



Statehouse Happenings

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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

We are now two months into the new General Assembly and things are shaping up to be an improvement over the previous two General Assemblies.

During the first two months of the 134th GA there were only 7 pieces of veteran/military legislation introduced. In the same period of the 135th GA there were 13 introduced. Your law makers of the 136th GA introduced 16 veteran/military related pieces of legislation. Let us hope that the momentum is not short lived and that a high percentage of these bills will make it all the way to the governors desk. The number of hearings also picked up in February as a result.

February 3 - 7

On Wednesday, Chair **Tracy Richardson** (HD-86) called the Veteran and Military Development Committee to order for organizational purposes. There was no testimony given.

February 10 - 14

The House Public Safety Committee meet on Wednesday morning for an informal hearing for House Bill 96. The bill creates appropriations for fiscal years 2026-2027. It is referred by some a the State Operating Budget. First to testify was Deborah Ashenurst, Director of The Ohio Department of Veteran Services. She talked about how the state funds were used and the need for upgrades and modernization at the two Ohio Veterans Homes as well as the many other needed and worthwhile programs the ODVS does for Ohio veterans because of the support of the legislators.



Director Ashenurst

The next topic was the subsidies to Veteran Service Organizations from GFR Funds. Testimony was heard from (pictured clockwise from top) Jacob Brault of The American Legion Department of Ohio, Carl K. Price of Military Order of the Purple Heart Department of Ohio, Don McCauley of American Veterans (AMVETS) Department of Ohio, Eugene Wilt of Vietnam Veterans of America BSC, David K. Root of Ohio Veterans of Foreign Wars, Bob McCullough of Korean War Veterans Association, and Michael R. Stith of Disabled American Veterans, Department of Ohio. There was also written testimony received.



While that was going on, the Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee was meeting to hear testimony on SB 21. This was the

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second hearing for SB 21 the bill that would designate October 4 as Rutherford B. Haynes Day. There was no testimony received and a motion to favorably pass the bill out of committee was passed with a 7 to 0 vote. On February 19 SB 21 passed on the Senate floor with a vote of 32 to 0.

In the Veterans and Military Development Committee Wednesday morning Director Ashenhurst gave a department overview to the members in a power point presentation. It covered all the major programs the ODVS has going and how they are working with partners around the state for the benefit of veterans.



Director Ashenhurst

Representatives **Brian Lorenz** (HD-60) and **David Thomas** (HD-65) presented sponsor testimony for their House Bill 22 to the members of the House Ways and Means Committee. Their bill would authorize a full homestead exemption for surviving spouses of members of the uniformed services killed in the line of duty.



Reps Lorenz (l) & Thomas

That afternoon, two bill were on the agenda of the Senate Armed Services, Veterans Affairs and Public Safety Committee. First was the second hearing for SB 17. This bill was introduced by Senators **Michele Reynolds** (SD-03) and **Hearcel F. Craig** (SD-15) to designate March 9th as "6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion Day." The six-triple-eight as it was known was the only all-black women's unit to serve overseas during World War II. Testimony was provided by the founder of Mutt's Sauce, and current Executive Director of the OH Taste Foundation. Written testimony was also received from former State Representative Adam C. Miller. The bill



Sen. Craig (l) & Johnson

passed unanimously in the full senate on February 26.

Sponsor testimony was then presented for the second bill. Senate Bill 39 would create and make available for display a poster

containing information on benefits and services for veterans. Sponsors of the bill are Senators **Terry Johnson** (SD-14) and Craig. And both were on hand for the presentation.



Sen. Patton

February 17 - 21

Tuesday morning the Senate Ways and Means Committee meet and Senator **Thomas F. Patton** (SD-24) presented his sponsor testimony for SB 92. The purpose of his bill is to authorize a total property tax exemption for the homesteads of totally

disabled veterans and their surviving spouses.

On Wednesday the House Ways and Means Committee heard sponsor testimony on another homestead tax bill. This bill would modify the amount of the homestead exemptions and owner-occupancy property tax credit by replacing the standard homestead exemption with a flat property tax credit. The homestead exemption for disabled veterans and surviving spouses of emergency responders would be a flat property tax credit of \$1,500. The bill is House Bill 61 and was introduced by Representatives David Thomas and **Jack K. Daniels** (HD-32).



Reps Daniels (l) & Thomas

In the afternoon the Senate Armed Services, Veterans Affairs and Public Safety Committee was busy. There were four pieces of legislation on the agenda. First was a third hearing for SB 17. Senator Craig asked to amend the bill. He asked that the language be changed from "the only all-Black women's unit to serve overseas during World War II" to "the only unit composed of women of color to serve overseas during World War II". The amendment was approved and then was unanimously passed favorably out of committee. On the 26th it passed on the Senate floor 32-0.

Next on the agenda was SB 39 for a second hearing but there was no testimony. Next up were two resolutions sponsored by Senator **Tim Schaffer** (SD-20) and he provided sponsor testimony for both. SR 21 would urge the U.S. Congress to support the provision of prompt and comprehensive mental health treatment to military personnel and veterans who are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and other service-related stress disorders. SR 22 would urge the President of the United States, the United States Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and the United States Congress to take prompt action to reduce the processing time for veterans' disability benefit claims.



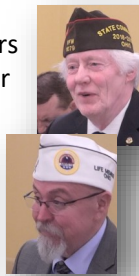
Senator Schaffer

February 24 - 28

Senate Bill 88, sponsored by Senator Johnson had its first hearing on Wednesday morning before the Senate General Government Committee. The bill would modify the law that prohibits certain governments, businesses, and individuals from acquiring certain real property. Among other restrictions it would extend the prohibition in current law against certain foreign countries, businesses, individuals, and organizations acquiring agricultural land to other real property located within 25 miles of a critical infrastructure facility or a U.S. military base, camp, or airport. The Senator provided testimony on the bill he has named the "Ohio Property Protection Act."

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The House Veterans and Military Development Committee did not have any legislation on the agenda Wednesday morning. Instead there were presentations made to the committee members by David K. Root, State Legislative Chairman for the VFW Department of Ohio and Don McCauley, Executive Director of American Veterans (AMVETS) Department of Ohio. They gave information presentations about what their organizations do, how the legislature helps them with funding and what their future needs might be.



Root (top) & McCauley

Later in the morning the House Ways and Means Committee heard sponsor testimony from



Reps Richardson (l) & Dovilla

Representatives Richardson and **Michael D. Dovilla** (HD-17) on House Bill 40. Their bill would increase the enhanced homestead exemption for certain disabled veterans. It would increase the current exemption for a homestead from \$56,000 of its

value to \$100,000 of its value for disabled veterans with an income below \$125,000. If their income is above that threshold, they would continue to get an exemption on the \$56,000 of its value. Both Richardson and Dovilla provided testimony.

The last hearings on veteran/military legislation for the month was in the Senate Armed Services, Veterans Affairs and Public Safety Committee. SB 39 was

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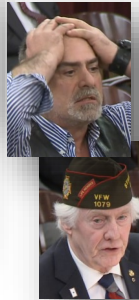
Joins us and follow all the actions of the Ohio General Assembly.

Reflections

"Every important change in our society, for the good, at least, has taken place because of popular pressure—pressure from below, from the great mass of people."

-Edward Abbey

first for its third hearing. There was no testimony provided and the committee favorably passed it out of committee with a 6 to 0 vote.



Paige (top) & Root

SR 21 had its second hearing.

Written testimony was received from Brault of the Ohio American Legion. Testimony was presented by Ohio VFW's Root and a Navy Veteran who served as a Hospital Corpsman. Following SR 21, testimony was given in support of SB 22 from the same three individuals. We don't usually bring the civilians into our articles but this time is an exception. The Navy Corpsman gave two very moving testimonies. His words came straight out of his memories and

experiences. They came from his heart and from the depth of his soul. His name was Timothy Paige and he worked with Senator to draft both resolutions. Our hat is off to him.



Speaker Announces Appointments

On Tuesday, March 4, House Speaker Matt Huffman announced the appointments of Representatives Michael D. Dovilla (HD-17) and **Desiree Tims** (HB-38) to the State Council on Educational Opportunity for Military Children.

Ohio signed on to the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children six years ago to eliminate barriers to a successful education due to frequent moves and deployment of their parents. The compact has been adopted by all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the Department of Defense Education Activity.

Dovilla is a commander in the U.S. Navy Reserve with more than 20 years of military service.



PRIMARY ELECTION - May 6, 2025

- Friday March 21: Military and Overseas Absentee Voting begins.
- Monday April 7: Deadline for voter registration for May 6 primary/special election.
- Tuesday April 8: Absentee Voting by mail begins.
- Tuesday April 8: Early In-Person Voting begins.
- Tuesday May 6: Primary/Special Election Day. Polls open from 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Go to the Secretary of State website for the answers to any questions you might have about voting in Ohio.

Date Set For First Vet Caucus

Invitations were recently emailed from the office of Representative **Bernard Willis** (HD-74) announcing the first Veteran Caucus of the 136th General Assembly. It is to be held Tuesday, March 18 from 4:00 to 5:00 PM in the new first floor conference center in Riffe Tower.

Plans for the caucus, is to have a discussion on all priority military and veteran related legislation that may be worked on during this General Assembly. Attendees will have the opportunity to hear from the current House Veterans and Military Development Committee Chair Tracy M. Richardson (HD-86) along with Chair Terry Johnson (SD-14) of the Senate Armed Services, Veterans Affairs, and Public Safety Committee on what the outlook of these committees might be for the term.

An RSVP is required. RSVPs or questions should be sent to Logan Hannum at logan.hannum@ohiohouse.gov.




Nominations Being Accepted Now

Chances are you know a veteran who continues to serve selflessly in their post-military life — a former service member who is going above and beyond to impact others.

Each year, the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame inducts up to 20 veterans who have contributed to our communities, state, and nation through exceptional acts of volunteerism, advocacy, professional distinction, public service, or philanthropy.

The deadline for submitting nominations is June 1 and we want to hear from those who know former service members who are excelling and making a difference in society.

Learn more about the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame, see the complete list of inductees, and fill out a nomination for a deserving veteran in your life at OhioVets.gov.



State Representative Jodi Salvo

District Office Hours

Thursday, March 20
6:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Dover Library - 525 N Walnut St,
Dover, OH 44622

Ohio Legislative Report
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Rep Richardson Receives American Legion Award

February 12, 2025

Columbus, OH - State Representative Tracy Richardson (center) was presented with the Ohio American Legion 2024 Legislator of the Year award. She received a proclamation and a crystal trophy recognizing her many accomplishments. Presenting the award are Suzette Heller, Legislative Chairman for 12th District and David Root Legislative Chairman for 5th District.



State Senator Receives Prestigious AMVETS Award

February 22, 2025

Dublin, OH - At the Mid-Winter Conference of American Veterans –better known to most veterans as AMVETS, the organization presented their annual award of Legislator of the Year. This year the recipient was State Senator Andrew O. Brenner. (center)

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS

If you have news or photos of a state representative or senator doing veteran/military stuff in their district, send it to us.

Email photos along with all info about the event and the photo to:
oh.leg.report@gmail.com

OUT
IN
THE

DISTRICTS



DISTRICT 17 OFFICE HOURS

at your local library
9:00 A.M. - 11:00 A.M.

JOIN US

- Saturday, ~~February 15th~~ - Berea Branch
- Saturday, ~~March 1st~~ - Olmsted Falls Branch
- Saturday, March 29th - Strongsville Branch
- Saturday, April 26th - Brecksville Branch
- Saturday, May 31st - North Royalton Branch



Tristan Rader
4.9K friends • 33 mutual

Cancel request Message

Coffee with Rep. Rader

Propaganda Coffee

Coffee with Rep. Rader: Connecting Over Coffee and Conversation

Join State Representative Tristan Rader for an informal and engaging community event! "Coffee with Rep. Rader" is your chance to sit down, ask questions, share your concerns, and have an open conversation about the issues that matter most to you and your community. These relaxed gatherings offer a unique opportunity to meet your representative face-to-face, hear about Tristan's work in the Ohio Statehouse, and discuss ways we can build a brighter future together.

The first event will be:

- ~~Friday, February 20th~~
- ~~9:00 AM - 11:00 AM~~
- ~~Propaganda Coffee~~
- ~~17806 Detroit Ave., Lakewood~~

Next Up:

- March 28th: Las Villas Deli & Pastries - 3216 W. 41st St., Cleveland, 44109 (Clark/Fulton)
- April 25th: Civilization - 2366 W. 11th St., Cleveland, 44113 (Tremont)
- May 30th: Root Cafe - 15118 Detroit Ave., Lakewood
- June 27th: Koffie Cafe - 2517 Market Ave., Cleveland, 44113 (Ohio City)

Whether you want to discuss local issues, state policies, or simply get to know Tristan better, we'd love to see you there! Stop by for as little or as long as you'd like. Coffee and great conversation are on us!

People first. TOWN HALL & Legislative Update

Join Us!

- ▶ State Senator Catherine D. Ingram
- ▶ State Representative Sedrick Denson
- ▶ State Representative Rachel Baker
- ▶ State Representative Dani Isaacsohn
- ▶ State Representative Cecil Thomas

With Special Guest,
Jessica Miranda, Hamilton County Auditor



Saturday
March 15, 2025
11:30 a.m. - 1:30p.m.

Easterseals
Redwood
2901 Gilbert Ave, Cincinnati, OH 45206



Constituent Coffee

with

State Representative Nick Santucci &
State Representative David Thomas

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

- ~~January 30 at The Mocha House (Warren)~~
- ~~February 27 at The Daily Grind (Girard)~~
- March 27 at Raptis (Howland)
- April 24 at Cadence Coffee (Niles)
- May 29 at The Station (Austinburg)
- June 26 at Cortland Main (Cortland)
- July 31 at Market House (Howland)
- 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.

DON'T FORGET REGISTER TO VOTE

ATTENTION LEGISLATORS

Ohio Legislative Report will publish an announcement of your upcoming Town Hall or District Meeting.

Send your press releases to:
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by the end of each month to be included.

LEGISLATION INTRODUCED IN FEBRUARY

- HB 40** Introduced on February 3 by Representatives **Tracy Richardson** (HD-86) and **Michael D. Dovilla** (HD-17). The bill would amend sections 323.152 and 4503.065 of the Revised Code to increase the enhanced homestead exemption for certain disabled veterans. It was referred to the House Ways and Means Committee.
- HB 50** Introduced on February 4 by Representative **Angela N. King** (HD-84). The bill would enact section 5533.106 of the Revised Code to designate a portion of State Route 47 in Darke County as the "PFC John Wayne Richard Memorial Highway." It was referred to the House Transportations Committee.
- HB 56** Introduced on February 4 by Representative **Sharon A. Ray** (HD-66). The bill would enact section 5534.013 of the Revised Code to designate a portion of State Route 421 in Medina County as the "CPL David James Amheiser Memorial Highway." It was referred to the House Transportations Committee.
- SR 21** Introduced on February 4 by Senator **Tim Schaffer** (SD-20). The resolution would urge the U.S. Congress to support the provision of prompt and comprehensive mental health treatment to military personnel and veterans who are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and other service-related stress disorders. It was referred to the Senate Armed Services, Veterans Affairs and Public Safety Committee.
- SR 22** Introduced on February 4 by Senator **Tim Schaffer** (SD-20). The resolution would the President of the United States, the United States Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and the United States Congress to take prompt action to reduce the processing time for veterans' disability benefit claims. It was referred to the Senate Armed Services, Veterans Affairs and Public Safety Committee.
- HB 61** Introduced on February 5 by Representatives **David Thomas** (HD-65) and **Jack K, Daniels** (HD-32). The bill would amend sections 319.302, 323.152, 323.156, 4503.065, and 4503.068 of the Revised Code to modify the amount of the homestead exemptions and owner-occupancy property tax credit. It was referred to the House Ways and Means Committee.
- SB 88** Introduced on February 10 by Senator **Terry Johnson** (SD-14). The bill would amend sections 319.202, 5301.256, and 5323.02 of the Revised Code to modify the law that prohibits certain governments, businesses, and individuals from acquiring certain real property and to name this act the Ohio Property Protection Act. It was referred to the Senate General Government Committee.
- SB 92** Introduced on February 10 by Senator **Thomas F. Patton** (SD-24). The bill would 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. It was referred to the Senate Ways and Means Committee.
- HB 95** Introduced on February 11 by Representatives **Andrea White** (HD-36) and **Brian Stewart** (HD-12). The bill would make an appropriation to support higher education institutions that are members of the Ohio Veterans Education Council. It was referred to the House Workforce and Higher Education Committee.

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- HB 96** Introduced on February 11 by Representative **Brian Stewart** (HD-12).
The bill would amend multiple sections of the Revised Code and to repeal Sections 125.10 as subsequently amended and 125.11 as subsequently amended of H.B. 59 of the 130th General Assembly to make operating appropriations for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2027, to levy taxes, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of state programs.
It was referred to the House Finance Committee.
- HCR 7** Introduced on February 26 by Representatives **Haraz N. Ghanbari** (HD-75) and **Joseph A. Miller, III** (HD-53).
The Concurrent Resolution would support and encourage the work of the American Legion Buckeye Boys State and the American Legion Auxiliary Buckeye Girls State in providing a premier educational and leadership program to the youth of Ohio.
It was referred to the House Education Committee.

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
-
- HCR 7 To support the work of the Am. Leg. Buckeye Boys State and the Am. Leg. Aux. Buckeye Girls State
-
- 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 88 Enact the Ohio Property Protection Act
- SB 92 Authorize total property tax exemption-totally disabled veterans
-
- SR 21 Urge Congress support military, veteran mental health treatment
- SR 22 Urge federal govt reduce processing time-veteran disability claim

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 member 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.