

CHAPTER 2026-92

Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 474

An act relating to military affairs; amending s. 115.01, F.S.; revising the authorization to be granted a leave of absence for military service to include the Coast Guard; removing the condition that such service be during war between the United States and a foreign government; amending s. 115.07, F.S.; clarifying a provision relating to leaves of absence for all officers and employees of the state and the counties, municipalities, and political subdivisions of the state for reserve or guard training; authorizing local governments to provide additional paid leave for officers and employees for reserve or guard training; amending s. 115.08, F.S.; revising the definition of the term “active military service”; amending s. 115.09, F.S.; specifying that an authorization for a leave of absence for public officials to perform active military service for a specified timeframe is based on a single order; amending s. 115.14, F.S.; specifying that an authorization for a leave of absence for all employees of the state and the counties, municipalities, and political subdivisions of the state to perform active military service for a specified timeframe is based on a single order; amending s. 121.055, F.S.; revising the list of military positions required to participate in the Senior Management Service Class of the Florida Retirement System; amending s. 250.10, F.S.; removing a requirement that the Adjutant General administer youth About Face Programs and adult Forward March programs; removing provisions governing the programs; amending s. 250.116, F.S.; revising eligibility for the Soldiers and Airmen Assistance Program to include traditional drilling guardsmen on state active duty or on Title 32 United States Code duty and their eligible beneficiaries demonstrating valid financial need; defining the term “beneficiary”; requiring requests for assistance to be reviewed, processed, and approved by the Florida National Guard Foundation’s board of directors; requiring requests for assistance to be reviewed and evaluated based on specified criteria; requiring an annual external audit of the program; requiring the board to annually review the bylaws that govern the program; requiring the board to provide a report to the Department of Military Affairs to be approved by the Adjutant General; reenacting s. 115.06, F.S., relating to reassumption of duties for officers returning from the service of the United States, to incorporate the amendment made to s. 115.01, F.S., in a reference thereto; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Section 115.01, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

115.01 Leave of absence for military service.—Any county or state official of the state, subject to the provisions and conditions hereinafter set forth, may be granted leave of absence from his or her office, to serve in the volunteer forces of the United States, or in the National Guard of any state,

or in the regular Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, or Space Force of the United States, when the same shall be called into active service of the United States ~~during war between the United States and a foreign government.~~

Section 2. Subsections (3) and (4) of section 115.07, Florida Statutes, are renumbered as subsections (4) and (5), respectively, subsections (1) and (2) are amended, and a new subsection (3) is added to that section, to read:

115.07 Officers and employees' leaves of absence for reserve or guard training.—

(1) All officers or employees of the state, of the several counties of the state, and of the municipalities or political subdivisions of the state who are commissioned reserve officers or reserve enlisted personnel in the United States military or naval service or members of the National Guard are entitled to leaves of absence from their respective duties, without loss of vacation leave, pay, time, or efficiency rating, on all days during which they are engaged in training ordered under the provisions of the United States military or naval training regulations or applicable general law for such personnel when assigned to active or inactive duty.

(2) Leaves of absence granted as a matter of legal right under the provisions of this section may not exceed 240 working hours in any one annual period, except as provided in subsection (3). Administrative leaves of absence for additional or longer periods of time for assignment to duty functions of a military character shall be without pay, except as provided in subsection (3), and shall be granted by the employing or appointing authority of any state, county, municipal, or political subdivision employee and when so granted shall be without loss of time or efficiency rating.

(3) A county, municipality, or other political subdivision of the state may adopt an ordinance or resolution providing that an employee who is a commissioned reserve officer or reserve enlisted personnel in the United States military or naval service or who is a member of the National Guard may receive more than 240 working hours of paid leave from his or her respective duties, without loss of vacation leave, pay, time, or efficiency rating, on all days during which he or she is engaged in training ordered under the provisions of the United States military or naval training regulations or applicable general law for such personnel when assigned to active or inactive duty, provided that no state funds are used for such supplemental payments.

Section 3. Subsection (1) of section 115.08, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

115.08 Definitions.—

(1) The term “active military service” as used in this chapter means shall ~~signify active duty in the Florida defense force or federal service in training~~

~~or on active duty~~ with any branch of the Armed Forces or Reservists of the Armed Forces, the Florida National Guard, the Coast Guard of the United States, and service of all officers of the United States Public Health Service detailed by proper authority for duty with the Armed Forces, and includes ~~shall include~~ the period during which a person in military service is absent from duty on account of sickness, wounds, leave, or other lawful cause.

Section 4. Section 115.09, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

115.09 Leave to public officials for military service.—All officials of the state, the several counties of the state, and the municipalities or political subdivisions of the state, including district school and Florida ~~community~~ College System officers, which officials are also servicemembers in the National Guard or a reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States, must be granted leave of absence from their respective offices and duties to perform active military service, with the first 30 days of any such leave of absence to be with full pay for active federal military service that is equal to or greater than 90 consecutive days on a single order.

Section 5. Section 115.14, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

115.14 Employees.—All employees of the state, the several counties of the state, and the municipalities or political subdivisions of the state must be granted leave of absence under the terms of this law; upon such leave of absence being granted, such employee must enjoy the same rights and privileges as are granted to officials under this law, including, without limitation, receiving full pay for the first 30 days for federal military service that is equal to or greater than 90 consecutive days on a single order. Notwithstanding s. 115.09, the employing authority may supplement the military pay of its officials and employees who are reservists called to active military service after the first 30 days in an amount necessary to bring their total salary, inclusive of their base military pay, to the level earned at the time they were called to active military duty. The employing authority shall continue to provide all health insurance and other existing benefits to such officials and employees as required by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, chapter 43 of Title 38 U.S.C.

Section 6. Paragraph (g) of subsection (1) of section 121.055, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

121.055 Senior Management Service Class.—There is hereby established a separate class of membership within the Florida Retirement System to be known as the “Senior Management Service Class,” which shall become effective February 1, 1987.

(1)

(g) Effective July 1, 1996, participation in the Senior Management Service Class shall be compulsory for any member of the Florida Retirement System employed with the Department of Military Affairs in the uniformed

positions of the Adjutant General, Assistant Adjutant General-Army, Assistant Adjutant General-Air, and State Quartermaster, ~~Director of Human Resources, Director of Legislative Affairs, Inspector General, Executive Officer, and two positions serving as a Special Projects Officer of the Florida National Guard additional directors~~ as designated by the agency head, ~~not to exceed a total of 10 positions~~. In lieu of participation in the Senior Management Service Class, such members may participate in the Senior Management Service Optional Annuity Program as established in subsection (6).

Section 7. Paragraph (m) of subsection (2) of section 250.10, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

250.10 Appointment and duties of the Adjutant General.—

(2) The Adjutant General shall:

~~(m) Subject to annual appropriations, administer youth About Face programs and adult Forward March programs at sites to be selected by the Adjutant General. Both programs must provide schoolwork assistance, focusing on the skills needed to master basic high school competencies and functional life skills, including teaching students to work effectively in groups; providing basic instruction in computer skills; teaching basic problem-solving, decisionmaking, and reasoning skills; teaching how the business world and free enterprise work through computer simulations; and teaching home finance and budgeting and other daily living skills.~~

~~1. About Face is a summer and year-round after-school life-preparation program for economically disadvantaged and at-risk youths from 13 through 17 years of age. The program must provide training in academic study skills, and the basic skills that businesses require for employment consideration.~~

~~2. Forward March is a job-readiness program for economically disadvantaged participants who are directed to Forward March by the local workforce development boards. The Forward March program shall provide training on topics that directly relate to the skills required for real-world success. The program shall emphasize functional life skills, computer literacy, interpersonal relationships, critical thinking skills, business skills, preemployment and work maturity skills, job-search skills, exploring careers activities, how to be a successful and effective employee, and some job-specific skills. The program also shall provide extensive opportunities for participants to practice generic job skills in a supervised work setting. Upon completion of the program, Forward March shall return participants to the local workforce development boards for placement in a job placement pool.~~

Section 8. Subsections (4), (5), and (6) of section 250.116, Florida Statutes, are amended, and subsection (7) is added to that section, to read:

250.116 Soldiers and Airmen Assistance Program.—

(4) ELIGIBILITY.—~~Persons eligible for assistance from the program include:~~

(a) Persons eligible for assistance from the program include ~~service-members who are members of the Florida National Guard who are:~~

1. traditional drilling guardsmen on state active duty or on Title 32 United States Code duty, who otherwise do not qualify for the assistance programs available to servicemembers serving under Title 10 United States Code, and who demonstrate valid financial need, and their eligible beneficiaries, and such persons are authorized to apply for and receive financial assistance from the program, as administered by the Florida National Guard Foundation’s board of directors and its governing bylaws, contingent upon the availability of funds serving in the Global War on Terrorism or Overseas Contingency Operation or who request assistance within 120 days after the termination of orders for such service and return to their home of record.

2. ~~Deployed by the Federal Government and participating in state operations for homeland defense or request assistance within 120 days after the termination of orders for such service and return to their home of record.~~

(b)1. As used in this subsection, the term “beneficiary” means the current spouse, dependent children, or other beneficiaries as designated in the servicemember’s service component records ~~Beneficiaries of an eligible servicemember designated on United States Department of Defense Form 93.~~

2. ~~Individuals demonstrating a financial need for authorized assistance who are dependents or family members of an eligible servicemember.~~

(5) REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE; REVIEW; AWARDS.—

(a) ~~A request for assistance must shall be reviewed, and processed, and approved by the Florida National Guard Foundation’s board of directors at the local level by an official designated by the Adjutant General. During the initial review and processing of the request, the Department of Military Affairs may accept assistance from the direct support organization. Final review and approval of requests for assistance shall be made by the Department of Military Affairs.~~

(b) ~~Requests for assistance must shall be reviewed and evaluated based on the following criteria:~~

1. ~~The impact of a servicemember’s financial situation absence and inability to provide quality of life and other qualifying life-impacting assist in home and vehicle repairs or meet other family needs;~~

2. ~~The economic impact of deployment;~~

3. ~~The overall financial situation of the applicant;~~

2.4. The assistance authorized under the program; and

3.5. Any other consideration dictated in the bylaws of the Florida National Guard Foundation ~~Other relevant information.~~

(6) QUARTERLY FINANCIAL REVIEW.—The financial committee of the board of directors of the direct-support organization shall review financial transactions of the program each quarter. The board of directors must also ensure an annual external audit is completed and published on the publicly available website of the direct-support organization. This audit must review shall be provided to the Department of Military Affairs in order to determine whether the direct-support organization is being operated in a manner that is consistent with the purposes of the Soldiers and Airmen Assistance Fund, and in the best interests of the department. The financial committee may request the Office of Inspector General to conduct additional reviews.

(7) ANNUAL BYLAW REVIEW.—The Florida National Guard Foundation’s board of directors shall annually review the bylaws that govern the program. This review shall be provided in a report to the Department of Military Affairs and subject to approval by the Adjutant General.

Section 9. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 115.01, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, section 115.06, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

115.06 Reassumption of duties.—Upon being mustered out of the service of the United States, such officer granted leave under s. 115.01 shall immediately enter into the duties of his or her office for the remainder of the term for which he or she was elected.

Section 10. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.

Approved by the Governor May 22, 2026.

Filed in Office Secretary of State May 22, 2026.