



Ohio *Legislative Report*

Volume Two-Alpha; Number Eight

August 2025

Statehouse Happenings

HELPFUL LINKS

OHIO GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

www.legislature.ohio.gov

OH HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

www.ohiohouse.gov

OH SENATE:

www.ohiosenate.gov

OHIO GOVERNOR:

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'Ohio Legislative Report'

Ohio Legislative Report

Is published electronically at the start of each month to report on the latest information about legislative issues taking place in Columbus that could affect the lives of Veterans, Military Personnel, their families, and Veteran Organizations in Ohio.

It is emailed at no charge to all who would like to receive it.

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Editor: David K. Root

Our regular readers are aware that this column is all about what happened last month in the various committees as they held hearings on our veteran/military bills. This issue and the September issue will not be covering any hearings because there are no hearings scheduled until mid-September when the General Assembly returns to Columbus following summer break.

We will cover any news of legislation and activities that pertain to our Ohio veterans and military, but it is questionable how much we will find. Summer break means that your legislators are spending most of their time in the districts and very little in their Columbus offices.

The Budget

In the previous issue we told you that the budget bill (HB 96) was finally agreed to by both chambers on June 25 and it went to the Governor for his signature. He signed it on June 30 after vetoing 67 items. Here is what happened in July.

The House called for a special session to convene on July 21. The purpose was to override three of the items the Governor had vetoed. All three pertained to property tax reform affecting school funding.

Overriding a governor's veto requires a 3/5 vote in both chambers—60 in the House and 30 in the Senate. Going into the special session most were not sure if there would be enough votes to pass a veto.

On July 21 the House convened at 11:20 AM. Discussion began on one of the three items—to override the veto of the provision that removes local authority to put replacement property tax levies and certain emergency levies on the ballot. When the vote was taken there were 61 yeas and 28 nays. The governor's veto was overturned. It now moves to the Senate for their vote.

The remaining line-item vetoes were left pending. The session was adjourned at 12:02 PM.

Homestead Exemptions

In the meantime, a special Property Tax Reform Working Group formed by the Governor held their first meeting on July 24. The task force is tasked with thoroughly examining issues related to how to provide meaningful property tax relief to homeowners and businesses while ensuring that funding for local schools, fire, police, EMS, libraries, and developmental disabilities is adequate according to a press release issued by the Governor. It is made up of the CEO/President of Ohio Business Roundtable and a former state representative as the co-chairs. The rest of the task force is made up of one county treasurer, two county auditors, one city mayor, two superintendents of schools, and three county commissioners. The governor wants the group to issue a report with concrete proposals by September 30.

See Happenings on Page Three...

In this issue of OLR we are going to look at two very different bills even though they have the same purpose - homestead tax exemption for disabled veterans.

HB 40 and SB 92

You decide which would be best for Ohio's veterans.

House Bill 40—*To amend sections 323.152 and 4503.065 of the Revised Code to increase the enhanced homestead exemption for certain disabled veterans.*

The Summary

Homestead exemption for disabled veterans

The bill enhances a property tax reduction for certain homeowners who are disabled veterans, including owners of manufactured or mobile homes. Under current law, the homestead of a disabled veteran who has received a total disability rating or a total disability rating for compensation based on individual unemployability ("totally disabled veteran") qualifies for an exemption that, in essence, exempts from tax \$56,000 of the homestead's value, indexed to inflation under continuing law. The bill enhances this exemption by increasing the amount of the exemption to \$100,000 for disabled veterans with an income at or below \$125,000, computed in aggregate with the veteran's spouse's income. The increased exemption amount and income limitation are indexed to inflation like all other homestead exemption amounts and thresholds under continuing law. Disabled veterans with an income above that threshold continue to receive the existing \$56,000 exemption.

Similar to all other homestead exemptions, the bill requires the state to reimburse local taxing units for tax reductions resulting from the bill's enhanced and expanded homestead exemption.

Surviving spouse

Under continuing law and under the bill, if the disabled veteran who qualified for the exemption dies and is survived by a spouse who occupied the homestead at the time of death and who acquires ownership of the homestead, such surviving spouse will continue to receive the reduction, based on the spouse's own income, until the spouse dies or remarries.

Application date

The tax reduction applies beginning in tax year 2025 for real property and tax year 2026 for manufactured or mobile homes. (The difference accounts for the fact that property taxes are paid one year in arrears, while manufactured and mobile home taxes are paid in the current year.)

Senate Bill 92—*To amend sections 323.152 and 4503.065 of the Revised Code to authorize a total property tax exemption for the homesteads of totally disabled veterans and their surviving spouses.*

The Summary

Homestead exemption: disabled veterans

Continuing law provides a property tax credit for the residence, or "homestead," of certain qualifying individuals. The standard "homestead exemption" equals the taxes that would be charged on up to \$28,000, for tax year 2025, of the true value of a home owned by a homeowner who is 65 years of age or older, permanently and totally disabled, or at least 59 years old and the surviving spouse of an individual who previously received the exemption. ("True value" is the appraised fair market value.) The credit essentially exempts \$28,000 of the value of a homestead from taxation. The amount of the tax savings for a qualifying homestead depends on the local tax rate: the higher the tax rate, the greater the tax reduction. This standard exemption is means-tested, so only homeowners with household income below a certain threshold (\$40,000 for tax year 2025) may qualify for the exemption.

Under current law, a special "enhanced" exemption of \$56,000, for tax year 2025, is available for homes of honorably discharged military veterans with a total disability and surviving spouses of

Continued on next Page...

emergency responders who died in the line of duty. The bill expands the enhanced exemption for disabled veterans by increasing the exemption to equal the full value of the veteran's homestead. In essence, the enhanced exemption completely exempts a disabled veteran's home from taxes.

As under the current homestead exemption for disabled veterans, the bill's enhanced exemption extends to the surviving spouse of a disabled veteran, until the spouse dies or remarries. Also like the current disabled veteran exemption, the bill's enhanced exemption does not require the disabled veteran to make below a certain income.

Similar to other homestead exemptions, the bill's enhanced disabled veteran exemption applies to manufactured and mobile homes regardless of whether they are taxed as real property or subject to the manufactured home tax. Also similar to other homestead exemptions, the enhanced exemption does not exempt the disabled veteran's homestead from special assessments.

Application requirements

As with all current homestead exemptions, a disabled veteran must apply to the county auditor to qualify for the exemption. The veteran must include

with this initial application a copy of the veteran's discharge record showing the veteran received a total disability rating. After this initial application, no further application is needed to maintain the exemption, but the auditor must be notified if the homestead no longer qualifies for the bill's enhanced veteran exemption.² (This notification is required under continuing law to report ineligibility for all current homestead exemptions.)

Reimbursement of local taxing units

As with all current homestead exemptions, local taxing units are reimbursed by the state for the reduction in property tax revenue that results from the bill's enhanced disabled veterans homestead exemption. The reimbursement is paid from the GRF semiannually or annually.

Application date

The enhanced homestead exemption for disabled veterans begins to apply for tax year 2025 or, in the case of homes that are subject to the manufactured home tax, tax year 2026. The difference in application is accounted for by the fact that manufactured home tax is payable on a current-year basis, whereas property tax is payable in arrears.

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Happenings, from Page One

While our veterans and military were not directly affected by any of the above activities there are currently four other bills that will. OLR suggests all homeowners who are veterans follow the hearings on these bills. Study them and learn what they will do and then contact your legislators and ask them to support the bill of your choice. The bills are HB 22, HB 40, HB 61, and SB 92.

Readers can look at the summaries of two of those bills -House Bill 40 and Senate Bill 92 in the column 'In and Nut Shell' found on page two.

Marijuana and Hemp Products

There are two bills that suddenly are very important to Ohio veterans, and we have added them to our list (page six). They deal with new regulation and the sale and use of marijuana and hemp products.

In June Congress approved amendments to the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, Agriculture, and Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, 2026 (HR 3944). The amendments were taken from the Veterans Equal Access Act (HR 1384) which directs the Department of Veterans Affairs to authorize VA health care providers to provide veterans with recommendations and opinions regarding participation

in their state's marijuana programs. Previous to the passage of HR 3944, VA doctors could not talk about marijuana because federally it is an illegal drug.

The two bills before the Ohio General Assembly have now become very important to veterans. OLR will be talking more about both bills in the next issue, but for now we strongly suggest that all veterans become familiar with the bills and start talking to their legislators. The bills are Senate Bill 56 and House Bill 198. SB 56 has already passed in the Senate and both bills now sit in the House Judiciary Committee.

New Bills

In June three new bills were introduced, all in the House and all naming portions of Ohio highways in memory of veterans. See page five.

Reflections

"The government is us; we are the government, you and I."

- Theodore Roosevelt



Representative Bill Roemer took part in the dedication ceremony of the new Veterans Memorial Park in Norton on the morning of July 4. Roemer pictured with retired Army Maj. Gen. James Hodge (l), a Norton native, West Point graduate and the keynote speaker during the event.



Representative Tracy M. Richardson (r) attended the Ohio Army National Guard change of command ceremony at the Maj. Gen. Robert S. Beightler Armory in Columbus on July 16. While there she had the opportunity to recognize OANG Captain Alex J. Rozanski of Marysville for his induction into the Ohio Military Hall of Fame this past May.

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Representatives Michael D. Dovilla and Tracy M. Richardson (far left) spend the afternoon of July 17 on an informational tour of the Defense Supply Center Columbus. The DSCC is the Land and Maritime Supply Chain headquarters for the Defense Logistics Agency. The 520-acre site is located in Whitehall. More than 30 state, federal and defense organizations such as the Ohio National Guard and Reserves, the Chalmers P. Wylie Ambulatory Care Center (VACC), the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, and Defense Information Systems Agency are on or near the site.

Meet
With
Your

Legislators



CASEY WEINSTEIN

OHIO STATE SENATOR

TOWN HALL FORUM

Wednesday, August 13th
5:30-7:00pm

Akron-Summit County Public Library, 60 S High St, Akron, OH 443

ALL CONSTITUENTS OF SENATE DISTRICT 28 ARE ENCOURAGED TO JOIN US!



Constituent Coffee

with

State Representative Nick Santucci &
State Representative David Thomas

All events run from 9:00 - 10:00 AM

- August 28 at Twisted Peacock (Vienna)
- September 25 at KT's Coffee (Hubbard)
- October 30 at Wall Street Coffee (Jefferson)
- November 20 at Scribblers (Geneva)
- December 11 at Lakeshore (Andover)

Residents of the 64th and 65th districts are invited to join Representative Santucci and Representative Thomas for coffee to discuss their questions and concerns.

LEGISLATION INTRODUCED IN JUNE

HB 383 introduced on July 1 by Representative **Ty Moore** (HD-95).

The bill would enact section 5534.015 of the Revised Code to designate a portion of State Route 149 in Belmont County as the "Litten Brothers Memorial Highway."

It has not been referred to a committee yet.

HB 384 introduced on July 1 by Representative **Ty Moore** (HD-95).

The bill would enact section 5534.102 of the Revised Code to designate a portion of U.S. Route 22 in Harrison County as the "Staff Sergeant Melvin Trushel, Sr. Memorial Highway."

It has not been referred to a committee yet.

HB 385 introduced on July 1 by Representative **Ty Moore** (HD-95).

The Bill would enact section 5534.668 of the Revised Code to designate a portion of U.S. Route 22 in Harrison County as the "PFC Thomas "Tommy" Pizzino Memorial Highway."

It has not been referred to a committee yet.

A bill is a document by which a member of the General Assembly proposes to enact a new law or amend or repeal an existing law. The term "bill" is used to refer to the document from the time it is drafted and delivered to the members until it is considered and approved by both the House and the Senate. After passing both houses, a bill becomes an "act" and must be presented to the Governor for acceptance or rejection. If accepted, or if the Governor does not take any action for ten days, it becomes a "law."

An idea for a new law or a change in an existing law might originate with a member of the General Assembly, an administrative agency of the state, the Governor, a special interest group, or a private citizen.

ELECTION DAY

Tuesday, November 4th

Oct. 06: Deadline for voter registration for Nov. 4 general election (30 days before general election)

Oct. 07: Early in-person absentee voting begins (first day after close of voter registration)

Oct. 28: Applications for absentee ballots to be mailed for Nov. 4 general election must be received by boards of elections by the close of business (7 days before general election)

Nov. 04: General Election Day. -Polls open from 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Absentee ballots, returned in person or via a method other than U.S. Mail, must be received by the boards of elections by close of polls

Legislation In The 136th Ohio General Assembly

Pertaining to Ohio Veterans, Active Duty, Reserve & National Guard and Their Families

HB 1	Enact Ohio Property Protection Act
HB 22	Authorize homestead exemption for surviving military spouses
HB 27	Designate Specialist Jacob A. Ashton Memorial Bridge
HB 40	Increase disabled veteran enhanced homestead exemption
HB 50	To designate a portion of SR 47 the "PFC John Wayne Richard Memorial Highway."
HB 56	To designate a portion of SR 421 the "CPL David James Amheiser Memorial Highway."
HB 61	Modify homestead exemption, owner-occupancy tax credit amount
HB 95	Support members of Ohio Veterans Education Council
HB 96	Make state operating appropriations for FY 2026-27
HB 135	Prohibit source of income discrimination in rental housing
HB 171	Designate a portion of State Route 28 the "CPT Louis John Speidel Memorial Highway."
HB 198	Regulate manufacture, sale of inhalable, ingestible hemp products
HB 204	Designate 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion Day
HB 228	To designate a portion of I 280 the "SSG Jack W. Coy Veterans Memorial Highway."
HB 234	Designate Cpl. Robert Dockstader Memorial Highway
HB 259	Designate Captain Joshua Michael McClimans Memorial Highway
HB 267	Regards creation, display of veterans benefit and services poster
HB 297	Regards funds provided by county for Memorial Day expenses
HB 316	LaRe Designate MSGT Norman Michael Kilbarger Memorial Highway
HB 339	Allow surviving spouse to retain Purple Heart license plate
HB 344	Regards electronic instant bingo, lottery terminals; levy a tax
HB 360	Designate SPC Louis P. Shuster Memorial Interchange
HB 383	Designate Litten Brothers Memorial Highway
HB 384	Designate Staff Sergeant Melvin Trushel, Sr. Memorial Highway
HB 385	Designate PFC Thomas "Tommy" Pizzino Memorial Highway
HCR 7	To support the work of the Am. Leg. Buckeye Boys State and the Am. Leg. Aux. Buckeye Girls State
HR 133	Honoring Battery B, 1st Battalion, 134th Field Artillery Regiment on its One Hundred Fiftieth Anniversary.
SB 17	Designate 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion Day
SB 21	Designate Rutherford B. Hayes Day
SB 39	Provide for informational poster on veteran benefits and services
SB 56	Revise medical and adult-use marijuana laws; levy marijuana taxes
SB 88	Enact the Ohio Property Protection Act
SB 92	Authorize total property tax exemption-totally disabled veterans
SB 148	Designate a portion of State Route 2 the "Specialist Lloyd Andrew Sellers Memorial Highway."
SB 179	Verify veteran status of imprisoned individuals
SB 193	Designate Captain Joshua Michael McClimans Memorial Highway
SB 197	Legalize, tax internet gambling; make other Gambling Law changes
SB 218	Exempt armed forces-certified child care provider from licensure
SB 223	Require ODNR discount program for veterans, service members
SCR 7	Urge Congress reissue DoD Civilian Retiree Identification Cards
SR 21	Urge Congress support military, veteran mental health treatment
SR 22	Urge federal govt reduce processing time-veteran disability claim
SR 52	Honoring the DAR Elizabeth Sherman Reese Chapter on its 150th Anniversary
SR 97	Observing April 2025 as the Month of the Military Child in Ohio
SR 123	Honoring Deborah A. Ashenhurst on her retirement from the OVDS