

**The Florida Senate**  
**BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

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Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Community Affairs

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**BILL:** CS/SB 346

**INTRODUCER:** Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security Committee and Senator Ingoglia and others

**SUBJECT:** Special Observances

**DATE:** January 19, 2024

**REVISED:** \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Brown</u>	<u>Proctor</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>Fav/CS</u>
2.	<u>Hunter</u>	<u>Ryon</u>	<u>CA</u>	<u>Pre-meeting</u>
3.	_____	_____	<u>RC</u>	_____

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**Please see Section IX. for Additional Information:**

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE - Substantial Changes

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**I. Summary:**

CS/SB 346 designates the month of November each year as Veterans Appreciation Month, as a replacement in law to Veterans Week. The Governor may annually issue a proclamation designating Veterans Appreciation Month and encourage counties, municipalities, public schools, and state residents to observe the occasion through providing special programs and events to honor veterans.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2024.

**II. Present Situation:**

**Legal Holidays and Observances**

Examples of legal holidays are New Year's Day (January 1), Memorial Day (the last Monday in May), Independence Day (July 4), Labor Day (the first Monday in September), Thanksgiving Day (the fourth Thursday in November), and Christmas Day (December 25).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Section 683.01, F.S.

In addition to legal holidays, special observances are recognized and observed by the state. Special observance days include Law Enforcement Memorial Day<sup>2</sup>, Arbor Day<sup>3</sup>, and Law Day and Law Week<sup>4</sup>.

### **Veterans Recognition Days**

The legal holiday of Veterans' Day is annually celebrated November 11.<sup>5</sup> In addition to the one-day holiday, the 2023 Legislature enacted as a special observance a Veterans Week.<sup>6</sup> Veterans Week begins with the Sunday preceding November 11 of each year. If November 11 is on a Sunday, Veterans Week begins that day. If the Governor proclaims a Veterans Week, public officials, schools, private organizations, and state residents are called upon to mark the observance by honoring veterans who answered the call in war and peace.<sup>7</sup>

### **Veterans in Florida**

#### ***Population***

Ranked lower than only California and Texas for number of veteran residents, Florida has the third largest population of veterans in the nation.<sup>8</sup> In excess of 1.4 million veterans reside in Florida. The number of veterans in Florida represents 12 percent of the state's population of persons who are at least 18 years old.<sup>9</sup>

#### ***Medal of Honor Recipients***

The highest military decoration awarded by the U.S. government, the Medal of Honor is bestowed by the President on behalf of Congress.<sup>10</sup> The Medal of Honor is conferred only upon members of the U.S. Armed Forces who distinguish themselves through "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his or her life above and beyond the call of duty."<sup>11</sup>

According to the Congressional Medal of Honor Society, 24 Medal of Honor recipients have been accredited to Florida.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Section 683.115, F.S.

<sup>3</sup> Section 683.04, F.S.

<sup>4</sup> Section 683.22, F.S.

<sup>5</sup> Section 683.01(1)(q), F.S.

<sup>6</sup> Section 683.1474, F.S.; s 4, ch. 2023-162, Laws of Fla.

<sup>7</sup> Section 683.1475(2), F.S.

<sup>8</sup> Florida Dep't of Veterans Affairs, *FDVA - Our Veterans*, available at <https://www.floridavets.org/our-veterans/> (last visited Jan. 17, 2023).

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Dep't of Defense, *Honors for Valor*, available at <https://www.defense.gov/Multimedia/Experience/honors-for-valor/> (last visited Jan. 17, 2023).

<sup>11</sup> *Id.*

<sup>12</sup> Congressional Medal of Honor Society, *The Recipients*, available at <https://www.cmohs.org/recipients/overview> (last visited Jan. 17, 2023).

**III. Effect of Proposed Changes:**

CS/SB 346 amends s. 683.1475, F.S., to replace Veterans Week with a Veterans Appreciation Month. Veterans Appreciation Month will run the full month of November. In support of this month, the Governor may annually issue a proclamation designating Veterans Appreciation Month and encourage counties, municipalities, public schools, and state residents to observe the occasion through providing special programs and events to honor veterans.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2024.

**IV. Constitutional Issues:****A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:**

None.

**B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:**

None.

**C. Trust Funds Restrictions:**

None.

**D. State Tax or Fee Increases:**

None.

**E. Other Constitutional Issues:**

None.

**V. Fiscal Impact Statement:****A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

**B. Private Sector Impact:**

None.

**C. Government Sector Impact:**

As local entities are encouraged but not required to celebrate Veteran Appreciation Month with activities and events, a fiscal impact is not expected

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Statutes Affected:**

This bill amends section 683.1475 of the Florida Statutes.

**IX. Additional Information:**

- A. **Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:**  
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

**CS by Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security on January 9, 2024:**

- Provides in law for a Veterans Appreciation Month as a replacement for Veterans Week; and
- Authorizes the Governor to annually proclaim a Veterans Appreciation Month and encourage local entities and state residents to observe the occasion through special programming and events.

- B. **Amendments:**

None.