

## **HB 269 / SB 128: Relating to Services for Veterans and their Families**

***Veterans and their families need access to behavioral health care referral and care coordination services.***

### **What is the purpose of HB 269 / SB 128?**

- ▶ This bill establishes the Florida Combat Veterans' Care Coordination Program within the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to provide Veterans and their families with behavioral health information and referral services.
  - ◇ The program will be modeled after the proof-of-concept pilot program established in 2014 by the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay and the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs, and will be delivered through the Florida 211 Network.
- ▶ This bill appropriates \$2,000,155.00 in recurring general revenue to DCF for the program.

### **Why is HB 269 / SB 128 necessary?**

- ▶ According to the National Center for Post-Traumatic Disorder, between 11% and 20% of Veterans who served in Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom have PTSD in a given year. It is estimated that an additional 2% to 10% return with major depression.
- ▶ In a 2012 report released by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA), 22.2% of all Veteran deaths from the period 1999–2009 were a result of suicide. Additionally, the study showed that in 2010, on average 22 Veterans committed suicide per day.

### **How would HB 269 / SB 128 work?**

- ▶ The goals of the program are to prevent suicide by combat Veterans, increase the use of USDVA programs and services by combat Veterans and their families, and increase the number of Veterans who use other available community-based programs and services.
- ▶ From 2014–2015, the pilot program handled 1,135 calls from Veterans and made 925 referrals to community mental health agencies, USDVA, and other providers for service.

**Support Florida Veterans and their families  
by voting "YES" on HB 269 / SB 128!**