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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, and their families in Ohio.

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

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Editor: David K. Root

## Statehouse Happenings

Committee hearings in January were on the light side to say the least. The winter break did not end until mid month.

The first hearing was Tuesday the 16th when the House Transportation Committee heard testimony on HB 299 and HB 365. Both bills would designate memorial highways in Ohio.

It was the second hearing for House Bill 299, but there were no witnesses and no written testimony was submitted. The bill is sponsored by Representative **Don Jones** (District 95) and would designate a portion of State Route 7 in Washington County as the "Specialist Five Frederick Wayne Taylor Memorial Highway."

House Bill 365 had its first hearing and Representative **Tim Barhorst** (District 85) provided his sponsor testimony. HB 365 would designate multiple memorial highways. It would designate a portion of U.S. Route 68 in Champaign County be named "Army Corporal Charles E. Hiltbran Memorial Highway." A portion of U.S. Route 68 in Logan County would be named "Army PFC Herbert S. Bechtel Memorial Highway." Also in Logan County a portion of State Route (SR) 235 would be named "Patrolman Frank J. Hossler Memorial Highway." Hossler was a U.S. Marine Corps veteran and served with the Ohio State Highway Patrol.

Following questions from the committee, Vice Chair, **Dave DoBos** (District 10) moved to report favorably House Bill 365 out of committee and recommend its passage. The committee voted unanimously to approved his motion.

The senate held a couple of hearings the

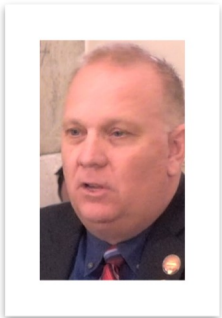
following week. The Education

Committee met on Tuesday, the 23rd for a hearing on a house bill and the next day the Veterans and Public Safety Committee met to hear testimony on two senate concurrent resolutions and a senate bill.

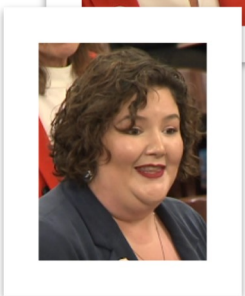
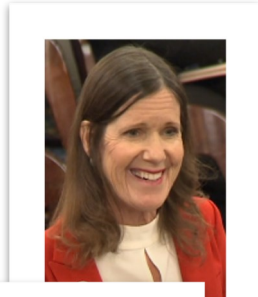
Tuesday, Representatives **Jessica E. Miranda** (District 28) and **Tracy M. Richardson** (District 86), Sponsors of House Bill 250 provided testimony. HB 250 would rename the "Military Enlistment Seal" to the "Military Seal" and would establishes new pathways for a high school student to earn the seal. The bill passed in the house chamber with a 95 to 0 vote in November of last year.

Wednesday, in the Veterans and Public Safety Committee Senator **Tim Schaffer** (District 20) gave sponsor testimony on SCR 8 and SCR 9.

SCR 8 would urge the President of the United States, the United States Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and



Rep Barhorst fields questions following testimony on HB 365



Rep Richardson (top) and Rep Miranda testify

See Happenings on Page Six...

# BILLS & RESOLUTIONS INTRODUCED IN JANUARY

## SR 262:

Introduced by Senators **Tim Schaffer** (District 20) and **Bill Reineke** (District 26) on January 9th. It was adopted the same day.

The resolution resolves: That we, the members of the Senate of the 135th General Assembly of Ohio, in adopting this Resolution, mourn the loss and salute the memory of a truly unique individual, Senior Airman Brian "Kody" Johnson; and be it further RESOLVED, That the Clerk of the Senate transmit a duly authenticated copy of this Resolution to the family of Senior Airman Brian "Kody" Johnson.

## HB 378:

Introduced by Representatives **Brian Lorenz** (District 60) and **Nick Santucci** (District 64) on January 16th. It was referred to the House Ways and Means Committee.

The bill would amend sections 323.151, 323.152, 323.153, 4503.064, 4503.065, and 4503.066 of the Revised Code to authorize a full homestead exemption for surviving spouses of members of the uniformed services killed in the line of duty.

## OUT IN THE DISTRICTS



### Rep is Member of Award Winning Veteran Organization

January 25, 2024

**Harrison, OH** - At the Greater Harrison Chamber of Commerce Annual Celebration, Yeager-Benson American Legion Post 199 was presented with the '2023 Greater Harrison Chamber Non-Profit of the Year' award. Among the Post and Auxiliary members there to accept the award was State Representative Cindy Abrams (second from left). Abrams is a member of the Auxiliary Unit.

The event took place at Duwell VFW Post 7570.



### Students & Veterans Recognized in Junior High

January 11, 2024

**Perrysburg, OH** - Prior to the eighth grade boys basketball game a special assembly was held to recognize the service of local veterans and also the work of the school's Student Veteran Organization. Taking part in the recognition program was State Representative Haraz N. Ghanbari.

## Reflections

*"The most important political office is that of the private citizen."*

*-Louis D. Brandeis*



State Representative Jennifer Gross

The Ohio House of Representatives

### Next Town Hall Meeting:

**Where:** Fairfield Community Arts Center - 411 Wessel Dr. Fairfield, OH 45014

**When:** Monday, 02/26/2024, from 5:00 - 6:00 PM

# WHAT OTHER STATES ARE DOING

There are plenty of bills that will help veterans, military, or families of veteran or service member in just about, if not all the fifty states. Some of them are similar to bills we have in our general assembly. Some of them are unique to the states they are in and some are the 'Hey, why didn't I think of that' variety. There may also be a few bills that will make you shake your head in bewilderment.

We will take a look at some of the Vet/Military bill in other states. They are bills introduced within the past year or so. They may still be in committees, they may have passed out of committee, or they may have been signed into law. You can look at the progress of each by going to the websites of each of the state's legislature.

Maybe some of them will spark some interest and begin to grow in Ohio.



## In the West Virginia General Assembly

**Senate Bill 385:** Establishing program to pay monthly allotment to all veterans who have been honorably discharged, who are 65 years of age or older, who served on active duty during a period of war, and who are not currently receiving a Federal Veterans Administration check for disability or retirement.

**House Bill 4903:** Makes vehicles exempt from payment of registration fees, by lowering the percentage of a service-connected disability required for exemption from 100 percent to 50 percent or greater; and, by adding recipients of the Distinguished Service Cross, Navy Cross, or Air Force Cross, to the list of persons who may receive such exemption.

**House Bill 4720:** Provides a waiver of tuition and fees at state institutions of higher education and community and technical colleges for military veterans, their spouses, and dependents, when that veteran has a service-related disability of 50 percent or greater.

**House Bill 4731:** Provides that first \$5000 per year earned on Military Duty, Active, National Guard, or Reserves be exempt from the WV State Income Tax.



## In the Rhode Island General Assembly

**Senate Bill No. 21:** Allows a modification up to fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) of taxable pension and/or annuity income includible in federal adjusted gross income for tax years beginning on or after January 1, 2024.

**Senate Bill No. 148:** Provides issuance of an occupational license, certificate and permit for military service members licensed in other states and relocated to Rhode Island.

**House Bill No. 5128:** Allows cold war, veteran administration connected disability, and RI National Guard with less than 90 days service admission into veterans' home.

**House Bill No. 5465:** Provides that the fifth day in April in each year be designated as "Rhode Island Gold Star Spouses Day" with appropriate exercises in public places and with flags flown at half-staff over the state house.

**House Bill No. 5933:** Requires employers in the state with more than 50 employees to display a poster containing basic information on veterans' benefits and services which would be created and distributed by the DLT in consultation with the office of veterans services.

**House Bill No. 5999:** Provides free admission to any state owned recreational facility for Gold Star families with exceptions for docking slips.

**House Bill No. 6017:** Allows members of retirement systems who also served in the national guard or reserves to purchase retirement services credits.



## In the Iowa General Assembly

**Senate File 33:** An act relating to the tuition and fees community colleges and state universities charge to former crew members of any United States navy vessel named for the state of Iowa.

**Senate File 106:** An act relating to lifetime trout fishing licenses for disabled veterans.

**Senate File 465:** AN act providing for a veterans' benefits and services poster for employers to display in the workplace and provides penalties.

**See States on Page Six...**

# OUR OPINION

## Yes! Restore Our Readiness

Who would name their resolution ROAR? Sounds a little undignified for a piece of legislation. But we think, as did the sponsors, that it is a very fitting name for HCR 9.

House Concurrent Resolution 9 is the work of Representatives **Jennifer Gross** (District 45) and **Bernard Willis** (District 74). The short title of the resolution is Adopt Restoration of America's Readiness (ROAR) Resolution. But it is the long title that tells the reader exactly what it is about.

Long title: To urge the United States Congress to restore the Department of Defense's superior warfighting principles of recruiting, assigning, training, promoting, and retaining personnel solely based on merit and ensuring such personnel maintain and display a warrior ethos, and to name this resolution the "Restoration of America's Readiness (ROAR) Resolution."

The Resolution's eight whereases clearly lays out the reasons for the three resolves. The whereases clearly point out that the United States has proven that she is the world's greatest warfighting nation for nearly as long as she has been a country. That it is chiefly due to the ability of her personnel to be kind and compassionate during times of peace while maintaining the ability to become willing and able to engage an enemy when the battles of war require it.

They further address the concern that during the past several years the D.O.D. and it's branches have engaged in some practices that are chipping away at the warfighting principles of our Armed Forces and could be putting our county's military dominance at risk.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**OLR** welcomes letters to the editor.

- \* Letters are limited to 250 words.
- \* Letters with over 200 words may be edited.
- \* Letters will be subject to editing for accuracy, clarity, length, and taste.
- \* Letters must include writer's name, address, and phone number for the purpose of verification.

EMAIL LETTERS TO: [oh.leg.report@gmail.com](mailto:oh.leg.report@gmail.com)

The resolution lists five examples of the practices that are of concern.

- 1) Overemphasizing and relying on diversity and inclusion in all its forms, including gender, gender identity, race, and sexual preference, as a primary determinant in how military forces should be comprised without providing credible and verifiable evidence that such a prescribed composition results in higher job performance, unit effectiveness, and mission accomplishment, as opposed to a model in which a meritocracy-based force composition is used
- 2) Making nonsensical "unconscious bias" training mandatory for all military and civilian personnel
- 3) Instituting mandatory "emergency use only" COVID-19 vaccines with little regard to individual medical concerns in light of the Anthrax vaccine mandate problems of the late 1990s and denying almost all requests for exemptions based on religious grounds, which is particularly troubling given the recent decision by the United States Department of Defense to rescind the COVID-19 vaccine mandate
- 4) Requiring mandatory training at the United States Air Force Academy to incorporate "person-centered" and gender neutral language when describing individuals and to request cadets to consider using the term "parent" or "caregiver" rather than "mother" or "father" as not to offend those that may come from a different parenting background
- 5) Requiring mandatory indoctrination of every cadet at the United States Military Academy in Critical Race Theory, a theory focused on dividing the American population along racial lines, which ignores the progress accomplished within the United States since our Civil War of the 1860s, so as to manufacture voting blocks for radical politicians, and creates distrust of the leadership of the United States Army

Further whereases point out that the success of our military has always relied on the concept of recruiting, assigning, retaining, and advancing in rank based on aptitude and performance regardless of their "race, gender, sexual preference, or other person-centric identifiers." They claim that type of practice is one of the causes of low recruiting numbers and may cause those currently serving to refrain from reenlisting.

The resolution concludes with "therefore be it Resolved, That we, the members of the 135th General Assembly, urge the United States Congress to use its authorization and appropriation authorities to prohibit the use of such "woke" social engineering and experimentation practices, which are eroding military effectiveness, and to mandate a return to a merit-based system for military force development and composition resolved."

If passed as written in both chambers copies

See *Opinion* on Page Six...

# Legislation In The 135<sup>th</sup> Ohio General Assembly

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

- ◇ HB 18 Allow military license plate applicant present county veterans ID
- ◇ HB 33 Establishes operating appropriations for fiscal years 2024-2025
- ◇ HB53 Authorize refundable tax credits for hiring certain veterans
- ◇ HB 57 Index the homestead exemption to inflation
- ◇ HB 60 Increase amount of and expand the homestead exemption
- ◇ HB 69 Revise membership of county veterans service commissions
- ◇ HB 90 Authorize property tax exemption for disabled veterans, spouses
- ◇ HB 123 Designate Honor and Remember flag to honor fallen service members
- ◇ HB 126 Expand municipal income tax exemption for military pay
- ◇ HB 131 Designate Army SSgt. Charles V. Kettler Memorial Highway
- ◇ HB 132 Designate Army Sgt. Herbert C. Linville Memorial Highway
- ◇ HB 133 Designate Army Sgt. Ronnie Blair Memorial Highway
- ◇ HB 150 Prohibit rental discrimination based on lawful source of income
- ◇ HB 202 Designate Specialist Dennis Alan Combs Memorial Highway
- ◇ HB 231 Establish 9-8-8 suicide prevention, mental health telephone line
- ◇ HB 242 Establish the Armed Forces Reserve Component Scholarship Program and related funds
- ◇ HB 250 Revise the Military Enlistment diploma seal
- ◇ HB 252 Designate SM1 Cornelius Anthony McCafferty, Jr. Memorial Highway
- ◇ HB 253 Designate Brigadier General Charles Young Memorial Historical Corridor
- ◇ HB 254 Expand and enhance the homestead property tax exemption for disabled veterans
- ◇ HB 269 Designate Sgt Bradley J. Harper USMC Memorial Highway
- ◇ HB 286 Designate Vienna Township Veterans Bridge
- ◇ HB 294 Designate Delaware County Veteran's Memorial Highway
- ◇ HB 299 Designate Specialist Five Frederick Wayne Taylor Memorial Highway
- ◇ HB 310 Regards STRS member purchase of military service credit
- ◇ HB 317 Designate Sgt. Cory M. Endlich Corridor
- ◇ HB 335 Designate Ottawa County Veterans Memorial Highway
- ◇ HB 350 Designate Lance Corporal Austin B. Schwenk Memorial Highway
- ◇ HB 355 Designate Licking County Veterans Memorial Highway
- ◇ HB 365 Designate multiple memorial highways
- ◇ HB 378 Permit homestead exemption-surviving spouses of service members
- ◇ HR 95 Urge Congress to extend GI Bill benefits
- ◇ HR 189 Honoring Thomas Mihalis Memorial Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1079 on its Centennial
- ◇ HR 221 Honoring Dan Shroyer as a 2023 National Veterans Golden Age Games Champion
- ◇ HR 222 Honoring Dr. John Eichelberger as a 2023 National Veterans Golden Age Games Champion
- ◇ HR 258 Honoring American Legion DeWitt McConnell Post 235 on its Centennial
- ◇ HR 302 Honoring Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1090 on its Centennial
- ◇ HR 316 Honoring Jay Wilson American Legion Post 112 on its Centennial
- ◇ HCR 8 To urge the federal government to select Ohio for the permanent headquarters of the United States Space Command
- ◇ HCR 9 Adopt Restoration of America's Readiness (ROAR) Resolution
- ◇ SB 12 Regards veteran-owned business enterprise certification program
- ◇ SB 14 Expand veteran eligibility to teach without license
- ◇ SB 15 Authorize Military License Plate Program permanent registration
- ◇ SB 43 Modify homestead exemption-surviving spouse of a disabled veteran
- ◇ SB 45 Designate Veterans Memorial Bridge in

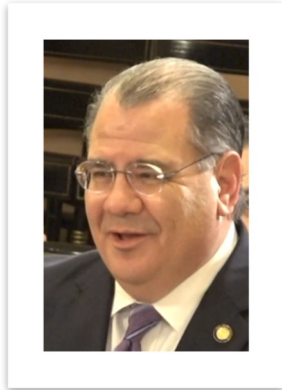
**See Legislation on Page Six...**

## Happenings, from Page One

the United States Congress to take prompt action to reduce the processing time for veterans' disability benefit claims.

SCR 9 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.

Both resolutions would also require the Clerk of the Senate to transmit copies of each resolutions to the President of the United States, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Speaker and Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives, the President Pro Tempore and Secretary of the U.S. Senate, the members of the Ohio Congressional delegation, and the news media of Ohio.



*Rep Schaffer testifies before the Veterans and Public Safety Committee*

Senate Bill 154 had its second hearing and heard from one proponent and received written testimony from another proponent. SB 154, sponsored by Senator **Kristina D. Roegner** (District 27) would amend many sections within the Ohio Revised Code to include Space Force in the definition of the armed forces, armed services, and uniformed services of the United States. It is a bill *Ohio Legislative Report* supported in the October issue.

With a full month ahead, it is hopeful that a few more bills can receive hearings. You can follow *Ohio Legislative Report* on facebook to find all upcoming hearings for any of the bills we track. Watch the hearings on *Ohio Channel*.

## States, from Page Three

**House File 79:** An act relating to the disabled veteran homestead tax credit and including effective date and retroactive applicability provisions.

**House File 223:** An act relating to transfers of moneys from the lottery fund to the veterans trust fund.

**House File 274:** An act establishing a gold panning permit available to veterans, and making penalties applicable.

## Legislation, from Page Five

- Trumbull County
- ◇ SB 63 Require plaintiff in asbestos claim to file specified disclosures
- ◇ SB 64 Expand Ohio National Guard Scholarship Program
- ◇ SB 110 Designate Sgt. Anthony Kress Vinnedge Memorial Highway
- ◇ SB 113 Regards failure to comply with Military Selective Service System
- ◇ SB 114 Designate Lance Corporal James F. Kimple Memorial Highway
- ◇ SB 152 Designate Cpl. Jack O. McClure Memorial Highway
- ◇ SB 154 Include Space Force in armed forces, armed and uniformed service
- ◇ SB 167 Designate Marine Corporal Tim W. Russell Highway
- ◇ SB 169 Designate Cortland Veterans Memorial Bridge
- ◇ SB 183 Designate Lance Corporal James Patrick Rizzo Memorial Highway
- ◇ SB 191 Designate PFC Richard 'Rick' Wesley McFarland Memorial Highway
- ◇ SB 208 To require a military exception in an open enrollment policy
  
- ◇ SR 171 Honoring Thomas Mihalis Memorial Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1079 as it commemorates its One Hundredth Anniversary
- ◇ SR 262 In memory of Senior Airman Brian "Kody" Johnson
  
- ◇ SCR 8 Urge federal govt reduce processing time-veteran disability claim
- ◇ SCR 9 Urge Congress support military, veteran mental health treatment

## Opinion, from Page Four

of HCR 9 would be sent to the President of the United States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and each member of the Ohio delegation to the United States Congress.

Ohio Legislative Report believes that while all members of the armed forces should and must be able to get along with those they live, work, fight, sleep, and eat with, the practices currently being used by the D.O.D. go beyond what is necessary and has an adverse effect on today's military. OLR supports this resolution.