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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS



www.FloridaVets.org

April 2011

Florida Honors Military Families at Cabinet Meeting

TALLAHASSEE – Chief Financial Officer Jeff Atwater sponsored a resolution at the April 17 Cabinet meeting to designate the day as Military Family and Community Covenant Day in Florida.

The Text:

WHEREAS, for more than 230 years, individuals from all walks of life have taken up arms and sworn an oath to support and defend the principles upon which our country was founded; and

WHEREAS, whether serving at home or abroad, Florida's active duty, reserve and National Guard members protect our homeland, respond to natural disasters, assist in humanitarian emergencies and protect against all threats foreign and domestic; and

WHEREAS, created in 2008, the United States Army Community Covenant program was designed to foster and sustain effective state and community partnerships with all of the armed services, improving the quality of life for service men and women and their families; and

WHEREAS, more than 35 Florida communities have conducted a community covenant signing ceremony; and



WHEREAS, community support is essential to the readiness of the military and contributes to the strength and resilience of U.S. military personnel; and

WHEREAS, Americans recognize that military personnel and their families make considerable sacrifices as they defend the Nation, as long deployments, frequent moves and separations are a few of the unique stresses families face; and

WHEREAS, today, Floridians support service members by stepping forward to help mitigate stresses associated with military life while also striving to inspire their fellow Americans to continue to recognize and support our men and women in uniform by working together to find ways to meet the needs of our military.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Governor and Cabinet of the State of Florida do

hereby recognize April 17, 2011, as MILITARY FAMILY & COMMUNITY COVENANT DAY in Florida and call upon communities across our state to honor all those who participate in the United States Army Community Covenant Program, supporting the families of those who serve the United States Armed Services.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Governor and Cabinet of the State of Florida do hereby express their unwavering support and admiration to all current and former military personnel for their true and faithful service and further recognize the tremendous sacrifices of their families.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF the Governor and Cabinet of the State of Florida have hereunto subscribed their names and have caused the Official Seal of Florida to be hereunto affixed in the City of Tallahassee on the 5th day of April, 2011.

Rick Scott

Governor

Pam Bondi

Attorney General

Jeff Atwater

Chief Financial Officer

Adam H. Putnam

Commissioner of Agriculture

News of the Month

- Community Covenant
- 2011 Legislative Session
- Smart Phone APP
- Stop Loss Pay Extended
- New Tricare Coverage
- Post-Incarceration Care
- Foreclosure Avoidance
- Social Security Numbers

Conferences and Events

References for Veterans

Veteran Bills Under Review at Capitol

TALLAHASSEE -- More than 54 veteran-related bills are currently being considered in the 2011 Florida Legislative Session, which is scheduled to end May 6.

"Many of these bills will not survive the process," said Jim Brodie, director of legislative and cabinet affairs for the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs.

"Historically, only about 10 percent of all bills filed at the beginning of session actually become law."

Passing the state budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2011 and the matter of redistricting as a result of the 2010 Census are the two main issues for the final week and a half.

Interested parties can follow the progress of veteran-related bills by visiting the FDVA website at www.FloridaVets.org and accessing the section entitled *Legislative Issues*.

VA/DOD Smart Phone App Helps Veterans Manage PTSD

Courtesy of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

WASHINGTON -- Veterans dealing with symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder can turn to their smart phones for help anytime with the PTSD Coach application created by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense.



“This is about giving veterans and servicemembers the help they earned when and where they need it,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “We hope they, their families and friends, download this free app. Understanding PTSD and those who live with it is too important to ignore.”

PTSD Coach lets users track their PTSD symptoms, links them with local sources of support, provides accurate information about PTSD, and teaches helpful individualized strategies for managing PTSD symptoms at any moment. The free PTSD Coach app is now available for download from the iTunes store and will be available for Android devices by the end of the spring.

The PTSD Coach is primarily designed to enhance services for individuals who are already receiving mental health care, though it is certainly helpful for those considering entering mental health care and those who just want to learn more about PTSD.

The application is one of the first in a series of jointly designed resources to help servicemembers, veterans, their families and friends manage their readjustment challenges and get anonymous assistance.

VA and the Defense Department hope to reach tens of thousands of veterans, servicemembers, and their family members with the new suite of apps.



Chief Financial Officer Jeff Atwater, second from right, joined Gov. Rick Scott and other Cabinet members April 17 in presenting Clearwater-based **VeteransPlus** with the 2011 Champion of Financial Literacy Award for providing financial education to more than 4,000 military personnel and their families last year. *Photo by Dorian M. Burr.*

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Deadline for Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay Extended

Courtesy of the Department of Defense

WASHINGTON -- People whose military service was involuntarily extended or whose retirement was suspended between Sept. 11, 2001, and Sept. 30, 2009, now have until Oct. 21 to file for retroactive payments of \$500 for each month of their extended service under the “Stop Loss” policy.

To apply for Stop Loss pay or for more information, including submission requirements and service-specific links, go to <http://www.defense.gov/stoploss>.

New Tricare Program Offers Coverage for Young Adults Under 26

Courtesy of the Department of Defense

WASHINGTON -- The Defense Department announced April 27 the Tricare Young Adult program is now open for enrollment with coverage beginning May 1, 2011.



Military dependents under 26, unmarried, and not eligible for their own employer-sponsored health care coverage may be qualified to purchase TYA, which offers Tricare Standard coverage, for monthly premiums of \$186, as long as their sponsor is still eligible for Tricare.

For more information, visit <http://www.tricare.mil>.

To get e-alerts on TYA and other Tricare news, sign up at <http://www.tricare.mil/subscriptions>.

VA Extends Post-Incarceration Health Care for Eligible Veterans

Courtesy of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

WASHINGTON -- The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs will extend health care to eligible veterans in halfway houses and other temporary, post-incarceration housing under a new program aimed at cutting back on repeat offenses.

“There’s hard evidence that lack of access to health care, including mental health care, for newly released inmates is a factor in people becoming homeless or returning to prison and jail,” said Jim McGuire, director of VA’s Veterans Justice Outreach Programs. “These are veterans who otherwise qualify for VA health care.”

A long-standing rule has barred VA from providing health care to veterans for whom another federal, state or local government has an obligation to provide health care. Frequently, that means inmates of prisons and jails.

Under the changed rule, that prohibition would be amended and VA would be allowed to provide health care to veterans in halfway houses and other temporary, post-incarceration housing.

Veteran Organization Conventions, Events and Job Fairs

Sponsor	Event	Date	Location	Contact Information
Bay Pines VA Medical Center	Annual Car Show	May 1 Noon	10000 Bay Pines Blvd. Bay Pines	(727) 207-0939 www.downshiftersofbrooklyn.com
Naval Aviation Museum Foundation	2011 Symposium	May 4-6	National Museum of Naval Aviation, NAS Pensacola	(800) 327-5002 www.NavalAviationMuseum.org
Vietnam and All Veterans of Florida State Coalition	24th Annual Florida Vietnam and All Veterans Reunion	May 5-8	Wickham Park, Melbourne	(321) 453-7498 www.FloridaVeteransReunion.com
American Military Retirees Association, Department of Florida	Annual Convention	May 7 9 a.m.-4 p.m.	DAV Hall, 1150 SW California Blvd., Port St. Lucie	(772) 342-2653
WorkforceEscarosa	Veterans & Military Family Career & Benefits Fair	May 12 9 a.m.-1 p.m.	Hadji Temple 800 W. Nine Mile Rd. Pensacola	(850) 473-0939
City of Jacksonville	Veterans Job Fair	May 13 10 a.m.-3 p.m.	Agricultural Fair Grounds	(904) 630-3680 www.coj.net
City of Jacksonville	Homeless Veterans Social Services	May 14 9 a.m.-3 p.m.	Agricultural Fair Grounds	(904) 630-3680 www.coj.net
Military Order of the Purple Heart, Department of Florida	State Convention	June 8-12	Best Western Waterfront Hotel, Punta Gorda	(321) 622-4330 www.floridapurpleheart.org
AMVETS, Department of Florida	State Convention	June 9-12	Rosen Centre Hotel, Orlando	(813) 626-3406
Disabled American Veterans, Department of Florida	83rd Annual State Convention	June 16-18	Orlando Marriott Lake Mary, Lake Mary	(352) 331-0945
American Legion, Department of Florida	2011 Department Convention	June 23-26	Caribe Royale, Orlando	(407) 295-2631, Ext. 232

Editor's Note: All times local. Florida's Veterans Service Organizations and veteran-related agencies provided the information in the table above. To submit event information, contact the editor at MurrayR@fdva.state.fl.us

VA Releases Foreclosure Avoidance Guide for Veterans

Courtesy of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

WASHINGTON -- Although the default rate for VA-backed mortgages is well below the national rate for prime loans, veterans might find themselves behind in payments.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has prepared a quick reference guide to avoid foreclosure and guide veterans to available resources.

For more information, visit http://www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans/docs/foreclosure_avoidance_fact_sheet.pdf



Gov. Rick Scott climbs into the cockpit of an F-15 Eagle jet during a briefing at the 125th Fighter Wing in Jacksonville, Fla., April 16, 2011. The governor and Lt. Gov. Jennifer Carroll toured the National Guard base to meet local airmen and learn about the Florida Air National Guard. *Photo by Debra Cox.*

References for Veterans

2011 Florida Veterans' Benefits Guide

www.FloridaVets.org -- then click on "Benefits Guide"

Federal Benefits for Veterans & Dependents Guide

http://www1.va.gov/OPA/publications/benefits_book.asp

Florida Veterans Foundation

www.FloridaVeteransFoundation.org

Employ Florida Vets - veteran employment resources

<http://veterans.employflorida.com/portals/veteran/>

Florida's Veteran Service Organizations

www.floridavets.org/organization/commanders.asp

Florida Department of Military Affairs

<http://dma.myflorida.com/>

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

www.va.gov

Burial, Headstone and Marker Information (VA)

www.cem.va.gov

Returning OEF/OIF/OND Veterans (VA)

<http://www.oefoif.va.gov/>

National Resource Directory - for wounded warriors

<http://www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov/>

Post-9/11 G.I. Bill and Veteran Education Benefits

www.gibill.va.gov

National VA Homeless Hotline - 24 Hour

Toll Free at 1-877-424-3838

Veterans Crisis Line - 24 Hour

Toll Free at 1-800-273-8255, Press 1

www.mentalhealth.va.gov

Social Security Administration

www.socialsecurity.gov

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve

www.esgr.mil

Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses

www.osd.dms.state.fl.us

Center for Women Veterans

<http://www1.va.gov/womenvet/>

Defense Department to Drop Social Security Numbers from ID Cards

Courtesy of American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON -- Beginning June 1, Social Security numbers on military identification cards will begin to disappear, said a Pentagon spokeswoman.

The effort is part of a larger plan to protect service members, dependents and retirees from identity theft, officials said. Criminals use Social Security numbers to steal identities, allowing them to pillage resources, establish credit or to hijack credit cards, bank accounts or debit cards.

When current cards expire, they will be replaced with new cards having a DOD identification number replacing the Social Security number, officials said. The DOD identification number is a unique 10-digit number.

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Florida's Veterans' Homes

Robert H. Jenkins Jr. Veterans' Domiciliary Home

(Columbia County) *Lake City* (386) 758-0600

Emory L. Bennett State Veterans' Nursing Home

(Volusia County) *Daytona Beach* (386) 274-3460

Baldomero Lopez State Veterans' Nursing Home

(Pasco County) *Land O' Lakes* (813) 558-5000

Alexander Nininger State Veterans' Nursing Home

(Broward County) *Pembroke Pines* (954) 985-4824

Clifford C. Sims State Veterans' Nursing Home

(Bay County) *Springfield* (850) 747-5401

Douglas T. Jacobson State Veterans' Nursing Home

(Charlotte County) *Port Charlotte* (941) 613-0919

Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans' Nursing Home

(St. Johns County) *St. Augustine* (904) 940-2193

Supporting Veterans' Homes

Your purchase of the *Florida Salutes Veterans* or one of the approved Army, Navy, Air Force or Coast Guard license plates directly helps veterans.



The \$15 surcharge goes into a trust fund for the operation and maintenance of Florida's veterans' homes.

A portion of the Marine Corps and *Support Our Troops* license plates also supports the State Veterans' Homes Program.

Anyone can purchase these plates.

You may also support the State Homes for Veterans Trust Fund by making a \$1 contribution when renewing your Florida Driver License.



FDVA on Facebook

The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs is on *Facebook*, the social network service and website. FDVA seeks to connect veterans and their families with unclaimed benefits.

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