

Helmich Consulting, Inc.

MEMORANDUM

To: American Legion, Department of Florida

From: Helmich Consulting, Inc.

Date: March 17, 2020

RE: 2020 Session Report

The 2020 Legislative Session has ended except for the final passage of the budget which is currently in its 72 hour cooldown period on the members desks.

Below is a list of veteran related bills an what their current status is.

HB 877 / SB 1076 Ad Valorem Tax Discount for Spouses of Certain Deceased Veterans Who Had Permanent, Combat-Related Disabilities – These bills and their related bills Proposes an amendment to State Constitution to authorize surviving spouse of deceased veteran to carry over certain discounts on ad valorem taxes on homestead property until surviving spouse remarries or sells or otherwise disposes of property, if, upon veteran's death, veteran had permanent, combat-related disabilities; authorizes discount to be transferred to another permanent residence if surviving spouse has not remarried. **PASSED and will be on the 2020 ballot**

HB 741 / SB 1582 Asbestos Trust Claims – These bills are not identical but do Require plaintiff to provide certain materials after filing asbestos claim; authorizes defendant to seek discovery from asbestos trust; prohibits plaintiff from barring discovery or claiming privilege or confidentiality. **These bills were successfully killed.**

HB 167 / SB 294 Offenses Against Veterans – These bills provides that person commits aggravated white collar crime if committed against specified number of veteran. **PASSED and sent to the Governor.**

HB 205 / SB 352 Unlawful Use of Uniforms, Medals, or Insignia – Prohibits certain misrepresentations concerning military service when made for specified purposes. **PASSED and sent to the Governor.**

HB 171 / SB 372 Postsecondary Education for Certain Military Personnel – The Bills Require BOG & SBE to create uniform process for award of postsecondary credit & clock hours to certain servicemembers & veterans; provides process for award of postsecondary credit & clock hours for military experience & credentials; requires

March 17, 2020

Page 2

specified postsecondary institutions to waive transcript fee for active duty members, certain veterans, & their spouses & dependents. **PASSED and sent to the Governor.**

HB 61 / SB 136 Adoption Benefits – The bills provide eligibility to certain veterans & servicemembers for specified adoption benefits, specifically if a veteran adopts a child from the child welfare system, they will be paid a lump sum. This program already existed for state employees. **PASSED and sent to the Governor.**

HB 593 / SB 936 Disability Retirement Benefits – The bills allow members receiving care at federal Veterans Health Administration facilities to use certification by a specified number of physicians working at such facilities as proof of total and permanent disability for purposes of establishing eligibility for benefits. **PASSED and sent to the Governor.**

HB 1249 / SB 1662 Transfer of Tax Exemption for Veterans – These bills provide that certain veterans & their surviving spouses receiving homestead tax exemption may apply for & receive prorated refund of property taxes paid on new homestead property acquired during certain timeframe; requires property appraiser to immediately make certain entries upon tax rolls to allow prorated refund. While the legislature did not increase this tax exemption this year they did make portability of the current exemption easier. **PASSED and sent to the Governor.**

HB 155 / SB 420 VA MISSION Act of 2018 – The bills urge Congress and the department to ensure that the VA MISSION Act of 2018 is implemented in a manner consistent with the legislative intent and purpose of the act. **Died because House bill was never heard.**

HB 543 / SB 98 Medical Marijuana Identification Cards for Service-disabled Veterans – These bills prohibits the DOH from charging fee for issuance, replacement, or renewal of medical marijuana identification card for service-disabled veteran or his or her caregiver if specified form is included with application for such card. **Neither of these bills were ever been heard in committee and they are Dead.**

HB 687 / SB 104 Services for Veterans and Their Families – These bills Requires DVA to establish Florida Veterans' Care Coordination Program to provide behavioral health care referral & care coordination services for veterans & their families; requires DVA to contract with certain nonprofit entity to enter into agreements with Florida 211 Network participants to provide such services; provides program goals; provides for statewide delivery of specified services by program teams; requires Florida 211 Network participants to collect program implementation data & to submit such data to DVA; requires DVA to submit report to Governor & Legislature. **These bills died in the final budget negotiations.**

March 17, 2020

Page 3

Budget: Section 2 line 150 of the budget contains \$100,000 for Florida State University Boys & Girls State. Its is important that we get our members to reach out to the Governor's office to encourage him to not veto this project. A letter from the commander as well as letters from other leadership to the Governor would help too.

Please always feel free to call or email me at any time if you have any questions or comments.