

2019 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 391

BY REPRESENTATIVE FOIL

Prefiled pursuant to Article III, Section 2(A)(4)(b)(i) of the Constitution of Louisiana.

VETERANS: Provides for the certification of veteran-owned businesses

1 AN ACT

2 To enact Chapter 57 of Title 51 of the Revised Statutes of 1950, to be comprised of R.S. 51:  
3 3201 through 3208, relative to economic development; to create The Veterans First  
4 Business Initiative; to provide for the certification of veteran-owned businesses; to  
5 provide for the creation of an insignia to identify a business as part of the initiative;  
6 to provide a database to search for veteran-owned businesses; to provide for  
7 community outreach and interagency cooperation; to provide for the promulgation  
8 of rules; to provide definitions; to provide legislative intent; and to provide for  
9 related matters.

10 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

11 Section 1. Chapter 57 of Title 51 of the Revised Statutes of 1950, comprised of R.S.  
12 51:3201 through 3208, is hereby enacted to read as follows:

13 CHAPTER 57. THE VETERANS FIRST BUSINESS INITIATIVE

14 §3201. Short title

15 This Chapter shall be known and may be cited as "The Veterans First  
16 Business Initiative".

17 §3202. Declaration of purpose

18 The Legislature of Louisiana finds that a debt of gratitude is owed to those  
19 men and women of the armed forces of the United States for their service to our  
20 country. In order to show gratitude for their sacrifices, the legislature hereby

1 ~~creating~~ creates a veteran-owned business initiative within Louisiana Economic  
2 Development. The purpose of the program is to identify veteran-owned businesses,  
3 create an insignia for those businesses to use on storefronts and promotional and  
4 collateral materials so that they are easily identifiable to the public, produce a  
5 database on which the citizens of Louisiana can search for veteran-owned businesses  
6 to patronize, and to work to promote veteran-owned businesses to the public. The  
7 legislature envisions a cooperation among Louisiana Economic Development, the  
8 Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs, local chambers of commerce, regional  
9 economic development organizations, and local economic development  
10 organizations throughout the state in order to promote the patronage of veteran-  
11 owned businesses. The legislature intends for The Veterans First Business Initiative  
12 to help veterans who own businesses to meet and interact with customers and with  
13 veterans looking for employment.

14 §3203. Definitions

15 For the purposes of this Chapter, terms and phrases shall have the meanings  
16 ascribed as follows:

17 (1) "Department" means Louisiana Economic Development.

18 (2) "Veteran" is an individual who meets either of the following  
19 qualifications:

20 (a) A person who served in the active military and was discharged or  
21 released under conditions other than dishonorable.

22 (b) An active or reserve member in any branch of the armed forces of the  
23 United States, including the national guard, coast guard, and armed forces reserves.

24 (3) "Veteran-owned business" means a business of which at least fifty-one  
25 percent is owned by a veteran.

26 §3204. Application; form; submission; confirmation; notification; appeal

27 A.(1) The department shall develop an application process including an  
28 application form prescribed by the department, for the submission and processing of  
29 applications for certification of a business as a veteran-owned business.

1           (2) As part of its procedure for certification, the department may require  
2           applicants to provide information in addition to that requested on the application  
3           forms.

4           (3) No business may be decertified as a result of any changes of application  
5           form.

6           B. Upon receipt of an application, the department shall, in consultation with  
7           the Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs, confirm that the applicant is a veteran  
8           and that the business is a veteran-owned business as defined in R.S. 51:3203.

9           C. The department shall notify the applicant of its decision to grant or deny  
10          certification promptly after the decision has been made. If the department denies the  
11          application, the decision shall set forth the basis for denial and provide the applicant  
12          the opportunity to appeal the decision.

13          §3205. Insignia; creation; use

14                 The department shall create an insignia for use by certified veteran-owned  
15                 businesses to indicate to the public that the business is part of The Veterans First  
16                 Business Initiative. After certification, a veteran-owned business shall have the  
17                 right and privilege of displaying the insignia on its storefront and on any promotional  
18                 or marketing materials. The display of the insignia serves to distinguish the business  
19                 as being veteran-owned.

20          §3206. Database

21                 The department shall create and maintain a database of certified veteran-  
22                 owned businesses. The department shall make the database available for public  
23                 access on its official webpage.

24          §3207. Outreach

25                 The department shall work in cooperation with the Louisiana Department of  
26                 Veterans Affairs for outreach to regional economic development organizations, local  
27                 economic development organizations, and chambers of commerce throughout the  
28                 state. The cooperation shall serve to encourage business owners who are veterans  
29                 to seek certification as part of The Veterans First Business Initiative and to promote

1 veteran-owned businesses that have been certified pursuant to the provisions of this  
2 Chapter.  
3 §3208. Promulgation of rules and regulations  
4 The department shall promulgate, in accordance with the Administrative  
5 Procedure Act, any such rules and regulations as are necessary to implement the  
6 provisions of the Chapter.

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## DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

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HB 391 Original

2019 Regular Session

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**Abstract:** Creates The Veterans First Business Initiative.

Proposed law creates The Veterans First Business Initiative to certify a business as veteran-owned.

Proposed law requires Louisiana Economic Development (LED) to create the application and certification process, and create and maintain a database of veteran-owned business which is searchable on its website.

Proposed law requires the creation of an insignia which will identify a business as being certified as veteran-owned.

Proposed law requires the cooperation of LED and Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs (LDVA) in order to confirm veteran status and promote the program.

Proposed law requires LED to cooperate with LDVA and local and regional economic development organizations and chambers of commerce in order to promote the initiative and veteran-owned businesses.

Proposed law requires LED to promulgate rules to implement proposed law.

(Adds R.S. 51:3201-3208)