HB 1223 2015

1 A bill to be entitled 2 An act relating to the Florida Foreclosed Homes for 3 the Brave Program; creating s. 295.24, F.S.; creating 4 the Florida Foreclosed Homes for the Brave Program; 5 directing the Department of Veterans' Affairs, in 6 coordination with Building Homes for Heroes, to 7 purchase foreclosed homes for eligible injured veterans of the United States Armed Forces; 8 9 authorizing the program to provide specified types of 10 assistance; providing eligibility criteria; providing for the review of requests for assistance; requiring 11 12 the financial committee of the board of directors of 13 the direct-support organization for the department to review the financial transactions of the program 14 15 quarterly; authorizing the financial committee of the board of directors to request additional reviews by 16 the Office of Inspector General; authorizing the 17 department to adopt rules to administer program; 18 19 providing an appropriation; providing an effective 20 date. 21 22 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida: 23 Section 295.24, Florida Statutes, is created to 24 Section 1. 25 read: 26 Florida Foreclosed Homes for the Brave Program. -295.24

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(1) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the program is to purchase foreclosed homes for injured veterans of the United States Armed Forces. The program shall be administered by the Department of Veterans' Affairs. The department may be assisted in the processing of applications and the administration of the program by the direct-support organization authorized under s. 250.115.

- (2) FUNDING.—The program shall be implemented through funding appropriated to the department for the purposes of this section.
- (3) AUTHORIZED ASSISTANCE.—The department, in coordination with Building Homes for Heroes, shall purchase foreclosed homes for persons eligible under this section. The program may also provide assistance with repairs, renovations, or replacements to such homes which are needed to address health or safety issues or meet disability needs.
- (4) ELIGIBILITY.—Persons eligible for assistance from the program include injured veterans who served in Iraq or Afghanistan in the Global War on Terrorism or Overseas Contingency Operations and return to their home of record.
 - (5) REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE; REVIEW; AWARDS.-
- (a) A request for assistance shall be reviewed and processed at the local level by an official designated by the department. During the initial review and processing of the request, the department may accept assistance from the direct-support organization. Final review and approval of requests for assistance shall be made by the department.

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

- 1. The impact of the veteran's inability to assist in the purchase of a home.
 - 2. The economic impact of the veteran's injury.
 - 3. The overall financial situation of the applicant.
 - 4. The assistance authorized under the program.
 - 5. 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. This review shall be provided to the department in order to determine whether the direct-support organization is being operated in a manner that is consistent with the purposes of this section, and in the best interests of the department. The financial committee may request the Office of Inspector General to conduct additional reviews.
- (7) RULES.—The department may adopt rules to administer this section.
- Section 2. <u>Beginning in fiscal year 2015-2016</u>, the sum of \$4 million in recurring funds is appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the Department of Veterans' Affairs for the purpose of carrying out the Florida Foreclosed Homes for the Brave Program pursuant to s. 295.24, Florida Statutes.
 - Section 3. This act shall take effect October 1, 2015.