State Technology shall assist the task force upon request.

Section 10. This act shall take effect July 1, 2016.

Approved by the Governor April 15, 2016.

Filed in Office Secretary of State April 15, 2016.