

Volume One Bravo; Number One

January 2024

HELPFUL Links

- OHIO GENERAL ASSEMBLY: www.legislature.ohio.go
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'Ohio Legislative Report'

<u> Dhio Legislative</u> 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.

To subscribe, send your name and email address to:

oh.leg.report@gmail.com

Editor: David K. Root

Statehouse Happenings

The number of committee hearings in December numbered much less than the previous month due mostly to the fact that the General Assembly began their winter break in mid-month. During the first half

of the month, Tuesday the 5th was the busiest for veteran/military legislation.

In the morning the House Transportation Committee heard sponsor testimony for House Bills 335 and 299. First Representative **D.J. Swearingen** (District 89) testified for his bill HB 335 which would designate a

portion of State Route 163 in Ottawa County as the "Ottawa County Veterans Memorial Highway."

Following next was testimony from Representative **Don Jones** (District 95) sponsor of HB 299. His bill would designate a portion of State Route 7 in Washington County as the "Specialist Five Frederick Wayne Taylor Memorial



Highway." SP5 Taylor was killed in action in Vietnam in 1968.

Rep Jones testifying before the Transportation Committee

At the same time the Transportation Committee was conducting business, the House Homeland Security

Committee was hearing sponsor testimony from Representative **Bernard Willis** (District 74) on House Concurrent Resolution 9. The resolution, sponsored by

Representatives **Jennifer Gross** (District 45) and Willis would urge the US Congress to restore the Department of Defense's superior warfighting principles of recruiting,



Sen Johnson testifies before the Armed services Committee

assigning, training, promoting, and retaining personnel solely based on merit and ensuring such personnel maintain and display a warrior ethos and the resolution would be known as the "Restoration of America's Readiness (ROAR) Resolution." In the afternoon the House Armed Services and Veterans Affairs Committee heard testimony on Substitute Senate Bill 113 from

Senator **Terry Johnson** (District 14). This was the first hearing on the house side. The bill was sponsored by former Senator **Frank Hoagland**, but Johnson testified at



Rep Willis testifies before the Homeland Security Committee



Rep Swearingen testifies

before the Transportation

Committee

BILLS & RESOLUTIONS INTRODUCED IN December

HB 350:

Introduced by Representatives **Jame Callender** (District 57) and **Daniel P. Troy** (District 2) on December 4th. It was referred to the House Transportation Committee.

The bill would enact section 5534.664 of the Revised Code to designate a portion of State Route 44 as the "Lance Corporal Austin B. Schwenk Memorial Highway."

<u>HB 355:</u>

Introduced by Representative **Thaddeus J Claggett** (District 68) on December 12th. It was referred to the House Transportation Committee.

The bill would enact section 5534.671 of the Revised Code to designate State Route 161 in Licking County as the "Licking County Veterans Memorial Highway."

<u>HB 365:</u>

Introduced by Representative **Tim Barhorst** (District 85) on December 19th. It has not been referred to a committee at this time.

The will would enact sections 5534.659 and 5534.667 of the Revised Code to designate a portion of US Route 65 in Champaign County "Army Corporal Charles E. Hiltibran Memorial Highway" and a portion of US Route 68 in Logan County "Army PFC Herbert S. Bechtel Memorial Highway."

SB 208:

Introduced by Senator Kristina D Roegner (District 27) on December 19th.

It has not been referred to a committee at this time.

The bill would amend section 3313.98 of the Revised Code to require a city, exempted village, or local school district to include in its open enrollment policy an exception for military children.



State Rep Honors Hall of Fame Veteran

December 9, 2023

Pioneer, Ohio - Robert "Bob" Walkup (*center*), President and Founding Member of the Williams County Veterans Memorial was honored over the weekend with a special commendation from State Representative James M. Hoops (*left*). Walkins was inducted into the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame last month for his many years of dedicated service to veterans and his community. He is a Past Post Commander of Pioneer American Legion Post #307. Also pictured (right) is Pioneer Mayor, Edward Kidston.



"It's time for political leaders across the ideological spectrum to realize that, while partisanship is understandable, hyper-partisanship is destructive to our country. We need more visionary leaders who will earnestly strive for bipartisanship and finding policy solutions that can move America forward." -Martín Luther Kina III

WHAT OTHER STATES ARE DOING

Mass. Gov. Files Comprehensive Vet Legislative Package

In Massachusetts the governor as the primary sponsor can file a bill with the clerk of the House of Representatives and that is what Governor **Maura T. Healey** did. Just two days before Veterans Day Healey filed H4172, *An Act Honoring, Empowering and Recognizing Our Servicemembers and Veterans (HERO Act)*. It marks the first time in 20 years that a Massachusetts Governor has specifically introduced a comprehensive and expansive legislative package dedicated to the welfare of veterans.

According to a press release found on the state website, the Hero Act will have positive impacts for hundreds of thousands of veterans living in Massachusetts, including nearly 30,000 women veterans and thousands of LGBTQ+ veterans.

"Our veterans have sacrificed so much for our country, and this transformative legislation marks an important step toward ensuring that Massachusetts supports them in return," said Governor Healey in the release. "From day one, our administration has been committed to revitalizing veterans' services in Massachusetts and ensuring that every one of these heroes receives the benefits, resources and support that they deserve. I'm grateful to Secretary Santiago for his leadership of our state's first veterans' secretariat and look forward to collaboration with our legislative partners on this historic bill."

The HERO Act encompasses 17 spending, policy initiatives, tax credits, and statute changes organized into three categories:

Benefit Expansion

• Expands access to Behavioral Health

Treatment: Allows veterans to be reimbursed for visits to outpatient behavioral health providers.

• Increases the Disabled Veteran Annuity: Increases the annual annuity for veterans with a 100% service-connected disability, surviving spouses, or Gold Star Parents from \$2,000 to \$2,500.

• Increases the Vet-Hire Tax Credit: Increases to \$2,500 a tax credit for small businesses hiring chronically unemployed or low-income veterans. Eligible veterans include those receiving SNAP benefits, chronically unemployed veterans, and

unemployed service-connected disabled veterans.

• Increases access to the Active-Duty Buyback program: Lengthens the timeframe for veterans in public service to participate in the Active-Duty Service Buyback program and allows retroactive participation for veterans who missed the buyback opportunity. This program will enable veterans to purchase up to four years of active-duty service time toward their state retirement.

• **Prevents the "COLA Cliff":** Ensuring that a cost-ofliving adjustment in Social Security benefits will not affect veterans' eligibility for Chapter 115 benefits in the middle of the state fiscal year.

• Increases Local Flexibility for Veterans Property Tax Exemptions: Creates two separate local options. The first allows municipalities to double the veteran property tax exemption without doubling all other exemption clauses. The second ties the annual property tax abatement amount to inflation, allowing exempted property tax amounts to increase with inflation.

Eliminates the Fee for Specialty License Plates for Veterans: Waives specialty license plate fees on specialty veteran license plates and creates a new woman veteran license plate decal. Commitment to Inclusivity and Greater Representation

• **Broadens the Chapter 115 Definition of Veteran**: Aligns the state Chapter 115 program definition of a veteran with the United States Department of Veteran Affairs definition. This change allows more veterans to be eligible for annuity, Chapter 115 benefits, access to the Massachusetts Veterans Homes, and other stateprovided benefits. This only applies to EOVS programs and does not affect any other agency or entity.

• Expands the Scope of the Veterans Equality Review Board (VERB): Expands the scope of the Board beyond 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' discharges to include discharges related to Military Sexual Trauma, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injury, mental health conditions, or HIV discharges.

• Expands the definition of a veteran dependent: Expanding the Chapter 115 definition of "dependent" to support more dependents based on the Family Court definition.

• Updates Dependent Residency Requirements to

See States on Page Six...

OPINION PAGE

READERS LETTERS

Good For Some, But Not For All

SB 134 while at first glance and quick read through sounds like a great bill. It discriminates against those

who became injured or ill from their time in service that weren't able to do a 20 or more year time in service, and those who have life-shortening illnesses from their time in service that are under 59 years old. It also makes it so those under 59, and 100% still get the \$50,000 off the true property value, until they turn 59. Those who have done 20 or more years of service (Active, Guard or Reserves) and those who are over 59 that aren't 100% from the VA would be able to get their VA rating percentage reduced from their true property value.

SO a veteran rated at 70% and is either 59 or had 20 or more years in service would get 70% reduced from their true property value. Meanwhile those veterans who aren't 59 or were unable to do 20 or more years, that aren't 100% would get no reductions until they turn 59.

The exemptions carry over to our surviving spouse (as long as they don't remarry). SO how is this fair to the surviving spouses of those who have died at a young age from their toxic exposures, their surviving spouse isn't able to apply until they turn 59 either. Heath Robinson died from his cancer at the age of

See Letters on Page Six...

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

OLR welcomes letters to the editor.

- * Letters are limited to 200 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

OUR OPINION

Let The System Work

Will the adage "Third time's a charm" hold true for State Representative **Joseph A. Miller, III** (District 53)? We hope so.

For the third time in as many General Assemblies, Miller has introduced a bill that would "designate the Honor and Remember flag as the symbol of Ohio's concern and commitment to honoring and remembering the lives of all fallen service members and their families." Each time it has been met with opposition by other lawmakers.

Miller and State Representative **Tracy M. Richardson** (District 86) sponsored HB 406 at the end of the first half of the 133rd G.A. and after three hearings, members of the House Armed Services and Veterans Affairs Committee voted unanimously for favorable passage. It did not make it to the House floor for a vote.

Miller reintroduced the bill early in the 134th G.A. with former State Representative **Michael Sheehy** (District 46). Less than two months later HB 213 received a unanimous vote for favorable passage in the House Government Oversight Committee. On the house floor that same month, the bill passed with a vote of 96 to 0. It then went to the Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee and was never heard from again.

In March of this year Miller once again introduced his bill. This time with Representative **Adam C. Miller** (District 6) as his Cosponsor. The bill (HB 123) went right to the House State and Local Government Committee where it still awaits its first hearing.

HB 406 had 20 cosponsors when it died, HB 213 had 54 and HB 123 currently has 22. There has been no opposition testimony and has heard proponent testimony from VSOs, Gold Star Families, and others. There has not been one 'nay' vote. Democrats and republicans have been cosponsors as well as veterans and nonveterans.

It is past time for HB 213 to have hearings and

See Opinion on Page Six...

Legislation In The 135th 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
- **OMB 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
- O HB 317 Designate Sgt. Cory M. Endlich Corridor
- HB 335 Designate Ottawa Cunty 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
- ♦ 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...

States, from Page Two

Align with Current Practices: Updating dependent residency requirements to align with current practices. Implements IVF Reimbursement for Same-Sex Couples Denied Reimbursement by VA: Launching a pilot program to provide IVF reimbursement to affected veterans while establishing a working group to explore long-term solutions in response to the federal policy excluding same-sex couples.

Modernization of Veterans Services

• **Codifies Dental Assistance Benefits:** Ensuring veterans receive essential dental care by codifying dental benefits for Chapter 115 recipients.

• **Codifies Medical Assistance Benefits**: Providing consistent care to veterans by codifying medical assistance benefits.

• Codifies Authority for Veterans Cemeteries: Ensuring proper management and care of veterans cemeteries by codifying the authority for EOVS to continue administering and maintaining the state's two Memorial Veterans Cemeteries.

• Modernizes statute language for inclusivity and standardization: Revise Chapters 115 and 115A to ensure gender-neutral and inclusive language while removing antiquated references.

Initiates a Study on the Use of Alternative Therapies for Veteran Mental Health Disorders: Establishing a working group to study the potential benefits of alternative therapies, such as psilocybin, in treating veterans suffering from mental health disorders.

Opinion, from Page Four

be allowed to move through the legislative process. One or two lawmakers should not take it upon themselves to dictate their beliefs to the citizens of the state. Let the people be heard and let the legislators vote.

The Ohio Legislative Report thinks it is time to let the system to work the way it was designed to work.

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 and all info to: oh.leg.report@gmail .com

Letters, from Page Four

39, his widow is only 38, so she would have to wait until she turns 59 to get this exemption, if passed.

I believe this bill would be best IF they would amend it to remove the age and years of service requirement.

Andrea Neutzling, Sr. Vice Commander Department of Ohio VFW, District 12

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
- SCR 8 Urge federal govt reduce processing timeveteran disability claim
- SCR 9 Urge Congress support military, veteran mental health treatment

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Happenings, from Page One

Hoagland's request because he had resigned from office effective December 1st. Sub SB 113 would prohibit a person who fails to comply with the Military Selective Service System from holding certain public offices or employment with the state and would require high schools to notify students of any obligation to register for the Selective Service System. It passed on the senate floor in October with a 26 to 4 vote.

The committee then spent the next two- and one-half hours listening to testimony on House Bill 69.

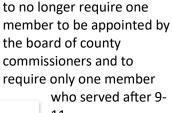


Bill sponsors are Representative Brian **Stewart** (District 12) and Bernard Willis (District 74). As written, HB 69 would require county veterans service commissions to include two members who served in the military after

Alger and June Cable gave proponent testimony on HB 69

September 11, 2001, and require one member of the commission to be appointed by the board of county commissioners. However, Willis stated before the





11. Proponent testimony was heard from three individuals followed by opponent testimony

Proponents giving testimony on HB 69 Clockwise starting at top: Terry L. Stanforth, Michael Newman, Jacob Smith, Andrea M. Neutzling, and Michael R. Stith.

from seventeen individuals representing twelve different

organizations. This was the third hearing for HB 69.

Later in the afternoon the House Ways and Means Committee brought forth House Bill 254 for a third hearing. The committee had no opponent

testimony submitted beforehand and there was no one in attendance to offer opposition to the bill. HB 254 is sponsored by Representatives Tracy M. Richardson (District 86) and Adam Holmes (District 97). The bill would expand and enhance the homestead property tax exemption for disabled veterans.

The next week on Tuesday the 12th, the House Pensions Committee heard proponent testimony from one individual on House Bill 310 which would amend the Ohio Revised Code regarding purchases of military service credit by State Teachers Retirement System members. The bill is sponsored by Representative Don Jones (District 95) and after three hearings has not heard any opponent testimony.

No other veteran/military legislation had a hearing before the break when the legislators went home to be with families for the holidays. They will be back to business-as-usual in the third week of January.

OHIO CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I, BILL OF RIGHTS

SECTION #9 BAIL

Effective: 2022

All persons shall be bailable by sufficient sureties, except for a person who is charged with a capital offense where the proof is evident or the presumption great, and except for a person who is charged with a felony where the proof is evident or the presumption great and where the person poses a substantial risk of serious physical harm to any person or to the community. Where a person is charged with any offense for which the person may be incarcerated, the court may determine at any time the type, amount, and conditions of bail. Excessive bail shall not be required; nor excessive fines imposed; nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted. When determining the amount of bail, the court shall consider public safety, including the seriousness of the offense, and a person's criminal record, the likelihood a person will return to court, and any other factor the general assembly may prescribe.

The general assembly shall fix by law standards to determine whether a person who is charged with a felony where the proof is evident or the presumption great poses a substantial risk of serious physical harm to any person or to the community.



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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. Hiltibran 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

Rep Barhorst fields questions following testimony on HB 365

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 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.

<u>HB 378:</u>

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.



Where: Fairfield Community Arts Center - 411 Wessel Dr. Fairfield, OH 45014 When: Monday, 02/26/2024, from 5:00 - 6:00 PM

-Louis D. Brandeis

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 the are in and some are the 'Hey, why didn't I think of that' variety. There may also be a few bill 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

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- * 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.

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

- 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 personcentric 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 meritbased system for military force development and composition resolved."

If passed as written in both chambers copies

See Opinion on Page Six...

Legislation In The 135th 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
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- HB 317 Designate Sgt. Cory M. Endlich Corridor
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- 0 HB 365 Designate multiple memorial highways
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- ♦ HR 95 Urge Congress to extend GI Bill benefits
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- 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
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- 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 Rep Schaffer testifies before the Veterans and Public Safety Committee

of the Ohio Congressional delegation, and the news media of Ohio.

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 Oho 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 of 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 timeveteran 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 todays military. OLR supports this resolution.



Volume One Bravo; Number Three

March 2024

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- OHIO GOVERNOR: www.governor.ohio.gov
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'Ohio Legislative Report'

<u> Dhio Legislative</u> <u>Report</u>

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.

To subscribe, send your name and email address to:

oh.leg.report@gmail.com

Editor: David K. Root

Statehouse Happenings

Committee hearings were light again in February. Hopefully business will be back to normal once primary elections are over.

The House Transportation Committee heard sponsor and proponent testimony on February 13th for House Bill 355. The bill would designate State Route 161 in Licking County as the "Licking County Veterans Memorial Highway." The testimony the committee heard was from bill sponsor, Representative **Thaddeus J. Claggett** (District 68) and then from Doug Stout of the Linking County Library. Strout related the stories several veterans beginning with Isaiah Beaumont who moved to Licking County in 1813 and is one of almost one hundred Revolutionary War soldiers who moved to Licking County after the war. Beaumont served in George Washington army and took part in Washington's famous crossing of the Delaware in December of 1775.



Rep. Claggett (top) and Stout Testify for HB 355



Roegner Testifies

for SB 208

A motion was made to favorably pass HB 355 out of committee and the vote that followed was a unanimous 9 to 0.

On the Senate side, there were three committee hearings held during the final week of the month.

On the 27th the Senate Education Committee heard testimony from Senator **Kristina D. Roegner** (District 27) sponsor of Senate Bill 208. Her bill would amend the Ohio Revised Code to require a city, exempted village, or local school district to include in its open enrollment policy an exception for military children.

Next on the agenda was Amended House Bill 250 which would amend the Ohio Revised Code to revise the

Military Enlistment diploma seal by renaming the "Military Enlistment Seal" to the "Military Seal" and establish new pathways for a high school student to earn the seal. The primary sponsors of the bill are Representatives **Jessica E. Miranda** (District 28) and **Tracy M. Richardson** (District 86). It was the second hearing for HB 250 and there was no testimony provided.

The Senate Veteran and Public Safety Committee also had a hearing on the 27th. First up was Senate Bill 154, a bill sponsored By Senator Roegner. It was the 3rd hearing for the bill and there were no witnesses. After being amended to make some technical changes, the committee voted to pass the bill out of committee and recommend its passage.

The committee then heard testimony on two Senate Concurrent Resolutions, SCR 8 and SCR 9. Both were sponsored by Senator **Tim Schaffer**

BILLS & RESOLUTIONS INTRODUCED IN FEBRUARY

HB 409:

Introduced by Representative Joseph A. Miller, III (District 53) on February 12th. It has not been referred to a committee yet.

The bill would amend section 5902.02 and to enact sections 5902.09 and 5919.21 of the Revised Code to create the Ohio Cold War Victory Medal.

SB 225:

Introduced by Senator Kristina D. Roegner (District 27) on February 21st. It has not been referred to a committee yet.

The Bill would amend section 5.481 of the Revised Code to designate September 22 as Veterans Suicide Awareness and Prevention Day.

HB 431:

Introduced By Representative Roy Klopfenstein (District 82) on February 27th. It has not been referred to a committee yet.

The bill would enact section 5534.614 of the Revised Code to designate a portion of U.S. Route 127 in Paulding County as the "Staff Sgt. Zachary Wobler Memorial Highway."





Willis & Others Recognized By Vet Organization February 24,2024

Dublin, OH - AMVETS Dept of Ohio held the 36th annual Legislation Breakfast during the Mid-Winter Conference. Legislators recognized for their 'veteran friendly' work were Senator Steve Wilson, Representative Steve Demetriou, and Representative Bernard Willis (pictured above with plaque).

PRIMARY ELECTION DAY

March 19th

Polls are open 6:30 AM to 7:30 PM

TOWN HALL MEETING

Where: Ross Township Administrative Building 4055 Hamilton Cleves Road, Hamilton, OH 45014



When: Monday, March 25th from 5:00-6:00 PM



Jennifer Gross R-West Chester

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 and all info to: oh.leg.report@gmail.com

OUR OPINION

Honor Our Gold Star Families

The 135th General Assembly is a little more than halfway through the two year session and so far, there have been no less than six bills introduced aimed at expanding homestead exemptions for Ohio veterans and/or their spouses. Only two of them have become law.

Senate Bill 43, sponsored by Senator **Andrew O. Brenner** (District 19) corrected a technical issue that prevented certain surviving spouses of disabled veterans from being eligible for the exemption. The bill sailed through both chambers and was signed into law by the Governor last July.

House Bill 57, sponsored by Representatives **Thomas Hall** (District 46) and **Steve Demetriou** (District 35) indexed the amount of the property tax homestead exemption so that the exemption amounts increase according to increases in the prices of all goods and services composing the national gross domestic product (GDP). HB 57 passed the house in May of last year and while in committee on the senate side the bills language was written into the state operating budget bill (HB 33) and became law.

There are four other bills, HB 60 sponsored by Representative **Daniel P. Troy** (District 23), HB 90 sponsored by Representative **Thomas F. Patton** (District 17), HB 254 sponsored by Representatives **Tracy M. Richardson** (District 86) and **Adam Holmes** (District 97), and SB 134 sponsored by former Senator **Frank Hoagland** that are still in committees. They have all had at least one hearing and as many as three or four.

The special Joint Committee on Property Tax Review and Reform was created in the budget bill and

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

OLR welcomes letters to the editor.

- * Letters are limited to 250 words.
- * Letters with over 250 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

began meeting in January with the task of submitting a report to the General Assembly by December 31, with recommendations to reform state property tax law. It is quite possible that the four homestead tax exemption bills will remain in committee until the Joint Committee wraps up their meetings and submits their report to the G.A.

There is one other homestead tax exemption bill that we hope will not be delayed and can make it to the Governors desk as quickly as possible.

Introduced by Representatives **Brian Lorenz** (District 60) and **Nick Santucci** (District 64) on January 16th, House Bill 378 will not give a tax exemption to a veteran. This bill would instead exempt all taxes on a homestead owned and occupied by the surviving spouse of a service member killed in the line of duty while serving in the uniformed services of the United States until the surviving spouse dies.

It is said by many that the hardest job in the military is the job of the military spouse. While the soldier, sailor, or marine is deployed, the spouse must not only do the job of husband, wife, father, and mother, but they must also do it while constantly worrying about the health and safety of their deployed loved one. It is a job that greets them first thing in the morning, follows them throughout the day and tucks them into bed at night. They live in constant fear that one day uniformed officers are going to walk to their front door and ring the bell.

It is hard to imagine if you have never lived like that. If you have never been a military spouse. But try to imagine what life would be like after those

See Opinion on Page Five...



"As lawmakers, our job is to listen to our constituents. If our phones are ringing off the hook with people demanding to know where we stand on an issue, we pay attention."

- Chrís Murphy

Happenings, from Page One

(District 20).

Senate Concurrent Resolution 8 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.

Testimony was heard from five individuals representing three different veteran organizations. They were David K. Root, Legislative Chairman, Dept. of Ohio VFW, Andrea M. Neutzling, Senior Vice Commander, Dept of Ohio VFW, Kristina A. Smith, President, District 2 Dept of Ohio VFW



Testifying for SCR 8 and SCR 9 (clockwise from top) Root, Neutzling, Page, Preston and Smith.

Auxiliary, and Timothy A. Page and James Preston of Ghosts of War Motorcycle Club. Written testimony was also submitted from Michael D. White, State Legislative Chairman, Dept. of Ohio American Legion.

Following SCR 8, oral and written proponent testimony for SCR 9 was provided by the same six witnesses. 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.

The next morning the Senate Transportation Committee heard testimony on House Bill 269 from bill sponsor by Representative **Adam Holmes** (District 97).

The bill would enact section 5534.847 of the Ohio Revised Code to designate a portion of State Route 60 in Muskingum County as the "Sgt Bradley J. Harper USMC Memorial Highway."

Sergeant Bradley was killed in action on August 3, 2005 while service in Iraq with Lima Company of Brookpark, Ohio.

Following testimony it was moved to pass the bill out of committee and recommend its passage and the vote was unanimous.

Next on the agenda was Senate Bill 45 for its second hearing. The bill would enact section 5534.612 of the Ohio Revised Code to designate a bridge spanning the Mahoning River in Trumbull County as the "Veterans Memorial Bridge." and is sponsored by Senator **Sandra O'Brien** (District 32). There was no testimony submitted. The committee voted it out of committee and recommended its passage.

That afternoon the Senate agreed to the recommendations of the committee and passed House Bill 269 and Senate Bill 45 with a vote of 32 to 0.

OHIO CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I, BILL OF RIGHTS

SECTION #10 TRIAL FOR CRIMES; WITNESS Effective: 1912

Except in cases of impeachment, cases arising in the army and navy, or in the militia when in actual service in time of war or public danger, and cases involving offenses for which the penalty provided is less than imprisonment in the penitentiary, no person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous, crime, unless on presentment or indictment of a grand jury; and the number of persons necessary to constitute such grand jury and the number thereof necessary to concur in finding such indictment shall be determined by law. In any trial, in any court, the party accused shall be allowed to appear and defend in person and with counsel; to demand the nature and cause of the accusation against him, and to have a copy thereof; to meet the witnesses face to face, and to have compulsory process to procure the attendance of witnesses in his behalf, and a speedy public trial by an impartial jury of the county in which the offense is alleged to have been committed; but provision may be made by law for the taking of the deposition by the accused or by the state, to be used for or against the accused, of any witness whose attendance can not be had at the trial, always securing to the accused means and the opportunity to be present in person and with counsel at the taking of such deposition, and to examine the witness face to face as fully and in the same manner as if in court. No person shall be compelled, in any criminal case, to be a witness against himself; but his failure to testify may be considered by the court and jury and may be made the subject of comment by counsel. No person shall be twice put in jeopardy for the same offense.

Opinion, from Page Three

officers ring the bell and tell you that your loved one has been killed. That you are never going to see them again. Imagine what it will be like when you tell your children they are going to have to grow up with only one parent.

Life will never be the same again for that military spouse. They will have to raise the children on their own with no help. They will have to survive financially on one income. Their life will never be the same on holidays, birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, weddings, and funerals. It will be that way for the rest of their life. House Bill 378 will help. If the General Assembly passes the bill and Governor **Mike DeWine** signs it into law, the Gold Star Spouse will be forever exempt from paying tax on their homestead. There are some stipulations that must be met, but basically it will be no more tax for the rest of their life. No worries about losing the home because they can't pay the taxes. It will be helpful and it will eliminate at least one financial burden.

Ohio Legislative Report firmly supports the bill and urges the Ohio legislators to fast-track it so it will become law as soon as possible. Our Gold Star families need it now.

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Editor: David K. Root

Statehouse Happenings

Legislators did not hold any hearings on veteran/military bills in March. The March Primary election and Easter break took up most of the legislator's time.

This column is usually devoted to covering the hearings that took place during the previous month. But since there were not any and there were only three bills introduced, we will instead talk a little about the results of the primary election. We want to give you a look at what you might be dealing with in November.

First, we want to remind our readers that the 135th General Assembly is still dealing with the issue of districts. Pay attention because your previous district could have changed and the candidates you have voted for in the past may be in a different district this time. In short make sure you know what district you are in and follow the correct candidates.

Second, candidates you have voted for in past elections may be running for a different office or may not be running for anything in this

<u>ELECTION DAY</u> Tuesday, November 5th Polls are open 6:30 AM to 7:30 PM

Oct. 07: Deadline for voter registration for Nov. 5 general election (30 days before general election)

Oct. 08: Early in-person absentee voting begins (first day after close of voter registration)

Oct. 29: Applications for absentee ballots to be mailed for Nov. 5 general election must be received by boards of elections by the close of business (7 days before general election)

Nov. 05: 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 election. Some of our legislators have 'termed out' (Ohio voters passed term limits for Ohio legislators in 1992) so they cannot run for the same seat again. Some are running for an office on a more local level or a state level.

To give you as idea of what the November election is starting to look like, here are a few

facts. Except for one independent, all candidates are running as a republican or democrat.

Of the 99 house seats, 71 have incumbents running. There are currently 16 candidates running unopposed. Two candidates are currently serving in the state senate. There are 100 or more who have never held an elected office.

On the senate side there are 16 seats up for grabs. There

BILLS & RESOLUTIONS INTRODUCED IN MARCH

<u>HB 447:</u>

Introduced by Representative **Mike Loychik** (District 65) on March 12th. It has not been referred to a committee yet.

The bill would amend sections 319.301, 323.151, 323.152, 323.153, 323.156, 3317.01, 4503.064, 4503.065, 4503.066, 4503.068, and 5715.01 of the Revised Code to modify and expand property tax homestead exemptions, to gradually reduce school districts' 20-mill floor, and to modify the formula for determining farmland's current agricultural use value.

HB 453:

Introduced by Representative **Don Jones** (District 95) on March 20th. It has not been referred to a committee yet.

The bill would enact section 5534.615 of the Revised Code to designate a portion of I-77 in Noble County as the "Staff Sergeant George P. Mizik (USMC) Memorial Highway."

<u>SR 315:</u>

Introduced by Senators **Terry Johnson** (District 14) and **Stephanie Kunze** (District 16) om March 27th. The resolution was adopted by the senate the same day.

The resolution: RESOLVED, That we, the members of the Senate of the 135th General Assembly of Ohio, in adopting this Resolution, recognize April 2024 as the Month of the Military Child in Ohio and applaud military children for their tenacity and courage.

<u>HB 458:</u>

Introduced by James M. Hoops (District 81) on March 27th.

It has not been referred to a committee yet.

The bill would enact sections 5534.878 and 5534.879 of the Revised Code to designate a bridge and a viaduct that are located in the Village of Montpelier, in Williams County, as the "Gold and Blue Star Family Memorial Bridge" and the "POW/MIA Memorial Viaduct."

Happenings, from Page One

are 10 incumbents and 5 who are currently serving in the house. No one is running unopposed.

Many of you will have to choose between two or more candidates who have little or no political experience. There will be names you have never heard of before. Making a wise choice will be difficult but not impossible.

Most candidates have a campaign website and use social media. Following them will give you a good sense of what they stand for and believe in. That will tell you what their priorities will be if they end up with a seat in the next general assembly.

Attend all the candidate nights, debates, and other public events the candidates participate in. Ask them questions and listen to their answers. Do not rely on the media or the ads you see on TV or get in the mail. Don't rely on what your friends and neighbor think.

You have about seven months to cram for the exam that will come on Tuesday, November 5, 2024 and there is more at stake than a good grade.



"We shall never change our political leaders until we change the people who elect them."

-Mark Skousen





Student Honored for Taking a Stand March 13, 2024

Harrison, OH - East Central High School senior Cameron Blasek (center) was honored by the members of Yeager-Benson Memorial American Legion Post 199. State Representative Cindy Abrams (right) was also at the post when the veterans presented Blasek with a commendation. The presentation was made after Blasek refused to remove the American flag from his truck when he was asked to by his school. Because he stood up for his beliefs, the school sent letters to students and parents informing them that after careful consideration the school would allow U.S. flags to be displayed by students in the school parking lot.

(Photo captured from WXIX news broadcast)



State Rep Attends Vietnam Veterans Pinning Ceremony

March 30, 2024

Elyria, OH - A pinning ceremony to honor 14 veterans of the Vietnam War was preformed by the Nathan Perry Chapter of the NSDAR at American Legion Post 12. Attending the event was State Representative Gayle Manning (front row; fourth from right).

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 and all info to: oh.leg.report@gmail.com

Hello,

I will be hosting a series of town halls across Ohio's 21st Senate District in April. The purpose of these town halls will be to educate constituents and local leaders on matters affecting them in the legislature, share my legislative priorities, and take questions. These town halls will take place on the following dates.

<u>Shaker Heights:</u> Monday, April 1 from 6:30-8:00 pm Shaker Heights Public Library-Bertram Woods Branch

<u>Beachwood:</u> Tuesday, April 2 from 6:30-8:00 pm Beachwood Community Center Richmond Room 25225 Fairmount Blvd, Beachwood, OH 44122

<u>Garfield Heights:</u> Thursday, April 4 from 6:30-8:00 pm Garfield Heights Civic Center 5407 Turney Rd, Cleveland, OH 44125

<u>Collinwood:</u> Saturday, April 6 from 10:30 am-12:00 pm CPL-Collinwood Branch 856 E 152nd St, Cleveland, OH 44110

<u>University Heights:</u> Saturday, April 6 from 2:30-4:00 pm Heights Public Library University Heights Branch Room 1 13866 Cedar Rd, Cleveland, OH 44118

<u>Maple Heights:</u> Monday, April 8 from 7:30-9:00 pm, CCPL Maple Heights Branch Large Meeting Room 5225 Library Ln, Maple Heights, OH 44137

All town hall meetings are free and open to the public. Please spread the word about these meetings to anyone who might be interested in attending. If you want a share a graphic about the town halls, you can find one on my state Senate web page (www.ohiosenate.gov/members/kent-smith/news) which includes the relevant location, date and time information. Please do not hesitate to contact me or my office (614-466-4857 or smith@ohiosenate.gov) if you have any questions.

Sincerely, Senator Kent Smith Ohio Senate, District 21



State Rep is Keynote Speaker at Veterans Event March 27,2024

Parma, OH - The Parma Area Senior Veterans held a luncheon to honor all Vietnam Veterans at the Donna Small Activities Center. The event was held to celebrate National Vietnam War Veterans Day which is March 29th. The keynote speaker was State Representative Sean Brennon (District 14).

GUEST EDITOR

Building Relationships With Legislators

By: Kristal Kent

As an advocate focused mostly on healthcare policy and legislative advocacy, I am often asked how I connect with, and establish relationships with my legislators. Here are some of my tips to help you strengthen connections with your legislators. Please note, I live in the United States. While some of the governmental systems I reference differ from other countries, some of the tips I share can be utilized by advocates living throughout the world.

Establish relationships with local and state government

As advocates, too often we only focus on our Federal House of Representatives, Senators and/or Governor. However, it is beneficial to establish relationships with your local and state government officials as well, such as: Township Trustees, City Council Representatives, City Mayors, County Commissioners, County Executives, State House of Representatives, and your State Senate.

These government officials are just as important as those working in your federal government and governor's office. Many of these individuals serving on the local level will move into higher positions in government such as State Governors, State Attorney General, Congress or U.S. Senate. So, it's beneficial to connect and build relationships with your local government officials because many of these individuals will move into a higher position in government. Thus, they will be in a better position to support your legislative advocacy efforts.

Sign up to receive email newsletters and updates from your local, state, and federal legislators

These newsletters will help you stay abreast of current issues your legislators are addressing and provide insight on how proposed or established legislation may impact your communities and advocacy efforts. Further,

You can find information about every state legislator, bill, and district pertaining to the 135th Ohio General Assembly.

www.legislature.ohio.gov

legislators will often use the email newsletter forum to inform their constituents of any upcoming events, meet and greets, round table discussions with constituents, or resource events which you can attend and interface with your legislator or their staff.

Check your legislator's calendar

You can do this on their website for any upcoming health and/or resource events, meet and greets, community events, or constituent specific "panel discussions" that you can attend, in order to continue relationship building with your legislators. I recommend reviewing your local, state, and federal legislators' website calendar monthly to check for new events or events that are rescheduled.

Follow your local, state, and federal legislators on social media

With the expansion of social media platforms, most government officials are utilizing these tools to share information in real time. This helps keep you on top of the issues they are working on that impact the communities you represent.

Further, most government leaders, or their staff, will post upcoming community events or town halls. In addition, they sometimes use social media to poll the public on community issues. This is yet another way to represent your communities, engage in advocacy via social media, and provide helpful insight/information on issues impacting your communities.

Become a resource vendor

If you have a non-profit, and your legislator is hosting a health, community, or veteran resource event, I recommend contacting your legislator's office by phone, and request information on how your organization can register to be a "resource vendor" at these types of events. Not only will you be able to outreach people in your local community, but this also keeps your advocacy and organizational efforts on your legislator's radar.

Attend town halls

Local, state, and federal legislators will often host telephone, virtual or in person "town halls" to meet with constituents, to update their constituents on the legislation they are working on to improve systems and discuss any concerns impacting their constituents.

Further, town halls provide updates on any issues, or potential laws, that can impact the communities you represent. It also keeps you "fresh" in your legislator's mind as a leader of the community. As a side note, it may not seem that current issues will impact your communities directly, but keep in mind we are

See Guest on Page Five...

Guest, from Page Four

supporting various groups of people, within our advocacy space. To tie this in, I will give a personal example.

My Federal Congressional Representative serves on the Farm/Agriculture subcommittee and the Science and Technology sub-committee. While these congressional committees may not seem to directly impact the communities I represent, nor my advocacy initiatives, I have individuals in my communities who live in rural/farm areas. I have individuals who have difficulty in accessing farm fresh foods. Moreover, I represent some individuals who upstarted small farm homesteads in various parts of the country.

In addition, science and technology can impact medical care and healthcare systems. Telehealth, medical apps, resource apps and Artificial Intelligence are areas of science and technology that will have an ongoing impact on medical systems and the delivery of healthcare services. Thus, it is important that I attend my Congressional Representatives Town Hall meetings, so I can stay abreast of how technology is evolving and its' impact on medical care, along with represent my community members who are involved in agriculture/ farming or live in food deserts.

Create your pitch

When you interface with your legislators at events, town hall meetings, etc. have a 2–3 minute overview prepared of who you are, what you are doing with your advocacy work and/or organization, and how your efforts are supporting constituents within the community. Keep in mind you will only have a few minutes at these events to interact with your legislator or their staff. So, keep your introduction of who you are and what you do short and concise.

ADVOCACY PRO TIP: If you have awareness swag, a pamphlet, or overview flyer about you or your organization, put together a small awareness swag bag to give to your legislator and their staff.

Create relationships with your legislator's staffers

This is often a missed opportunity because we do not realize how integral these staff are. Nine times out of 10, the staff are the ones helping resolve issues in the community and are the direct line of communication for the legislator's constituents. Further, if a legislator were to resign, move into another government position, or in some cases they are not re-elected, some of their staff will be hired by the new government official. In some instances, when a legislator moves to a different government position, a few of their staff may also transfer with the legislator to support them in their new government office.

Creating a strong relationship with the staff can help open other doors or they can help connect you to the right people. Finally, many staff are the driving force behind policy and legislative advocacy. Some staff even help write legislative bills for Congressional Representatives and Senators. Therefore, cultivating relationships with staff is integral for successfully advocacy initiatives.

Send invites to events

If you or your organization is hosting a community wellness, awareness, or resource event, reach out to your local, state, and federal legislators and invite them to your event. Further, many state and federal legislators have staff assigned to oversee issues affecting different groups of people within their district such as Veterans, Senior Citizens, and people with Disabilities.

If you are hosting an event, inquire if any of the staff would like to participate in your event to provide information on how their legislator can assist people in these groups. **Example:** As a Disabled Army Veteran, I would ask if the staff assigned to oversee Veteran Issues and Social Security Disability Benefits, would be interested in participating in my event, so they can outreach constituents who may need assistance with a federal agency such as Social Security Administration or the Veteran Affairs, or need assistance with obtaining military records or military medals.

This is not only a great way to build relationships with legislators, but also a great form of community collaboration. **Side note:** Keep in mind that legislators and their staff schedules fill up quickly. If you would like to include these individuals at your community event, you should give at least 4-week notice, but 6-8 weeks would be more sufficient notice.

Send follow ups

If you meet with the staff or legislators, whether virtually, or at your State or Nation's Capital, always follow up with an email or a written thank you note. In this form of correspondence, simply thank them for taking time out of their schedule to discuss your advocacy efforts and you look forward to partnering with them in the future to address the needs of your community and fellow constituents. In the event you are advocating, let's say for funding to be appropriated for research on a medical condition, keep in touch with your legislators and their staff, to provide any updates on progress made with your advocacy efforts.

See Guest on Page Six...

Guest, from Page Five

Remember that your government officials and their staff are people too!

When engaging in Legislative Advocacy, be yourself, but most importantly, cultivate a human connection with all the government officials you meet and their staff. At the end of the day, we are all working towards the same goals, improving the lives of those we serve!

I hope everyone finds these tips helpful and I wish you all the best of advocacy success! Legislative Advocacy is not always easy but with passion, determination, and hope we can accomplish anything!

Kristal Kent is a disabled Army Veteran. Kristal founded the initiatives, "The Fibromyalgia Pain Chronicles" and "Veteran Voices For Fibromyalgia". Her advocacy work on behalf of the Veteran and Fibromyalgia Communities has been recognized by several organizations. Kristal is currently a member of Society for Participatory Medicine, Social Health's Patient Leader Network, a Co-op member of Savvy Cooperative and a member of the American Legion.

Visit her website: www.veteranvoicesforfibromyalgia.com

Legislation In The 135th 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
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- 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
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- HB 202 Designate Specialist Dennis Alan Combs Memorial Highway
- HB 231 Establish 9-8-8 suicide prevention, mental health telephone line
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- HB 317 Designate Sgt. Cory M. Endlich Corridor
- HB 335 Designate Ottawa Cunty 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

More Legislation on the NEXT PAGE...

Legislation, from Page Five

- HB 378 Permit homestead exemption-surviving spouses of service members
- HB 409 Create the Ohio Cold War Victory Medal
- HB 431 Designate Staff Sgt. Zachary Wobler Memorial Highway
- HB 447 Regards property tax exemptions, restrictions and land value
- HB 453 Designate Staff Sergeant George P. Mizik (USMC) Memorial Highway
- HB 458 To designate "Gold and Blue Star Family Memorial Bridge" and "POW/MIA Memorial Viaduct."
- 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 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 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
- SB 225 To designate September 22 as Veterans Suicide Awareness and Prevention Day

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
- SR 315 Recognizing the Month of the Military Child in Ohio, April 2024
- SCR 8 Urge federal govt reduce processing time- veteran disability claim
- SCR 9 Urge Congress support military, veteran mental health treatment



Volume One Bravo; Number Five

May 2024

HELPFUL LINKS

- OHIO GENERAL ASSEMBLY: www.legislature.ohio.go
- OH HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: www.ohiohouse.gov
- OH SENATE: www.ohiosenate.gov

OHIO GOVERNOR: www.governor.ohio.gov

OHIO SECRETARY OF STATE: www.ohiosos.gov

OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL: www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov

OHIO CHANNEL: www.ohiochannel.org



<u> Dhio Legislative</u> 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.

To subscribe, send your name and email address to:

oh.leg.report@gmail.com

Editor: David K. Root

Statehouse Happenings

After their spring break, the members of the 135th General Assembly rolled up their sleeves and got back to work. There were plenty of committee meetings and many of our bills finally received hearings. There were more hearings during the three and half weeks of April than all three of the previous months combined. Here is the recap of Aprils hearings, week by week.

April 8 - 12 -

The House Transportation Committee started the month with a meeting

on Tuesday the 9th and House Bills 317, 350, and 335 were on the agenda. Bill sponsor, **Reggie Stoltzfus** (District 50) offered testimony on HB 317. There was also testimony from four other proponents. The bill would designate a portion of State Route 172 in Stark County to be known as the "Sgt. Cory M. Endlich Corridor." U.S. Army Sgt. Endlich grew up in Massillon, Ohio. He died from enemy small-arms fire while on



patrol in Taji, Iraq on June 9, 2007. Following HB 317 was testimony for HB 350. This bill would name a portion of State Route 44 in Lake County the "Lance Corporal Austin B. Schwenk Memorial Highway". LCpl Schwenk died on October 18, 2023, at the Marine

Corps Camp Lejeune Military Base in

North Carolina after being shot in an on-base barracks room. Another Marine was apprehended, and the Naval Criminal Investigative Service is investigating the incident.

He was a graduate of Riverside High School in Painesville,

Ohio. The bill is sponsored by Representatives Jamie

Callender (District 57 and Daniel P. Troy (District 23).

Rep Stoltzfus testifies on HB 317

Rep Callender testifies on HB 350

Calendar gave sponsor testimony before the committee.

HB 335 did not have any witnesses. Both HB 317 and HB 350 were unanimously voted favorably out of committee.

Later in the afternoon, the House Ways and Means Committee heard sponsor testimony on House Bill 378. Introduced by Representatives **Brian Lorenz** (District 60) and **Nick Santucci** (District 64) in January it would authorize a full homestead exemption for believe military personnel and veterans who had separation or

discharge from military service related to mental health issues should have consideration to correct records to a more honorable discharge and that postmilitary service civilian income should not have any bearing on eligibility for



Rep Santucci (I.) and Rep Lorenz (I.) give sponsor testimony for HB 378

See Happenings on Page Eight...

BILLS & RESOLUTIONS INTRODUCED IN MARCH

<u>HB 483:</u>

Introduced by Representative **Kevin D. Miller** (District 69) on April 8th. It was referred to the House Homeland Security Committee.

The bill would amend section 4501.21 and enact section 4503.536 of the Revised Code to create the "Save a Warrior" license plate.

<u>HB 487:</u>

Introduced by Representative Justin Pizzulli (District 90) on April 10thth.

It was referred to the House Transportation Committee.

The bill would enact section 5534.835 of the Revised Code to designate a portion of State Route 41 in Adams County as the "TSgt. Grover Lee Swearingen Memorial Highway."

<u>HB 493:</u>

Introduced by Representative Angela N. King (District 84) on April 16th.

It was referred to the House Transportation Committee.

This bill would enact section 5534.813 of the Revised Code to designate a portion of State Route 185 in Darke County the "Lance Corporal Gerald Subler Memorial Highway."

<u>HB 494:</u>

Introduced by Representative Angela N. King (District 84) on April 16th.

It was referred to the House Transportation Committee.

This Bill would enact section 5534.616 of the Revised Code to designate a bridge spanning Indian Creek in Darke County as the "SSgt Gene F. Morrison Memorial Bridge."

<u>HR 431:</u>

Introduced by Representatives **C. Allison Russo** (District 7), **Tracy M. Richardson** (District 86), and **Brian E. Lampton** (District 70) on April 16th.

It was adopted by the House the same day.

This resolution resolved that the members of the House of Representatives of the 135th General Assembly, acknowledge the Month of the Military Child in Ohio, April 2024, and urged all citizens to participate in appropriate programs and activities associated with it.

<u>HR 434:</u>

Introduced by Representatives Haraz N. Ghanbari (District 75), and Elgin Rogers, Jr. (District 44) on April 23rd. It was adopted by the House the same day.

This resolution resolved that the members of the House of Representatives of the 135th General Assembly, congratulate American Legion Toledo Post 335 on its Centennial and salute its members as outstanding citizens.

HB 510:

Introduced by Representative Al Cutrona (District 58) on April 30th.

The bill has not been referred to a committee yet.

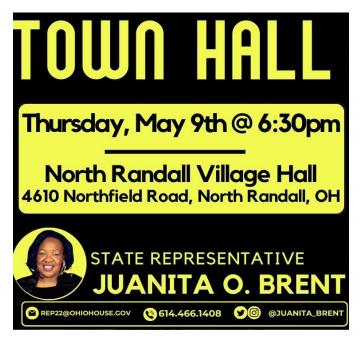
The bill would enact section 5534.648 of the Revised Code to designate a portion of State Route 11 in Mahoning County as the "Army Lt. Col. Robert R. Melnick Memorial Highway."

You can watch live every session of both chambers, all the committee hearings, Governor DeWine's press conferences, and much more on the Ohio Channel.

They are also archived for viewing at a later date.

www.ohiochannel.org







Community Meeting: Saturday, May 11th at 1pm at the Oregon Branch Library (3340 Dustin Road, Oregon, OH 43616

Keep an eye out for additional Community Meetings with Rep. Rogers that are in the works for Toledo Lucas County Library Branches: Point Place, Mott, Kent, and Reynolds Comer

ELECTION DAY Tuesday, November 5th

Oct. 07: Deadline for voter registration for Nov. 5 general election (30 days before general election)

Oct. 08: Early in-person absentee voting begins (first day after close of voter registration)

Oct. 29: Applications for absentee ballots to be mailed for Nov. 5 general election must be received by boards of elections by the close of business (7 days before general election)

Nov. 05: 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



I will be hosting Office Hours in Dublin at the Dublin Library in Meeting Room 1 on Tuesday, May 7th from 5:00-6:00 p.m.

This is an opportunity to ask questions or share legislative concerns. Please reach out to my office with any questions!



FRIDAY, MAY 3RD **10AM - 12PM** CARROLL COUNTY COFFEE COMPANY 704 CANTON ROAD NW CARROLLTON, OHIO

STATE REP. MONICA

BLASDEL



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 and all info to: oh.leg.report@gmail.com

OPINION PAGE

READERS LETTERS

Vets Org Seeks Bill Support From Other Vet Orgs

Dear fellow veterans, military families, and patriotic supporters:

I am writing to grow public support for Senate Bill 225, the designation of "Veterans Suicide Awareness and Prevention Day" in Ohio. On behalf of the thousands of Concerned Veterans for America activists across our state, we believe this bill is crucial for raising awareness about the challenges our veterans face, including mental health struggles and the tragically high rate of suicide among veterans.

We, at Concerned Veterans for America, are veterans from every branch of uniformed services and every conflict from World War II to the Global War on Terror. We are the family members of those who have proudly worn the uniform. We are freedom-loving citizens who value America's heroes and are concerned about the fate of our country. We come from all walks of life and live in every community across America (www.cv4a.org).

At Concerned Veterans for America, we are working tirelessly to ensure our veterans have access to timely and quality care to address the silent struggles of mental health issues. Too often, our heroes are left navigating a broken and bureaucratic VA system of red tape and barriers to treatment. Senate Bill 225 aligns with our mission to advocate for policies like those within the VA Mission Act (www.VAMissionAct.com), which expands veterans' health care options, especially mental health services.

We believe that "full choice" legislation can

See Letters on Page Five...

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Ohio Legislative Report welcomes letters to the editor.

- Letters are limited to 200 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

OUR OPINION

Special Interest License Plates Draw Attention and Raise Funds

You have been seeing them for years. They are on the vehicles cruising the city streets and highways of the US. Ohio is no stranger to them. They are 'special interest' license plates and you see them on cars, trucks, RVs, motorcycles, and trailers.

The Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles has hundreds on their menu. They fall into many categories. There are professional sports teams plates, collegiate plates, corporate plates, and organizational plates. They represent everything from amateur radios and the monarch butterfly to Superman and the Zeta Phi Beta Sorority.

There are also military plates of course. This category has more than 100 different plates available. There are plates for different wars and for medals earned —all the way up to the Medal of Honor. There are plates for active duty, retired, veteran, and even the Guard.

There is even a plate for World War I veterans. I know, but it is still on the menu. There is no additional fee for any of the military Plates, but you do need to prove you are eligible to get them.

Where does the BMV get the ideas for these special interest license plates? The plates require a bill to be written, passed, and signed into law. The bill will state what will be displayed on the plate, who is



eligible to purchase the plates, list any additional BMV fees or contributions and use of the contributions, and any requirement needed for issuance of the plates.

What special interest bills are currently in the General Assembly? There are quite a few, but of interest to our readers are four bills and they are all house bills. These four bills all pertain to our veterans or the families

See Opinion on Page Five...

Letters, from Page Five

empower veterans to reclaim control over their wellbeing. Veterans should have the freedom to seek the care that resonates with them, enabling them to embark on a journey towards restoration and renewal.

By officially recognizing Veterans Suicide Awareness and Prevention Day, Ohio can send a powerful message of support to our veteran community and emphasize the importance of mental health resources and suicide prevention efforts. Ultimately, Concerned Veterans for America will continue to advocate for ideas that promote veteran empowerment relative to control over their health care.

We urge fellow Ohioans to stand with us in honoring our veterans and taking proactive steps to address the mental health crisis they often confront. Please call and email your elected officials in the Ohio Legislature and tell them to support Senate Bill 225. This small action will make a meaningful difference in the lives of our veterans and their families throughout the Buckeye State.

Adam Miller

Adam Miller is Grassroots Engagement Director at Concerned Veterans for America – Ohio.

Opinion, from Page Five

of our military either directly or indirectly. They were referred to the House Homeland Security Committee and none have moved past a 2nd hearing. Let's look at each one and what they would do if passed into law.

First is House Bill 209. It was introduced by Representative **Rodney Creech** (District 40) in June of last year. The bill would create the "Ohio Society Daughters of American Revolution" license plate. It would be available to all applicants but there would be an additional \$10 administrative fee for the BMV and a \$10 contribution that would go to the Ohio Society Daughters of the American Revolution to be used for continuing the organization's endeavors in service, historic preservation, education, and patriotism.

The next bill (House Bill 248) was introduced by Representatives **Steve Demetriou** (District 35) and **Susan Manchester** (District 78) last year on the first of August. This bill would create the "Suicide Prevention" license plate, which would be available to all. There would be a \$10 administrative fee for the BMV and a contribution of \$25 that would be paid to Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation, which must use the contributions for suicide prevention programs, education, and advocacy.

On February 21st of this year, Representative

Joseph A. Miller, III (District 53) introduced HB 423. This would create the "Blue Star Banner" license plate. The special plate would only be available to a "member of the immediate family" of a person who is a member of any branch of the armed forces of the United States who is serving on active duty, including those on active duty in the reserves or National Guard. A member of the immediate family is defined in the bill. There is no addition fee or contribution for the plates.

The most recent bill, introduced by Representative **Kevin D. Miller** (District 69) the second week of April is House Bill 483. This bill would create a "Save a Warrior" license plate. The plate would be inscribed with the words "We Came Back For You" and display an appropriate design, logo, or marking selected by the representatives of Save a Warrior, Inc. and would be available to all applicants. The plate would have a \$10 BMV administrative fee and a \$10 contribution that would be paid to Save a Warrior, Inc. and used to prevent suicide by active members and veterans of the U.S. armed forces and first responders.

These four special interest license plates draw attention to a cause, a person or an organization. That creates new or renewed awareness or interest of things that may be unfamiliar to many citizens. Three of the plates will also raise funds for worthwhile organizations that do many wonderful things for Ohio veterans, our military, and their family members.

Ohio Legislative Report supports all four of these "Special Interest License Plate" bills.

Reflections

"Individual rights are not subject to a public vote; a majority has no right to vote away the rights of a minority; the political function of rights is precisely to protect minorities from oppression by majorities (and the smallest minority on earth is the individual)." -Ayn Rand

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- HB 133 Designate Army Sgt. Ronnie Blair Memorial Highway
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- HB 202 Designate Specialist Dennis Alan Combs Memorial Highway
- HB 212 Enact the Ohio Property Protection Act
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- HB 493 Designate Lance Corporal Gerald Subler Memorial Highway
- HB 494 Designate SSgt Gene F. Morrison Memorial Bridge
- HB 510 Designate Army Lt. Col. Robert R. Melnick Memorial Highway
- HR 95 Urge Congress to extend GI Bill benefits

More Legislation on the NEXT PAGE...

Legislation, from Page Five

- 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
- HR 431 Observing April 2024 as the Month of the Military Child in Ohio
- HR 434 Honoring American Legion Toledo Post 335 on its Centennial
- HCR 8 To urge the federal government to select Ohio for the permanent headquarters of the U.S. 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 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 134 Modifies homestead property tax exemption for disabled veterans
- SB 140 Designate Sgt. Todd M. Bates Memorial Highway
- SB 141 Designate American Gold Star Mothers, Inc. Memorial Highway
- SB 145 Designate Cpl. David A. Johnston 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
- SB 225 To designate September 22 as Veterans Suicide Awareness and Prevention Day
- SB 226 Enact the Ohio Property Protection Act
- SR 171 Honoring Thomas Mihalis Memorial VFW Post 1079 as it commemorates its One Hundredth Anniversary
- SR 262 In memory of Senior Airman Brian "Kody" Johnson
- SR 315 Recognizing the Month of the Military Child in Ohio, April 2024
- SCR 8 Urge federal govt reduce processing time- veteran disability claim
- SCR 9 Urge Congress support military, veteran mental health treatment

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Happenings, from Page One

healthcare-related benefits or treatment.

Following SCR 8 and 9, testimony was heard from

Senator Kristina D. Roegner (District 27), sponsor of Senate Bill 225. Her bill would amend section the Revised Code to designate September 22 as "Veterans Suicide Awareness and Prevention Day." Currently the first Saturday in May is designated as "Veterans Suicide Awareness Day" in Ohio.



In the Senate Education Committee, Senate Bill 208 had its second hearing and Amended House Bill 250 its third. Neither had any witnesses,

Senator Roegner although SB 208 did have two written only testifies on SB 225

agreed to for AmHB 250. They were to make corrections to the language of the bill.

April 15 - 19 -

testimonies. Two amendments were

The next week, there were no hearings for our bills on the house side, but the senate side had plenty to

keep them busy. The Senate Transportation Committee had five bills on the agenda and the Senate Education Committee had two. Both committees met on Wednesday the 17th.

Four of the bills in the Transportation Committee would create memorial highways and one would create a memorial bridge.

Senate Bill 191 was introduced in November by Senator Mark Romanchuk (District 22) and would create a portion of State Route

Highway" in Richland County. PFC McFarland was killed in action on August 10, 1970, when he tripped an explosive device during a reconnaissance mission in the Quang Ngai Province in South Vietnam. He was serving with Company E, 1st Battalion 52nd Infantry American Division.

Senate Bill 183 was also introduced in November by Senator Nickie J. Antonio (District 23). Her bill would create the "Lance Corporal James Patrick Rizzo



Senator Romanchuk testifying on SB 191

39, the "PFC Richard 'Rick' Wesley McFarland Memorial



Senator Antonio testifies on SB 183

Memorial Highway" on a portion of Interstate 90 on the

east side of Cleveland. It would be in honor of LCpl Rizzo who while serving in Vietnam, was killed in action on February 8, 1968, after attempting to gain support for his platoon during a ground assault. While serving with 3rd Marine Division where he earned 20 Service Ribbons, including the Bronze Star with Valor, the Purple Heart, the Combat Action Ribbon, and the Republic of Vietnam Service Medal.

Senate Bill 169 would designate a bridge spanning Walnut Creek in Trumbull County as the

"Cortland Veterans Memorial Bridge." The bill was introduced by Senator Sandra O'Brien (District 32) last October. The bill was the idea of the members of the Cortland

American Legion Post 540 as a way to recognize and honor the Veterans of the City of Cortland for their service and sacrifice to the country and their community.



Senator O.Brien testifies on SB 169

Senate Bill 141 would designate a portion of Interstate 77 in Akron as the "American Gold Star Mothers, Inc. Memorial Highway." Vernon Sykes (District 28) introduced the bill in July last summer.

Senate Bill 145 was introduced last August by Senator Tim Schaffer (District 20) to designate a portion of Refugee Road in Fairfield County as the "Cpl. David A. Johnston Memorial Highway." Corporal Johnston was killed in action while supporting Operation Taylor Common in the Quang Nam Province of South Vietnam on March 3, 1969. He was awarded the Bronze Star posthumously for his actions during the combat operation.

The same day the Senate Education Committee held hearings once again for Amended House Bill 250 and Senate Bill 208. Again, the committee approved two amendments, neither of which pertained to the military enlistment seals. There were no witnesses offering testimony for either bill.

April 22 - 26

In the next week on Tuesday the 23rd, the House Transportation Committee heard testimony on two more bills that would designate memorial highways. HB 335, introduced by Representatives D. J. Swearingen (District 89) and Elgin Rogers, Jr. (District 44) in November would designate a portion of State Route 163 in Ottawa County as "Ottawa County Memorial Highway." There was no testimony but with a vote of 10-0 it was favorably passed out of committee. HB 431 would designate a portion of U.S. Route 127 in Paulding County as "Staff Sgt. Zachary Wobler Memorial Highway." SSgt. Wobler was killed on February 6, 2005, by insurgent fire in Iraq while serving

with the Army's 2nd Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division.

The House Ways and Means Committee met on Tuesday and a second hearing was held for HB 378. Proponent testimony was heard from Tiffany Eckert, a Gold Star Spouse and written testimony was received from three other proponents of the bill. Secretary of State, Frank LaRose, Jane Horton, a Gold Star spouse, and Jon Bennehoof, Fund Raising Chairman for The Ohio Gold Star Families Memorial Monument Committee of Columbus.

In the House State and Local Government

Committee House Bill 123 finally was given its first hearing. Introduced by Representatives **Joseph A. Miller, III** (District 53) and **Adam C. Miller** (District 6) over a year ago, the bill would designate the Honor and Remember flag as the symbol of Ohio's concern and commitment to honoring and remembering the lives of all fallen service members and their families. Testimony was given by Rep Joseph Miller.



Rep J. Miller testifying on HB 123

Amended House Bill 250 was once again before the Senate Education Committee who approved two more amendments to the bill. Neither amendment affected military enlistment seals portion. The committee favorably reported it out of committee (now classified as Substitute House Bill 250). The next day the full senate made further amendments before it unanimously passed the bill (now it is Amended Substitute House Bill 250). SubAmHB 250 now goes back to the house.

The Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee had the second hearing for SB 225 and there was testimony, written and in person, from six

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proponents. Tim Hauser of Veterans Assurance Network, David K. Root of Department of Ohio Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Patricia Krummrich, and Michelle Lee Heym (speaking for themselves) testified in support of the bill. Written proponent testimony was

received from Adam Miller



Houser (Top) and Root testifying on SB 225



Ashley Wilson of American Foundation for Suicide Prevention - Ohio Chapter.

of Concerned Veterans for America and



On Wednesday, the House Homeland Security Committee heard sponsor testimony for House Bill 423. This bill would create a special interest license plate that would be available to a "member of the immediate family" of a person who is a member of any branch of the armed forces of the United States who is serving on active duty, including those on active duty in the reserves or National Guard. It was introduced in

Rep J. Miller testifies on HB 423

February by Joseph A. Miller, III (District 53).

April 29 – 30 -

The House Ways and Means Committee wrapped up the month on Wednesday with the third hearing for HB 378. There was no opponent testimony.

Remember all committee meetings are filmed and archived. You can watch them at ohiochannel.org or you can read the testimony by going to legislature.ohio.gov and search by bill number or legislator.

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Volume One Bravo; Number Six

June 2024

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'Ohio Legislative Report'

<u> Dhio Legislative</u> Report

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Editor: David K. Root

Statehouse Happenings

With the summer break just a month away the mad dash to get some bills passed continued. Here is the recap of the May hearings, week by week.

May 1-3

The House Homeland Security Committee got the month underway on



Rep. Miller gives testimony for HB 483 Wednesday morning with the first hearing for HB 483. Representative Keven D. Miller (district 69) presented his sponsor testimony. He talked about the mental health crisis that is causing a high suicide rate among first responders and veterans of

the armed forces. HB 483 would create a "Save a Warrior" license plate to spread awareness of the work being done by Save a Warrior Foundation to improve mental health and reduce the suicide rate, and it



Rep. King gives testimony for HB 493 & HB 494

May 6-10

the 8th of the previous month.

would also provide Save a Warrior with additional funding for outreach and

programing. Miller had introduced the bill on



Rep. Klopfenstein offers testimony for HB 431

On Tuesday, the House Transportation Committee was busy hearing sponsor testimony on four bills that would create three memorial highways and one memorial bridge. Representative Angela N. King (District 84) gave her sponsor testimony first on HB 493 and then on Hb 494. HB 493 would designate a portion of State Route 185 in Darke County the "Lance Corporal Gerald Subler Memorial Highway" and HB 494 would designate a bridge spanning Indian Creek in Darke County as the "SSgt Gene F. Morrison Memorial Bridge." Next on the agenda was Representative Roy Klopfenstein (District 82) testifying for his bill, HB 431 that would designate a portion of U.S. Route 127 in Paulding County as the

BILLS & RESOLUTIONS INTRODUCED IN MAY

<u>SB 257:</u>

Introduced by Senators **Brian M. Chavez** (District 30) and **Terry Johnson** (District 24) on May 1st. It was referred to the Senate Community Revitalization Committee.

The bill would amend section 135.71 of the Revised Code to make active duty members of the uniformed services eligible to participate in the homeownership savings linked deposit program.

<u>HB 517:</u>

Introduced by Representatives **Nick Santucci** (District 64) and **Brian E. Lampton** (District 70) on May 6th. It was referred to the House Economic and Workforce Development Committee.

The bill would amend section 135.71 of the Revised Code to make active duty members of the uniformed services eligible to participate in the homeownership savings linked deposit program.

<u>SB 260:</u>

Introduced by Senator Kent Smith (District 21) on May 7th.

It was referred to the Senate Transportation Committee.

This bill would enact section 5534.162 of the Revised Code to designate a portion of State Route 283 in Cuyahoga County as the "SPC Connor Wilson-Reichert" Memorial Highway.

<u>HB 523:</u>

Introduced by Representatives Lauren McNally (District 59) and Adam Holmes (District 97) on May 9th. The bill was referred to the House Commerce and Labor Committee.

The bill would enact section 4113.13 of the Revised Code regarding the creation and display of a poster containing information on benefits and services for veterans.

HB 611:

Introduced by Representative Haraz N. Ghanbari (District 75) on May 28th.

The bill has not been referred to a committee yet.

The bill would enact section 5534.131 of the Revised Code to designate a portion of State Route 199 in Wood County as the "U.S. Army Private First Class Jerry Bockbrader Memorial Highway."

<u>SB 281:</u>

Introduced by Senators **Hearcel F. Craig** (District 15) and **Terry Johnson** (District 14) on May 29th. The bill has not been referred to a committee yet.

The bill would enact section 4113.13 of the Revised Code regarding the creation and display of a poster containing information on benefits and services for veterans.

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OPINION PAGE

VETERAN BENEFITS

SERVICE

They Are Good Bills But They Have No Strength

Two bills -one in the House and one in the Senate. The bills are identical. We call them companion bills.

On May 9th Representatives Lauren McNally (District 59) and Adam Holmes (District 97) introduced House Bill 523. On the 29th Senators Hearcel F. Craig (District 15) and Terry Johnson (District 14) introduced Senate Bill 281. Both bills would enact section 4113.13 of the Revised Code regarding the creation and display of a poster containing information on benefits and services for veterans.

The bills have two parts – (A) The director of commerce, in consultation with the director of veterans services, shall create a veterans' benefits and services poster and (B) An employer in Ohio may display a copy of the poster on the their premises in a conspicuous place (the posters are free).

Part (A) has nine topics that require information. (1) Programs provided by the department of veterans services, including the department's contact and web site information; (2) The United States department of veterans affairs veterans crisis line, including contact information for the crisis line;

(3) Substance abuse and mental health treatment programs available to veterans;

(4) Educational, workforce, and training resources

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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available to veterans;

(5) Tax benefits and exemptions available to veterans;

(6) The availability of an armed forces designation on

an Ohio driver's license or identification card;

(7) Eligibility for unemployment benefits under Chapter 4141. of the Revised Code and federal unemployment compensation law;

(8) Legal services available to veterans;

(9) The availability of any other benefit or service relevant to veterans that the directors determine should be included on the poster.

This poster we believe will have much needed information that Ohio veterans aren't always aware off and that is a good thing. All too often a veteran will

find themselves in a situation and not know where to turn. This poster could be a life saver for many veterans.

OLR thinks the poster will be an effective tool to get information to veterans, but we have to ask, "Will veterans ever see the poster?" One little three letter word in the bills language could render the whole thing ineffective and the program a failure.

Part (A) is full of requirements for creating the posters. If passed the new section of the Ohio Revised Code will require by law that the directors create the poster and include all the listed information. They will have to do it.

But that is where the requirements end. Part (B) does not require anyone to ask for the poster and display it. The bill states "An employer employing employees in this state may display a copy of the poster created under division (A) ..." An employer must ask for the poster and there is no requirement to do so or to display it. We wonder just how many employers will request and display the poster. We also wonder if they will even know about the posters as there is nothing in the bills requiring the directors to promote the posters in any way.

Informational posters for veterans is a good idea but only if the posters do not get printed and sit on a shelf in Columbus collection dust. OLR supports the bill but we think there needs to be some work done to it before it gets to the governor's desk.

Legislation In The 135th Ohio General Assembly

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

- HB 2 Direct state funds for economic growth and community development
- HB 18 Allow military license plate applicant present county veterans ID
- HB 33 Establishes operating appropriations for fiscal years 2024-2025
- HB 53 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 212 Enact the Ohio Property Protection Act
- HB 231 Establish 9-8-8 suicide prevention, mental health telephone line
- HB 232 Create Historical and Patriotic Education license plate
- 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 Cunty 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
- HB 409 Create the Ohio Cold War Victory Medal
- HB 423 Create "Blue Star Banner" license plate
- HB 431 Designate Staff Sgt. Zachary Wobler Memorial Highway
- HB 447 Regards property tax exemptions, restrictions and land value
- HB 453 Designate Staff Sergeant George P. Mizik (USMC) Memorial Highway
- HB 458 To designate "Gold and Blue Star Family Memorial Bridge" and "POW/MIA Memorial Viaduct."
- HB 483 Create "Save a Warrior" license plate
- HB 487 Designate TSgt. Grover Lee Swearingen Memorial Highway
- HB 493 Designate Lance Corporal Gerald Subler Memorial Highway
- HB 494 Designate SSgt Gene F. Morrison Memorial Bridge
- HB 510 Designate Army Lt. Col. Robert R. Melnick Memorial Highway

More Legislation on the NEXT PAGE...

- HB 517 Allow military to participate in homeownership savings program
- HB 523 Regards info poster on benefits and services for veterans
- HB 611 Designate U.S. Army Private First Class Jerry Bockbrader Mem Hwy
- HR 95 Urge Congress to extend GI Bill benefits
- HR 189 Honoring Thomas Mihalis Memorial Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1079 on its Centennial
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- HR 431 Observing April 2024 as the Month of the Military Child in Ohio
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- SR 315 Recognizing the Month of the Military Child in Ohio, April 2024
- SCR 8 Urge federal govt reduce processing time- veteran disability claim
- SCR 9 Urge Congress support military, veteran mental health treatment

Happenings, from Page One

"Staff Sgt. Zachary Wobler Memorial Highway." Testimony for HB 383 was then given by Representative Sarah Fowler Arthur (District 99). HB

383 would designate a portion of U.S. Route 20 in Ashtabula County as the "Corporal John E. Ruch Memorial Highway." Following each testimony a vote was taken and all four bills were favorably passed out of committee with a 12 to 0 vote.

The House Ways and Means Committee meet in the afternoon and on the agenda was HB 378 but there were no witnesses. HB 378 would



Rep. Fowler Arthur testifies on HB 383

authorize a full homestead exemption for surviving spouses of members of the uniformed services killed in the line of duty and that exemption would continue until the spouse dies. Committee Chair Bill Roemer (District 31) told the committee members that the bill sponsors were working on an amendment and would be introducing it in a future committee hearing. It was introduced in January by Representatives Brian E. Lorenz (District 60) and Nick Santucci (District 64).

At the same time that afternoon the Senate Education Committee was meeting to hear testimony

on SB 208. Senator Kristina D. Roegner (District 27) introduced the bill just prior to the winter break. The bill would require a city, exempted village, or local school district to include in its open enrollment policy an exception for military children. Although there was no testimony, an amendment was agreed to by the committee. It was a technical amendment that would bring the language in line



Rep. Holmes gave testimony on HB 253

with that of HB 33 which was passed last year.

The next day the Senate Transportation Committee met in the morning to hear sponsor testimony on House Bills 253 and 202. Both bills passed in the house 88 to 0 and had been sitting in committee since December 13th. HB 253 would designate portions of United States Routes 42, 68, and 62 as the "Brigadier General Charles Young Memorial

Historical Corridor." Representative Terrence Upchurch (District20) informed the committee in written testimony the significance of highways chosen and how it ties to Young's African American history, and extensive military presence and background. Representative Adam Holmes (District 92) listed

highlights of General Young's life beginning with his birth in 1864 until his burial at Arlington National Cemetery in 1923.

HB 202 would designate a portion of United States Route 62 in Canton as the "Specialist Dennis Alan Combs Memorial Highway." **Representative Jim Thomas** (District 49) testified that Combs left behind a wife and a

two year old son when at the age testifies on HB 253 of 23 he was killed in the line of



Rep. Thomas

duty on June 16, 1967 while serving in the US Army with the 128th Medical Detachment, 1st Log Command.

Later in the day, in the Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee had SB 225 and SB 226 were on the agenda. Senate Bill 225 was introduced by Senate Kristina D. Roegner (District 27) in February. It would amend the Ohio Revised Code to designate September 22 as Veterans Suicide Awareness and

Prevention Day in Ohio. Testimony was heard from **Tim Hauser of Veterans** Assurance Network for the second time. He stated that the special day would help educate, veterans, their families, and the public about mental health and help eradicate the current stigma surrounding mental health. Following his testimony the committee favorably passed SB 225 out of committee. Two



Tim Hauser testifies on HB 225

weeks later the bill was passed by the full Senate 31 to 0 and was sent to the House.

Senate Bill 226, introduced in February by Senator Terry Johnson (District 14) would extend the law that prohibits certain governments, businesses, and individuals from acquiring agricultural land to

certain other property. It will be known as the Ohio Property Protection Act. This was the third hearing for SB 226 and there was no opponent testimony.

May 13-17

The House Ways and Means Committee met on Tuesday to hear testimony on House Bill 378. For the second time there were no witnesses to testify and again Chair Bill Roemer (District 31) stated that the bill sponsors were working on amendments to the bill and would be presenting them at a later hearing.

May 20-24

There were plenty of hearings this week. Tuesday started out with the House Transportation Committee meeting to hear testimony on House Bill

453. Introduced by Representative Don Jones (District 95) on March 20th, HB 453 would designate a portion of I-77 in Noble County as the "Staff Sergeant George P. Mizik (USMC) Memorial Highway." Representative Jones testified that SSgt. Mizik served during WWII including in the battle of Iwo Jima where he was awarded the Purple Heart. Following the war, Mizik



Rep. Jones testifies on HB 453

served his community, a member of numerous veterans organization, and active in his church. He passed away in 2005 at the age of 84. With a vote of



Reflections "I am only one; but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; I will not refuse to do the something I can do."

- Helen Keller, 1950

10 to 0, HB 453 was favorably passed out of committee.

There were no witnesses for the 3rd hearing for House Bill 212 in the House Civil Justice Committee. There were however two amendments brought to the committee by the bill sponsors, Representatives Angela N. King (District 84) and Roy Klopfenstein (District 82) that would add safeguards to prevent the wrong people from being targeted and they were agreed to. The bill would prohibit foreign adversaries and certain businesses from owning real property in Ohio and would name this act the Ohio Property Protection Act.

Senate Bill 257 had it's first hearing before the Senate Community Revitalization Committee. Sponsor testimony was heard from Senators Brian M. Chavez (District 30) and Terry Johnson (District 14). SB 257

would make active duty members of the uniformed services eligible to participate in the homeownership savings linked deposit program. According to the

Senators



Sen. Johnson (I.) and Sen. Chavez (r.) give sponsor testimony for SB 257

testimony, the "legislation will offer a more accessible opportunity for active-duty military members to become residents of Ohio if they wish to do so. Senate Bill 257 will ease the home buying process so that military personnel and their families can flourish through this successful program."

On the agenda in the Senate Education

Committee was Senator Roegner's bill SB 208 for it's fifth hearing. There were no witnesses and with a 6 to 0 vote it was favorably passed out of committee. It later passed on the senate floor with a 31 to 0 vote.

The next day Senate Bill 63 was scheduled for it's seventh hearing in the Senate Insurance Committee. **Opponent testimony was**



David K. Root gives testimony for SB 63

heard from David K. Root of Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Ohio and there was written testimony

presented by Shawn M. Acton of the Ohio Association for Justice. Both had testified previously. SB 63, Introduced in February of 2023 by Senator **George F.** Lang (District 4) would require a plaintiff in a tort action alleging an asbestos claim to file specified disclosures. Following testimony Senator Lang moved to amend his bill with three points that he felt would improve the bill. The committee passed the amendment but the amended bill still faced some

opposition. It passed favorably out of committee with a vote of 7 to 5. In the afternoon the bill passed on the senate floor with a vote of 21 to 10.

In the Senate **Transportation Committee** five bill were on the agenda. Senate Bill 260 had sponsor testimony from Senator Kent Smith District 21). The bill would designate a portion of State Route 283 in Cuyahoga County as the "SPC Connor Wilson-Reichert" Memorial Highway. Senate Bill 167 sponsored by Senators Theresa Gavarone (District 2) and Nathan H. Manning (District 13) would designate a portion of State Route 60 in Erie County as the "Marine Corporal Tim W. Russell Highway." Senator Gavarone was the witness. Senate Bill 141, sponsored by Senator Vernon



Sen. Smith gives testimony for SB 260



Sen. Gavarone testifies on SB 167

Sykes (District 21) would designate a portion of I-77 in Akron as the "American Gold Star Mothers, Inc. Memorial Highway." It was the third hearing for his bill and there were no witnesses. There were also no witnesses for SB 183. It was the second hearing for the

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bill. As amended it would designate a portion of I-90 in Cuyahoga County as the "Lance Corporal Jimmy Rizzo Memorial Highway." The bill is sponsored by Senator **Nickie J. Antonio** (District 23). Senate Bill 114 sponsored by Senator **Tim Schaffer** (District 21) had a second hearing and the committee was presented with written testimony from the family of LCPL James F. Kimple. The bill as amended would designate a portion of United States Route 33 in Fairfield County as the "Lance Corporal James F. Kimple Memorial Highway."

Senate Bills 141, 183, and 114 were all passed unanimously out of committee and then all passed 31-0 on the senate floor the same day.

In the Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee, SB 226 was scheduled for it's fourth hearing. There was written testimony submitted by Scott Williams of Ohio Realtors as an interested party but no action was taken by the committee.

May 27-31

The final week of the month had the House Government Oversight Committee holding hearings for House Bill 2 on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, however none of the testimony directly involved Ohio veterans or our active duty military.

House Bill 2 would create local jail facility funding programs and make certain capital appropriations for the biennium ending June 30, 2026. Part of the appropriations in the bill are for one time community projects and it lists the various projects and the amount designated for each project. Of the \$350 million in the One Time Strategic Community Investments Fund, about \$2 million would be used for projects throughout the state that pertain to veterans.

Look for the month of June to be another busy month of hearings as the general assemble prepares for their summer break.

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Ohio Legislative Report



Volume One Bravo; Number Seven

July 2024

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'Ohio Legislative Report'

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Editor: David K. Root

Statehouse Happenings

Summer break has now begun and that means the 135th General Assembly will not return to full operations again until some time in the fall – probably after the November Elections. In June both chambers were very busy trying to get as many bills as they could through committees and passed in session. Here is a week-by-week look at the June activity of the many 'veteran/ military' bills while in committees.

June 3-7

The House Civil Justice Committee had House Bill 212 on its agenda Tuesday afternoon. HB 212 would amend sections of the Revised Code to prohibit foreign adversaries and certain businesses from owning real property in Ohio and to name this act the Ohio Property Protection Act. It was introduced by Representatives **Angela N. King** (District 84) and **Roy Klopfenstein** (District 82) in June of last year. It is on our list because according to the LCS's Local Impact Statement, under the bill, protected property includes real property within a 25-mile radius of (1) an installation under United States armed forces jurisdiction, or (2) a critical infrastructure facility. It was the fourth hearing for the bill and no one was present to give testimony, however written testimony had been submitted from Scott Williams, Chief Executive Officer of Ohio REALTORS as an interested party. In his testimony, Williams pointed out that a similar bill enacted in Florida is having legal problems and Ohio could face similar challenges.

Later on Tuesday the House Ways and Means Committee held the sixth hearing for House Bill 378 which was introduced back in January by Representatives **Brian Lorenz** (District 60) and **Nick Santucci** (District 64). The bill would amend the Revised Code to authorize a full homestead exemption for surviving spouses of members of the uniformed services killed in the line of duty. Representative Lorenz offered three amendment to the bill and the committee agreed to them and the amended bill was favorably passed (12-1). The amendments would disallow a spouse if they remarry and a spouse who cohabitates with another unrelated person. The bill passed on the house floor the next week with a vote of 90 to 1.

On Wednesday the House Homeland Security Committee met and was scheduled to hear testimony and possibly vote on House Bill 232. The bill would amend the Revised Code to create the "Historical and Patriotic Education" license plate. The special plate would generate \$20. for the Ohio Society, Sons of the American Revolution. The Society would be required to use the contributions for special projects related to historical education. Representatives **Jamie Callender** (District 57) and **Mike Loychik** (District 65) introduced the bill June 29th a year ago. There was no testimony and the bill was favorably passed out of committee with a vote of 7 to 1.

BILLS & RESOLUTIONS INTRODUCED IN JUNE

HB 620:

Introduced by Representative **Roy Klopfenstein** (District 82) on June 3rd. It was referred to the House Transportation Committee.

The bill would enact section 5534.848 of the Revised Code to designate U.S. 24 in Paulding County as the "Paulding County Purple Heart Memorial Highway."

HB 621:

Introduced by Representative **Roy Klopfenstein** (District 82) on June 3rd. It was referred to the House Transportation Committee.

The bill would enact section 5534.849 of the Revised Code to designate U.S. 30 in Van Wert County as the "Van Wert County Veteran's Memorial Highway."

<u>HB 625:</u>

Introduced by Representative **Al Cutrona** (District 58) on June 3rd. It was referred to the House Homeland Security Committee.

This bill would amend sections 4501.21 and 4503.583 and to enact section 4503.896 of the Revised Code to create the "American Legion Auxiliary" license plate and to revise the requirements for the issuance of the "American Legion" license plate.

SB 282:

Introduced by Senator Stephanie Kunze (District 16) on June 4th.

It was referred to the Senate Transportation Committee.

The bill would enact section 5534.642 of the Revised Code to designate a portion of I-270 in Franklin County as the "PFC Henry 'Rick' Hausman, Jr. Memorial Highway."

<u>SB 285:</u>

Introduced by Senator Shane Wilkin (District 17) on June 4th.

It was referred to the Senate Transportation Committee.

The bill would enact section 5534.703 of the Revised Code to designate a portion of State Route 554 in Gallia County as the "Pharmacist's Mate Third Class Willard L. Shupe Memorial Highway."

HB 628:

Introduced by Representative **Josh Williams** (District 41) on June 12th.

It was referred to the House Transportation Committee.

The bill would enact section 5534.617 of the Revised Code to designate a portion of I-280 in Lucas County as the "SSG Jack W. Coy Memorial Highway."

SB 288:

Introduced by Senator Matt Dolan (District 24) on June 17th.

It was referred to the Senate Finance Committee.

The bill would make certain supplemental operating appropriations for the biennium ending June 30, 2025.

<u>SB 292:</u>

Introduced by Senator Matt Dolan (District 24) on June 17th.

It has not been referred to a committee.

The bill would amend sections 164.01, 164.05, 164.051, 164.06, 164.08, 164.14, and 164.26 of the Revised Code and to amend Sections 307.80 and 423.120 of H.B. 33 of the 135th General Assembly to provide authorization and

conditions for the operation of certain state programs, to make capital appropriations and reappropriations for the biennium ending June 30, 2026, to make other appropriations, and to declare an emergency.

<u>HB 629:</u>

Introduced by Representative **Jay Edwards** (District 94) on June 17th. It was referred to the House Finance Committee.

The bill would amend sections 164.01, 164.05, 164.051, 164.06, 164.08, 164.14, and 164.26 of the Revised Code and to amend Sections 307.80 and 423.120 of H.B. 33 of the 135th General Assembly to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of certain state programs, to make capital appropriations and reappropriations for the biennium ending June 30, 2026, to make other appropriations, and to declare an emergency.

<u>HB 631:</u>

Introduced by Representative **Jon Cross** (District 83) on June 17th. It was referred to the House Transportation Committee.

The Bill would enact section 5534.665 of the Revised Code to designate a portion of State Route 273 in Hardin County as the "Major David McGue Memorial Highway."

OPINIONS

Bills Would Tell Active Military 'Welcome to Ohio'

Written in last year's state operating budget was a new program. The program was created through the joint efforts of the offices of Governor Mike DeWine and Treasurer Robert Sprague and it took effect in January. The program, officially called the *Homeownership Savings Linked Deposit Program*, provides abovemarket interest rate accounts at an eligible savings institution that are to be used for the down payment and closing costs associated with buying a home. Known as "Ohio Homebuyer Plus",

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the savings program is designed to help more Ohioans realize the dream of homeownership.

In addition to higher-yield savings accounts, the program offers some tax-related benefits as well. The interest earned on the accounts is exempt from state income tax and accountholders and their family members may claim a personal income tax deduction for contributions made to the accounts.

To participate in the program, an individual must 18 years of age and be a resident of Ohio. They must apply for a homeownership savings account at an eligible savings institution and certify on the application that the funds in the homeownership savings account shall be used exclusively for eligible home costs.

There are more than 6,700 active-duty men and women who reside in Ohio. Because they are not residents of Ohio, they would not be

Continued on next Page...

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eligible to participate in Ohio Homebuyer Plus. It could keep them from realizing their dream of homeownership.

If Treasurer Sprague, State Representatives Nick Santucci (District 64) and Brian E. Lampton (District 70), and State Senators Brian M. Chavez (District 30) and Terry Johnson (District 14) have their way, that roadblock will be removed, and participation in Ohio Homebuyer Plus will be possible for them.

Chavez and Johnson introduced Senate Bill 257 on May 1. Santucci and Lampton followed on May 6 with House Bill 517. These companion bills will correct the current law by allowing a member of the uniformed services, on active -duty military who reside in another state but are stationed in Ohio to participate in Ohio Homebuyer Plus.

The legislation will encourage the men and women stationed in Ohio to purchase a house, put down roots, and become a permanent part of their communities. It will send a clear message to them that Ohio wants them and welcomes them.

HB 517 passed out of committee on June 25. SB 257 passed out of committee as well and also passed in senate session on the same day. We hope this legislation will continue to progress quickly through the general assembly and land on the governors desk and receive his signature.

OLR is in full support of HB 517 and SB 257.

ELECTION DAY

Tuesday, November 5th

Oct. 07: Deadline for voter registration for Nov. 5 general election (30 days before general election)

Oct. 08: Early in-person absentee voting begins (first day after close of voter registration)

Oct. 29: Applications for absentee ballots to be mailed for Nov. 5 general election must be received by boards of elections by the close of business (7 days before general election)

Nov. 05: 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

IN OTHER STATES

From the Washington State Legislature

The following bill was passed into law March 7, 2024...

HB 2014 (a synopsis)

Qualifying Discharge.

The term "qualifying discharge" is added to provisions establishing various benefit programs for veterans, generally replacing references to "honorable discharge." "Qualifying discharge" is defined as:

- a discharge with an honorable characterization of service;
- a discharge with a general under honorable conditions characterization of service;
- a discharge with an other than honorable characterization of service if the applicant provides certain documentation from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs showing eligibility for or receipt of monetary benefits; or
- any characterization of service if the reason for discharge was listed as due to:
 - a person's sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression;
 - statements, consensual sexual conduct, or consensual acts relating to sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression; or
 - the disclosure of statements, conduct, or acts relating to sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression to military officials.



"I am only one; but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; I will not refuse to do the something I can do."

- Helen Keller, 1950

Legislation In The 135th Ohio General Assembly

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

- HB 2 Direct state funds for economic growth and community development
- HB 18 Allow military license plate applicant present county veterans ID
- HB 33 Establishes operating appropriations for fiscal years 2024-2025
- HB 53 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 212 Enact the Ohio Property Protection Act
- HB 231 Establish 9-8-8 suicide prevention, mental health telephone line
- HB 232 Create Historical and Patriotic Education license plate
- 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 Cunty 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
- HB 409 Create the Ohio Cold War Victory Medal
- HB 423 Create "Blue Star Banner" license plate

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- HB 431 Designate Staff Sgt. Zachary Wobler Memorial Highway
- HB 447 Regards property tax exemptions, restrictions and land value
- HB 453 Designate Staff Sergeant George P. Mizik (USMC) Memorial Highway
- HB 458 To designate "Gold and Blue Star Family Memorial Bridge" and "POW/MIA Memorial Viaduct."
- HB 483 Create "Save a Warrior" license plate
- HB 487 Designate TSgt. Grover Lee Swearingen Memorial Highway
- HB 493 Designate Lance Corporal Gerald Subler Memorial Highway
- HB 494 Designate SSgt Gene F. Morrison Memorial Bridge
- HB 510 Designate Army Lt. Col. Robert R. Melnick Memorial Highway
- HB 517 Allow military to participate in homeownership savings program
- HB 523 Regards info poster on benefits and services for veterans
- HB 611 Designate U.S. Army Private First Class Jerry Bockbrader Mem Hwy
- HB 620 Designate Paulding County Purple Heart Memorial Highway
- HB 621 Designate Van Wert County Veteran's Memorial Highway
- HB 625 Regards American Legion Auxiliary, American Legion license plates
- HB 628 Designate SSG Jack W. Coy Memorial Highway
- HB 629 Make capital appropriations and reappropriations
- HB 631 Designate Major David McGue Memorial Highway
- 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
- HR 431 Observing April 2024 as the Month of the Military Child in Ohio
- HR 434 Honoring American Legion Toledo Post 335 on its Centennial
- HCR 8 To urge the federal government to select Ohio for the permanent headquarters of the U.S. 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 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 134 Modifies homestead property tax exemption for disabled veterans
- SB 140 Designate Sgt. Todd M. Bates Memorial Highway
- SB 141 Designate American Gold Star Mothers, Inc. Memorial Highway
- SB 145 Designate Cpl. David A. Johnston 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
- SB 225 To designate September 22 as Veterans Suicide Awareness and Prevention Day
- SB 226 Enact the Ohio Property Protection Act
- SB 257 Allow military to participate in homeownership savings program
- SB 260 Designate SPC Connor Wilson-Reichert Memorial Highway
- SB 281 Regards info poster on benefits and services for veterans
- SB 285 Designate Pharmacist's Mate Third Class Willard L. Shupe Mem Hwy
- SB 288 Make supplemental operating appropriations
- SB 292 Make capital appropriations and reappropriations
- SR 171 Honoring Thomas Mihalis Memorial VFW Post 1079 as it commemorates its One Hundredth Anniversary
- SR 262 In memory of Senior Airman Brian "Kody" Johnson
- SR 315 Recognizing the Month of the Military Child in Ohio, April 2024
- SCR 8 Urge federal govt reduce processing time- veteran disability claim
- SCR 9 Urge Congress support military, veteran mental health treatment

OHIO CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I, BILL OF RIGHTS

SECTION #10A \sim RIGHTS OF VICTIMS OF CRIME

Effective: 1917

(A) To secure for victims justice and due process throughout the criminal and juvenile justice systems, a victim shall have the following rights, which shall be protected in a manner no less vigorous than the rights afforded to the accused:

(1) to be treated with fairness and respect for the victim's safety, dignity and privacy;

(2) upon request, to reasonable and timely notice of all public proceedings involving the criminal offense or delinquent act against the victim, and to be present at all such proceedings;

(3) to be heard in any public proceeding involving release, plea, sentencing, disposition, or parole, or in any public proceeding in which a right of the victim is implicated;

(4) to reasonable protection from the accused or any person acting on behalf of the accused;

(5) upon request, to reasonable notice of any release or escape of the accused;

(6) except as authorized by section 10 of Article I of this constitution, to refuse an interview, deposition, or other discovery request made by the accused or any person acting on behalf of the accused;

(7) to full and timely restitution from the person who committed the criminal offense or delinquent act against the victim; (8) to proceedings free from unreasonable delay and a prompt conclusion of the case;

(9) upon request, to confer with the attorney for the government; and

(10) to be informed, in writing, of all rights enumerated in this section.

(B) The victim, the attorney for the government upon request of the victim, or the victim's other lawful representative, in any proceeding involving the criminal offense or delinquent act against the victim or in which the victim's rights are implicated, may assert the rights enumerated in this section and any other right afforded to the victim by law. If the relief sought is denied, the victim or the victim's lawful representative may petition the court of appeals for the applicable district, which shall promptly consider and decide the petition.

(C) This section does not create any cause of action for damages or compensation against the state, any political subdivision of the state, any officer, employee, or agent of the state or of any political subdivision, or any officer of the court.

(D) As used in this section, "victim" means a person against whom the criminal offense or delinquent act is committed or who is directly and proximately harmed by the commission of the offense or act. The term "victim" does not include the accused or a person whom the court finds would not act in the best interests of a deceased, incompetent, minor, or incapacitated victim.

(E) All provisions of this section shall be selfexecuting and severable, and shall supersede all conflicting state laws.

(F) This section shall take effect ninety days after the election at which it was approved.

June 10-14

On Tuesday, the House Economic and Workforce Development Committee held the first hearing for House Bill 517. The bill is a companion bill to SB 257 and would amend the Revised Code to make active duty members of the uniformed services eligible to participate in the homeownership savings linked deposit program. Testimony was heard from the bill's primary sponsors, Representatives **Nick Santucci** (District 64) and **Brian E. Lampton** (district 70). "We depend on these individuals for our security, and through House Bill 517, we can help them obtain security for themselves by ensuring that they are



afforded the resources necessary to purchase a home and to take that step for their future while serving out their assignments here in Ohio," Santucci stated in his testimony. When Lampton gave his testimony he said "It

Reps Santucci (I) and Lampton testifying on HB 517

is my hope that by expanding this program to include our service men and women and helping them to purchase homes, we can enable them to put down roots here in Ohio so that they can continue to be valuable contributors to our communities and our great state for many years to come."

The House Armed Services and Veterans Affairs Committee had four pieces of legislation on the agenda that afternoon. First up was SB 113. It would prohibit a person who fails to comply with the Military Selective Service System from holding certain public offices or employment with the state, and require high



Willette (I) and Daniels testify on SB 113

schools to notify students of any obligation to register for the Selective Service System. This bill was introduced by former Senator **Frank Hoagland** in April of last year. It passed out of committee and on the senate floor and was then introduced into the

house in October. This was the second hearing in this committee and proponent testimony was given by Bradley Willette, Ohio State Director and Jacob G. Daniels, Deputy Associate Director for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs at the United States Selective Service System. "...I'm concerned that registration rates for Ohio eighteen-year-olds dropped to 49.7% in 2023. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 73% of Ohio eighteen-year-old men registered with Selective Service System. To return registration rates to prior levels, we need help," Willette said in his testimony. Daniels stated "This bill aligns with federal law that requires registration to be eligible for employment in the Executive Branch. This includes employment with any federal agency, the United States Postal Service, the Census Bureau, AmeriCorps, and Peace Corps. Nineteen states condition state and/ or local government employment on registration with Selective Service System."

Next was Senator **Tim Schaffer** (District 20) who gave sponsor testimony on SCR 8 first and then SCR 9. Senate Concurrent Resolution 8 would urge the President of the United States, the Secretary of



Veterans Affairs, and Congress to take prompt action to reduce the processing time for veterans' disability benefit claims. It was introduced it in November and it passed unanimously out of committee and on the senate floor before arriving in the house. In his

Senator Schaffer gives testimony on SCR8 and SCR 9

testimony Schaffer said, "The VA describes processing time for claims over 125 days as backlog. Additionally, the number of

backlogged claims was at 278,929 claims as of June 8, 2024. It is simply unacceptable to take over four months to process a veteran's disability-related claim, especially in cases where the claim is denied and sent to be appealed. Additionally, the time to process claims should be improving, not getting worse." Senate Concurrent Resolution 9 would urge 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. "When it comes to our nation's military personnel and veterans, we should expect complete and full medical care for those men and women who sacrificed their health and wellbeing for their country," Schaffer said.

Senator Roegner testifies on SB 154

The fourth item was Sub SB 154 introduced in September by Senator **Kristine D. Roegner** (District 27). It would update the Revised Code in numerous

sections to include Space Force in the definition of the armed forces, armed services, and uniformed services of the United States. It had passed out of committee and in the full senate unanimously before being sent to the house.

In the Senate Community Revitalization Committee Senate Bill 257 had a second hearing. The bill would amend the Revised Code to make active duty members of the uniformed services eligible to participate in the homeownership savings linked

deposit program. It was introduced by Senators **Brian M. Chavez** (District 30) and **Terry Johnson** (District 14) on the first of May. State Treasurer, Robert Sprague said in his testimony, "Seeing as the



men and women of our armed forces represent the very best of us, it's only appropriate that those who come to the

Buckeye State as part of their military service also have the ability to stay here once that

Sprague (I) and Weiser give testimony on SB 154

service is complete. The Ohio Homebuyer Plus program can be a great benefit to them should they wish to plant permanent roots here in Ohio." Also testifying was Scott Weiser, Director of Legislative Affairs for the Ohio Credit Union League. He stated, "This common sense update provides those serving our country with an opportunity to participate in the program if they wish to make Ohio their permanent home." Two other witnesses provided the committee with written only testimony in support of SB 257.

In the Senate Finance Committee, Chairman Matt Dolan (District 24) gave sponsor testimony on his capital budget bill, SB 288 informing the members that



hearings would begin the next day. He explained the capital budget process and that SB 288 would contain the senates half of the \$700 million total one time strategic community investment appropriations allocated in the operating budget passed last year. It would be added into the House

Capital Budget Bill, HB 2 and passed as

Senator Dolan explains the capital budget plan

The next day the committee received written proponent testimony for SB 288 from eight witnesses. There were also some amendments accepted to the bill.

one bill.

The same day Senate Bill 226 was on the

agenda on the Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee for a fifth hearing. There were no witnesses. SB 226 is a companion bill to HB 212 –Ohio Property Protection act. Two amendments were made to the bill that addressed the concerns made in the written testimony for HB 212 from Ohio REALTORS the previous week. The committee then voted 5 to 0 for favorable passage. Two weeks later on the 26th, the bill passed in session with a 30 to 1 vote.

June 17-21

The House Economic and Workforce Development Committee heard testimony on Tuesday for HB 517, its second hearing. Giving in person testimony was Zach Prouty, Director of Policy and



Legislative Affairs for the Ohio Treasurer. "The men and women of our armed forces represent the very best our nation has to offer. By making this simple eligibility change to the Ohio Homebuyer Plus program, we can make it easier for our service members to plant permanent roots here in the Buckeye State following the completion of their military service," Prouty said in his testimony. Written testimony was also provided

Prouty testifies on HB 517

> by Scott Williams from Ohio REALTORS and Jared Weise of Ohio Credit Union League.

The House Finance Committee also met on Tuesday and heard testimony from Kim Murnieks, Director of Ohio Office of Budget and Management on HB 629. This is another capital budget bill and Is almost identical to HB 2 and SB 292. Two days later the Finance Committee held the second hearing for HB 292, There were two amendments offered but the committee tabled both. The only testimony received was written testimony from three witnesses.



Kim Murnieks gives testimony on HB 629 and SB 292

The Senate Finance Committee also met on Tuesday to hear testimony on HB 2 and SB 292. There was written testimony only for HB 2 and that was from the primary sponsors of the bill, Representatives **Al Cutrona** (District 58) and **Terrence Upchurch** (District 20). Senate Bill 292 had its second hearing and Director Murnieks gave the same testimony she gave earlier in the day for HB 629.

June 24-28

This final week of June was extremely busy as the committees in both chambers tried to pass as many bills as they could. A total of 16 of our pieces of legislation were scheduled in six different committees on Tuesday and two more pieces on Wednesday.

The final hearings for HB 2 and SB 292 were held in the Senate Finance Committee on Tuesday. There was an amendment to make some technical changes to SB 292. Then an amendment was accepted to eliminate everything in House Bill 2 and relace it with the language in the newly amended Senate Bill 292. That made it Substitute House Bill 2 and it had everything in it that the both the house and senate had passed. The committee then voted to favorably (11 to 0) pass the bill out of committee. The next day the Senate voted 31 to 1 to pass the bill and the House concurred with their 92 to 5 vote. Sub HB 2 was sent to Governor DeWine for his signature.

Senate Bill 257 had its third hearing in the Senate Community Revitalization Committee on Tuesday. There were no witnesses and no written testimony so a vote was taken to favorably pass the bill out of committee –it was unanimous. The bill passed 31 to 0 on the senate floor the next day and



Rep McNally testifies on HB 257

was sent over to the house chamber.

In the House Commerce and Labor Committee HB 523 had its first hearing. Representatives Lauren McNally (District 59) and Adam Holmes (District 97) introduced the bill in May. The bill would Require the Director of Commerce, in consultation with the Director of Veterans Services, to create a poster

containing information about specified veterans' benefits and services and require the Director to

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provide an employer with a copy of the poster free of charge at the employer's request. In her testimony McNally stated, "Ohio currently has no requirement that this information be curated or displayed. While HB 523 will not require employers to display the poster, it will create a standardized workplace posting that includes basic information about Veterans' benefits and a way for Veterans to learn more about the programs should an employer who is supportive of our Veterans wish to display the poster and demonstrate that support."

For the third hearing on HB 517, the bill that would allow military to participate in homeownership savings program, there were no witnesses or written testimony. The bill passed favorably out of committee with a 12 to 0 vote.

The House Armed Services and Veterans Affairs Committee started there meeting with Senate Bill 225. There was only written testimony from Tim Hauser of Twinsburg. SB 225 was introduced by Senator **Kristine D. Roegner** (District 27) and would designate September 22 as Veterans Suicide Awareness and Prevention Day. The bill was favorably passed out of committee by a 9 to 0 vote. The next day it passed 97 to 0 on the house floor and was sent to the governor for his signature.

Next on the committees agenda was Sub SB 154 for its second hearing. This is the Roegner bill that would include the Space Force in armed forces, armed and uniformed services throughout the Ohio Revised Code. There was no one to testify and the committee voted 9 to 0 to favorably pass the bill out of committee.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 9 was up for its second hearing. SCR 9 urges Congress to support military, veteran mental health treatment and was sponsored by **Senator Tim Schaffer** (District 20). There were no witnesses and the committee favorably passed it out of committee with a vote of 8 to 0.

The was also no testimony for House Resolution 95 that would urge Congress to enact HR 1255 that would make direct descendants of Black veterans of World War II eligible for Veterans Administration housing loans and education benefits. The resolution is sponsored by Representative **Terrence Upchurch** (District 20) and **Adam C. Miller** (District 6). That was its second hearing.

The House Transportation Committee had the first hearings on seven bill. Six of the bills would designate a portion of a roadway in Ohio as a

memorial highway. The seventh bill would create a memorial bridge and a memorial viaduct. House Bill 510 was the only bill that had no witnesses and did not pass out of committee. HB 510 is sponsored by Representative **Al Cutrona** (District 58) and would

designate a portion of State Route 11 in Mahoning County as the "Army Lt. Col. Robert R. Melnick Memorial Highway."

The other six bill all passed favorably out of committee with unanimous votes. Senator **Tim Schaffer** (District 20) is the sponsor and testified on two bills. SB 114 would designate a portion of United States Route 33 in Fairfield County as the "Lance Corporal James F. Kimple Memorial Highway." and SB 145 would designate a portion of Refugee Road in Fairfield County as the "Cpl. David A. Johnston Memorial Highway."

Two of the bills were sponsored by Representative **Roy Klepfenstien** (District 82). HB 620 would designate U.S. 24 in Paulding County as the "Paulding County Purple Heart Memorial Highway." and HB 621 would designate U.S. 30 in Van Wert County as the "Van Wert County Veteran's Memorial Highway." Providing written testimony in support of HB 261 was Kenneth Myers, Commander of the Van Wert American Legion Post 178.

Bill sponsor, Representative Justin Pizzulli (District 90) testified for his House Bill 487 which would designate a portion of State Route 41 in Adams County as the "TSgt. Grover Lee Swearingen Memorial Highway." Also saying a few words



Senator Schaffer gives testimony on SB 114 and SB 145



Rep Klopfenstein testifies on HB 620 and HB 621



Rep Pizzulli give testimony on HB

to the committee members was a son of TSgt. Swearingen.

Representative James M. Hoops (District 81)

provided testimony for HB 458 that he introduced in March. The bill would designate a bridge

located in the Village of Montpelier, in Williams County, as the "Gold and Blue Star Family Memorial Bridge" and a viaduct spanning the railroad tracks that is a part of State Route 107, also located in the Village of Montpelier as the "POW/MIA Memorial Viaduct."

On Wednesday the Senate Transportation met and two bills were on the agenda



Rep Hoops gives testimony on HB 458

that would designate a section of Ohio's roadways in memory of an Ohio Veteran. HB 253 had its 3rd hearing but there were no witnesses. The committee voted 11 to 0 for favorable passage. Later the same day the bill was passed by the full senate with a vote of 31 to 0. The bill sponsored by Representatives **Terrence Upchurch** (District 20) and **Adam Holmes** (District 97).

Senate Bill 282 had sponsor testimony from Senator **Stephanie Kunze** (District 16). Her bill would

designate a portion of I-270 in Franklin County as the "PFC Henry 'Rick' Hausman, Jr. Memorial Highway."

Anyone wishing to read any of the testimonies on any of the bills can go to www.legislature.gov and enter the bill number (HB 487 or SB 257) and then click on 'Committee Activity'. You can also watch the committee hearings at www.ohiochannel.org.



Senator Kunze testifies on SB 282

Dhio Legislative Report

is on facebook

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.



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HELPFUL LINKS

OHIO GENERAL ASSEMBLY: www.legislature.ohio.go

OH HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: www.ohiohouse.gov

OH SENATE: www.ohiosenate.gov

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OHIO SECRETARY OF STATE: www.ohiosos.gov

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'Ohio Legislative Report'

<u> Dhio Legislative</u> 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.

To subscribe, send your name and email address to:

oh.leg.report@gmail.com

Editor: David K. Root

Statehouse Happenings

This column is where we usually inform our readers about what happened to our veteran/military legislation in the committee hearings during the previous month. Because the general assembly is on summer break there will not be any hearings to report on until the December issue when we will be able to report on any November activities.

Until then we will do our best to find other happenings that we can report. » The biggest news from July took place in June. The General Assembly passed House Bill 2 -the biennial capital appropriations bill on June 26th. Governor Mike DeWine signed it into law two days later. "This capital budget is all about

creating jobs, growing our economy, and directly impacting the people of Ohio where they live and work," said Governor DeWine. "The investments we're making today impact our schools and universities, our hospitals, our parks and recreational spaces, and our communities. We know these needed investments will continue to make Ohio the best place to live, work, and raise a family for years to come."

The State of Ohio's biennial Capital Budget, enacted in each even-numbered year, provides appropriations for the repair, reconstruction and construction of capital assets of state agencies, colleges, universities and school districts. This year, in addition to the traditional capital budget, \$717 million was added for the One-Time Strategic Community Investment Fund (OTSCIF) as another source of funding which allowed communities and organizations to apply for help with projects that might not have qualified as part of the state's traditional Capital Budget.

Veteran related projects from the One-Time Strategic Community Investment Fund (OTSCIF)

Lima Veterans Memorial Hall Improvements	\$10,000,000.
VFW Roof Repairs Geneva Post 6846	\$99,037.
Village of Waynesfield Veteran's Park Enhancement	\$352,950.
VFW Roof Repairs Powhatan Point Post 5565	\$24,900.
VFW Roof Repairs West Chester Post 7696	\$15,560.
Felicity Veterans Village Housing Project	\$1,000,000.
VFW Roof Repairs Loveland Post 5354	\$28,505.
VFW Roof Repairs New Richmond Post 6770	\$20,894.
VFW Roof Repairs Solon Post 1863	\$88,787.
VFW Roof Repairs Parma Post 1974	\$28,633.
VFW Roof Repairs Cleveland Post 2533	\$17,208.
Veterans Memorial Park at Latty's Grove Rehabilitation	\$200,000.
Stockhands Horses for Healing, Capital Improvement Project	\$908,000.
Ohio Fallen Heroes Memorial	\$70,000.
VFW Roof Repairs Sunbury Post 8736	\$58,440.
American Legion Post 283 Improvements	\$20,000.
VFW Roof Repairs Reynoldsburg Post 9473	\$32,695.
Ohio Veterans' Children's Home Expansion & Upgrade	\$150,000.
Ada War Memorial Park	\$500,000.
Hardin County Veterans Memorial Park District	\$50,000.
VFW Roof Repairs Mentor Post 9295	\$35,478.
Lorain Hispanic Veterans Memorial	\$300,000.
VFW Roof Repairs Wellington Post 6941	\$12,276.
War Vet Museum Facility and Program Improvement Project	\$60,000.
VFW Roof Repairs Ellsworth Post 9571	\$14,480.
Marion Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Chapel	\$450,000.
VFW Roof Repairs Medina Post 5137	\$60,898.
VFW Roof Repairs Sardis Post 9930	\$19,836.
Thornville AMVETS 51	\$80,000.
VFW Roof Repairs Mansfield Post 3494	\$27,964.
VFW Roof Repairs Louisville Post 7490	\$42,970.
G.A.R. Hall Rehabilitation	\$150,000.
VFW Roof Repairs Van Wert Post 5803	\$41,754.
VFW Roof Repairs Mason Post 9622	\$9,969.
VFW Roof Repairs New Matamoras Post 6387	\$13,740.
VFW Roof Repairs Carey Post 3759	\$20,712.

The lawmakers granted \$15 million of the \$717 million for about 36 different veteran related projects. The projects were anything from building repairs and expansions to improvements of veteran memorials and parks.

» Governor DeWine's office issued a written statement on July 12th about

the new Military Recruit Award program that would offer a hiring bonus for military members and spouses to work in Ohio schools. DeWine, Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (DEW) Director Stephen Dackin, and Ohio Department of Veterans Services (ODVS) Director Maj. Gen. (U.S. Army, retired) Deborah Ashenhurst introduced the initiative to encourage military members to continue their call to service by working in Ohio schools according to the statement.

The Military Recruit Award is designed to support public school districts, community schools, Ohio. The bill was sponsored by Representatives **Terrence Upchurch** (District 20) and **Adam Holmes** (District 97). They introduced it in August of 2023.

Young helped pave the way for African Americans in the United States military He was the third African American to graduate from West Point, served with the famed Buffalo Soldiers as a second lieutenant in the Ninth Cavalry. He later served as a distinguished professor at Wilberforce University and was the first African American superintendent of a national park. At the time of his death on January 8, 1922, he was the

independent STEM schools, and joint vocational school districts in their efforts to recruit Ohioans involved in the military. This includes eligible service members, veterans, and their spouses.

According to the DEW website, DEW will offer financial reimbursements for districts or schools that provide a hiring bonus to military individuals who remain employed with the school for at least one year. DEW will also offer a bonus to the district or school for hiring and recruiting an eligible military individual.



Governor DeWine (seated) signed Senate Bill 225 surrounded by veterans representing many Ohio veterans organizations and bill sponsor Senator Kristina D. Roegner (standing behind Gov.)

"I am grateful for the Military Recruit Award, which is yet another example of how Ohio values military service and the unique skill sets of veterans and those currently serving," Director Ashenhurst said in the statement. "A strong sense of values, discipline, and teamwork make veterans and military members ideal for influencing the development and education of Ohio's children. This program will be a path to a successful career transition for many Ohio veterans."

Award applications are now being accepted. For more information, visit education.ohio.gov and in the search bar type 'Ohio Military Veteran Educators Program Recruiting Initiative'.

» On Monday, July 22nd Governor DeWine held a bill signing ceremony in front of the of the Charles Young Buffalo Soldiers National Monument in Wilberforce, Ohio. He signed into law House Bill 253 that designates portions of United States Routes 42, 68, and 62 as the "Brigadier General Charles Young Memorial Historical Corridor." The corridor US Route 42 from Wilberforce University to US Route 68 in Xenia, then south on US 68 to US 62 in Brown County. From there it is US Route 62 to the Simon Kenton Bridge in Aberdeen, highest-ranking African American officer in the Army. He was posthumously promoted to Brigadier General in April.

» Governor DeWine held a ceremonial bill signing at the Ohio State Fair on July 24th prior to the ribbon cutting ceremony to open the fair. The governor signed 21 bills that the general assembly had passed just prior to going on summer break.

Two of the bills were veteran related -House Bill 202 and Senate Bill 225. The legislators passed both bills on June 26th and they will go into effect on October 24th.

HB 202 was introduced by Representative **Jim Thomas** (District 49) in June of last year. It will designate a portion of United States Route 62 in Canton as the "Specialist Dennis Alan Combs Memorial Highway." Specialist Combs died in South Vietnam on June 16, 1967, while serving in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War.

SB 225 was introduced by Senator **Kristina D. Roegner** (District 27) in February of this year. The bill designates September 22 as Veterans Suicide Awareness and Prevention Day. Previously in Ohio, the first Saturday of May was designated as 'Veterans Suicide Awareness Day'. SB 225 instead designates September 22 as 'Veterans Suicide Awareness and Prevention Day'.

OPINIONS

READERS LETTERS

Gold Star Spouse Wants Ohio To Recognize Special Flag

Now is the time to pass HB 123 to officially recognize the Honor and Remember Flag across Ohio. As an OEF Veteran (USA) and the Gold Star Surviving Spouse of CW2 Brian D. Hazelgrove, killed in Iraq, it is time for Ohio to honor all service members and families left behind with the raising of the Honor and Remember Flag beneath the beloved American Flag they died to protect.

HB 123 is a chance for Ohio to show empathy to the pain, suffering and sacrifice that has been born by military surviving families across the state who have lost their loved ones and serves as a visible reminder that their loved ones are not forgotten. This no cost bill would provide opportunities for public awareness, education and outreach in communities for military surviving families to help them recover from such tragic loss.

The Honor and Remember flag is unique to serve a very specific purpose when flown or displayed, giving immediate recognition and honor to all those we have lost in service.

As a nationally recognized symbol of the ultimate sacrifice to our country, the Honor and Remember flag is presented to families, bearing the embroidered name of their loved one, to fly with dignity at their homes in remembrance. Businesses across the country and 28 states fly the Honor and

See Letters on Page Four...

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Ohio Legislative Report welcomes letters to the editor.

- Letters are limited to 200 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

OUR OPINION

Bill Would Provide Funds For Ohio's 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Two years ago, the country's National Suicide Prevention Lifeline downsized from ten digits to three and became known as the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. Users of the 988 Lifeline who are suicidal or experiencing a behavioral health emergency are connected to a crisis counselor where they may receive crisis counseling, resources and referrals.

Since the launch of the 988 Lifeline in July 2022, it has received almost 5 million contacts, of which nearly 1 million are from the Veterans Crisis Line (part of 988) with the rest consisting of 2.6 million calls, over 740,000 chats, and more than 600,000 texts. In Ohio the state's 19 call centers – the most of any state in the nation – have responded to nearly 340,000 calls, texts, and chats during the same time period: an average of more than 14,000 contacts each month according to an email from Governor Mike DeWine.

According to an article published in the Dayton Daily News (Nov. 2, 2023) the state received approximately \$20 million in federal funding for the start-up costs of Ohio's 988 launch and year one of the implementation through July 2023.

Ohio's state budget set \$20.7 million in fiscal year 2024 and \$25.8 million in fiscal year 2025 for the 988 program.

On June 26th Representatives **Gail K. Pavliga** (District 72) and **Adam C. Miller** (District 6) introduced House Bill 231. The purpose of the bill is to create

See Opinion on Page Four...

OHIO LEGISLATIVE REPORT IS ON FACEBOOK

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

Letters, from Page Three

Remember flag to demonstrate support to their military surviving families and to honor the sacrifice of the few, a debt that can never be repaid.

This is a deeply personal issue for me and my family, and I want to let the legislature know that I fully support HB 123 and would be grateful for the support. I thank Representative Joe Miller and Representative Adam Miller for sponsoring this bill and I encourage fellow Ohioans to join me in lifting HB 123 to ensure swift passage.

> Kimberly Hazelgrove Amherst, OH

Discover your Ohio Dept. of Veterans Services

Learn about the programs, responsibilities, endeavors and goals of this excellent state agency.

www.dvs.ohio.gov

ELECTION DAY Tuesday, November 5th

Oct. 07: Deadline for voter registration for Nov. 5 general election (30 days before general election)

Oct. 08: Early in-person absentee voting begins (first day after close of voter registration)

Oct. 29: Applications for absentee ballots to be mailed for Nov. 5 general election must be received by boards of elections by the close of business (7 days before general election)

Nov. 05: 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

If you will turn 18 <u>before</u> November 5th, you can register to vote <u>now</u>.

Go to: VoteOhio.Gov

Opinion, from Page Three

funding for the 988 Lifeline, establish a 988 Administrator within the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, and it lists requirements and duties of the Administrator and the Department in the operation of the 988 system.

The bill would add ten cents to all phone bills to fund the Lifeline. It would be similar to the surcharge now being charged for the funding of 911 service. The bill also would forbid using 911 funds for the 988 Lifeline or using 988 funds for 911 service.

There are currently only 10 states that have identified permanent funding for their state's 988 Lifeline. In Minnesota the fee will start at \$.12 per line per month and with a cap at \$0.25. In Washington State the fee started at \$.24 per line per month in 2021 and increased to \$.40 last year. Virginia charges \$0.12 per line per month and Delaware's fee is \$0.60.

Ohio has more call centers than any other state. The number of contacts per month is predicted to rise. Everything points to a lack of funds for the Ohio 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline very soon if the fee is set at \$.10 per line per month. Luke Russell, executive director of the Ohio division of National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) does not believe that HB 231 will completely fund the 988 system. Ohio Legislative Report agrees. It will not.

Without proper funding the phone lines will go dead and the help they provide will cease. Ohio cannot afford that to happen. Russell believes a study group should be formed to look at the actual cost to run 988. OLR feels they should look at the projected usage and expenses for the 988 system as well.

If House Bill 231 passes with its current language members of the next General Assembly should be prepared and willing amend the fees to reflect the actual cost of protecting Ohio citizens with a fully funded Ohio 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

Do you have questions about Elections and Voting in Ohio?

Find answers are at the Secretary of State website:

www.ohiosos.gov/elections/voters

BILLS & RESOLUTIONS INTRODUCED IN JULY

HB 6241:

Introduced by Representatives **Josh Williams** (District 41) and **Elgin Rogers, Jr.** (District 44) on July 15th. It has not been referred to a committee yet.

The bill would enact section 5534.617 of the Revised Code to designate a portion of I-280 in Lucas County as the "SSG Jack W. Coy Memorial Highway."

Legislation In The 135th Ohio General Assembly

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

- HB 2 Direct state funds for economic growth and community development
- HB 18 Allow military license plate applicant present county veterans ID
- HB 33 Establishes operating appropriations for fiscal years 2024-2025
- HB 53 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 212 Enact the Ohio Property Protection Act
- HB 231 Establish 9-8-8 suicide prevention, mental health telephone line
- HB 232 Create Historical and Patriotic Education license plate
- 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 Cunty 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
- HB 409 Create the Ohio Cold War Victory Medal

More Legislation on the NEXT PAGE...

- HB 423 Create "Blue Star Banner" license plate
- HB 431 Designate Staff Sgt. Zachary Wobler Memorial Highway
- HB 447 Regards property tax exemptions, restrictions and land value
- HB 453 Designate Staff Sergeant George P. Mizik (USMC) Memorial Highway
- HB 458 To designate "Gold and Blue Star Family Memorial Bridge" and "POW/MIA Memorial Viaduct."
- HB 483 Create "Save a Warrior" license plate
- HB 487 Designate TSgt. Grover Lee Swearingen Memorial Highway
- HB 493 Designate Lance Corporal Gerald Subler Memorial Highway
- HB 494 Designate SSgt Gene F. Morrison Memorial Bridge
- HB 510 Designate Army Lt. Col. Robert R. Melnick Memorial Highway
- HB 517 Allow military to participate in homeownership savings program
- HB 523 Regards info poster on benefits and services for veterans
- HB 611 Designate U.S. Army Private First Class Jerry Bockbrader Mem Hwy
- HB 620 Designate Paulding County Purple Heart Memorial Highway
- HB 621 Designate Van Wert County Veteran's Memorial Highway
- HB 625 Regards American Legion Auxiliary, American Legion license plates
- HB 628 Designate SSG Jack W. Coy Memorial Highway
- HB 629 Make capital appropriations and reappropriations
- HB 631 Designate Major David McGue Memorial Highway
- HB 641 Designate the SSG Jack W. Coy Memorial Highway
- 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
- HR 431 Observing April 2024 as the Month of the Military Child in Ohio
- HR 434 Honoring American Legion Toledo Post 335 on its Centennial
- HCR 8 To urge the federal government to select Ohio for the permanent headquarters of the U.S. 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 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 134 Modifies homestead property tax exemption for disabled veterans
- SB 140 Designate Sgt. Todd M. Bates Memorial Highway
- SB 141 Designate American Gold Star Mothers, Inc. Memorial Highway
- SB 145 Designate Cpl. David A. Johnston 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

Designate Cortland Veterans Memorial SB 169 Bridge

SB 183 **Designate Lance Corporal James Patrick Rizzo Memorial Highway**

SB 191 Designate PFC Richard 'Rick' Wesley McFarland Memorial Highway

To require a military exception in an open SB 208 enrollment policy

SB 225 To designate September 22 as Veterans Suicide Awareness and Prevention Day

SB 226 Enact the Ohio Property Protection Act SB 257 Allow military to participate in homeownership savings program

SB 260 **Designate SPC Connor Wilson-Reichert** Memorial Highway

Regards info poster on benefits and services SB 281 for veterans

SB 285 **Designate Pharmacist's Mate Third Class** Willard L. Shupe Mem Hwy

SB 288 Make supplemental operating appropriations

SB 292 Make capital appropriations and reappropriations

Honoring Thomas Mihalis Memorial VFW SR 171 Post 1079 as it commemorates its One Hundredth Anniversary

In memory of Senior Airman Brian "Kody" SR 262 Johnson

Recognizing the Month of the Military Child SR 315 in Ohio, April 2024

Urge federal govt reduce processing time-SCR 8 veteran disability claim

Urge Congress support military, veteran SCR 9 mental health treatment



"When we blindly adopt a religion, a political system, a literary dogma, we become automatons. We cease to grow."

-Anais Nin

Ohio Veterans Bonus Program

From: Redbook -LBO Analysis of Executive Budget Proposal (March 2023)

The Veterans Bonus Program was approved by Ohio voters in November 2009. The program is designed to provide a bonus to the estimated 200,000 qualifying Ohio veterans who served in the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan, and Iraq conflicts. The program is established in the Ohio Constitution (Section 2r of Article

VIII) and authorizes the issuance of \$200 million in bonds to pay for the bonuses as well as the administrative costs of the program. The program launched in August 2010. An initial \$50 million in cash was generated by a bond sale in August 2010 and deposited in the Persian Gulf. Afghanistan, and Iraq Conflicts Compensation Fund (Fund 7041). Since then, an additional \$34 million has been

The deadline for Ohio veterans to apply for the Ohio Veterans Bonus program is August 29, 2024.

This program offers a bonus for Ohioans who served in the U.S. Armed Forces between October 7, 2001 and August 30, 2021. Once a veteran has received \$500 for service anywhere in the world or \$1,000 for service in a designated country, or the maximum \$1,500 bonus, the veteran is not eligible for additional funds, even if they served in multiple conflicts. Those service members who completed their deployments in Afghanistan and have not yet applied for the Ohio Veterans Bonus can do so up until Aug. 30, 2024.

Learn more about the bonus and apply today at: www.ohiovets.gov/veteransbonus

generated in bond sales. The program's authority to issue bonds ended December 31, 2013.

For the most recent fiscal year, FY 2022, the program paid out \$428,838 in bonuses to 741 qualifying veterans. Currently, the program is averaging roughly 64 applications per month. The Department expects the number of applications to increase due to the withdrawal from Afghanistan.

December 31, 2013 was the deadline for Ohio veterans to apply for a bonus for active duty service during the Persian Gulf War and December 31, 2014 was the application deadline for veterans who served in Iraq. The end of the conflict in Afghanistan was declared August 30, 2021, providing applicants three years to apply for the bonus, ending August 30, 2024.



Representative Holmes. This is a fantastic opportunity to discuss current topics impacting Ohio and to ensure your opinions and concerns are clearly heard in the Ohio Statehouse. Help our office serve you better by learning more about what matters to you!

August 16th at the New Concord Library from 11am-2pm.

August 23rd at the John McIntire Library from 1-4pm.

August 30th at the Duncan Falls Library from 11am-2pm.



Representative Adam Miller (I) receiving the Ohio VFW Legislator of the Year Award from Ohio VFW Legislative Chairman David Root.



July 24, 2024

Governor DeWine Signs Bills Into Law

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)—Ohio Governor Mike DeWine signed the following bills into law:

Senate Bill 225, sponsored by State Senator Kristina Roegner (R-Hudson), designates September 22 as Veterans Suicide Awareness and Prevention Day.

House Bill 202, sponsored by State Representative Jim Thomas (R-Jackson Twp.), designates a portion of United States Route 62 in Canton as the "Specialist Dennis Alan Combs Memorial Highway."

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 and all info to: oh.leg.report@gmail.com

OHIO CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I, BILL OF RIGHTS

SECTION #11 \sim FREEDOM OF SPEECH; OF THE PRESS; OF LIBELS

Effective: 1851

Every citizen may freely speak, write, and publish his sentiments on all subjects, being responsible for the abuse of the right; and no law shall be passed to restrain or abridge the liberty of speech, or of the press. In all criminal prosecutions for libel, the truth may be given in evidence to the jury, and if it shall appear to the jury, that the matter charged as libelous is true, and was published with good motives, and for justifiable ends, the party shall be acquitted.

Section #12 \sim Transportation, etc. for crime

Effective: 1851

No person shall be transported out of the state, for any offense committed within the same; and no conviction shall work corruption of blood, or forfeiture of estate.

SECTION #13 ~ QUARTERING TROOPS

Effective: 1851

No soldier shall, in time of peace, be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner; nor, in time of war, except in the manner prescribed by law.



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- OHIO GENERAL ASSEMBLY: www.legislature.ohio.gov
- OH HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: www.ohiohouse.gov
- OH SENATE: www.ohiosenate.gov

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oh.leg.report@gmail.com

Editor: David K. Root

Statehouse Happenings

Your state legislators are spending most of their time in their districts. Some are campaigning for reelection, some are enjoying some rest and relaxation (R&R), and some have been holding district open houses or town hall meetings for their constituents.

We know what they are not doing. Holding committee hearings and full sessions. But that does not mean they are not working. They still have offices with staff members to run and many are still sending out newsletters and attending various meetings.

What does that all mean for the veterans of Ohio and our activeduty members? The next couple of months is an extremely important time. It is when they should be the most active in the legislative process.

The first thing to consider is the November election. There are 99 districts in the Ohio House of Representatives and 33 districts in the Ohio Senate. Elections are being held for all 99 house districts and the even numbered districts in the senate. Many districts have incumbents running but there are a lot of new names on ballots as well. It is important to pay attention and do as much homework as possible before the election. The outcome of the November election will affect us all for the next four years and beyond.

The second thing to consider is that when the break is over, and the legislators return to work, it will be in mid-November. The 135th General Assembly will adjourn on December 31st. Before they adjourn, they will have a couple of weeks off for the holidays. That means they will only have about one month to pass bills. It is a lame-duck session. When the 135th G.A. ends, any bills not passed will die.

What that means to the citizens of Ohio is that now is the time to be emailing, writing, or emailing their legislators and advocating for what they want them to get passed during the one-month period. Now more than any other time it is important to make their wishes known. Bills still need to have hearings and be voted on during that month if they are to become law.

The current general assembly is one of the least productive ones Ohio has had in many, many years. Since day one (January 3, 2023) the members have introduced less than 1,000 bills. Of those bills, less than six percent of them were passed and signed into law. If less than 75 bills get passed in a span of eighteen months, one must wonder how many will be passed in only one month. The time to advocate for important bills is now -before they return in November.

Anyone who is unsure about who represents them in Columbus

or how to contact them can find the answers on the official website of the Ohio Legislature. It is: www.legislature.ohio.gov. On that website you can track all the bills and resolutions, check the calendar for sessions and hearings, and read the session journals. The house and senate directors and committees are there as well as the Ohio Constitution and the current Ohio Revised Code. There are also several helpful publications that can be downloaded.

The directories will take you to the personal page of each of the 132 members where you can see all the contact information, sign up for newsletters, and link to social media accounts.

There are other helpful links listed on the front cover of every issue of OLR. Check them all out and get to know the workings of the Ohio State Government.

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ATTENTION LEGISLATORS

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

Send your announcement to: oh.leg.report@gmail.com by the end of each month to be included.

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 and all info to: oh.leg.report@gmail.com



PEOPLE FIRST TOWN HALL

 September 10th | 6PM
 Northwest Library, Trillium Meeting Room 2280 Hard Rd. | Columbus, OH 43235





State Representative Sean Brennen (ctr. blue shirt) presents a check to members of the Parma VFW Post 1974 for roof repairs. The money was allocated in House Bill 3 –the Capital Appropriations and Reappropriations Bill.



State Representatives Susan Manchester (left) and Tim Barhorst (2nd from right) spent time in the veterans tent at the Champaign County Fair listening to stories of their service in the military.

OPINION PAGE

Study Hard Before the Election

To vote in a federal election an individual must be a U.S. citizen over 18 and meet their state's residency requirements.

In Ohio an individual must be a registered voter. According to the Ohio Secretary of State website to be qualified to register all of the following requirements must be met:

1. You are a citizen of the United States;

2. You will be at least 18 years old on or

before the day of the next general election. (If you will be 18 on or before the general election, you may vote in the primary election to nominate candidates, but you cannot vote on issues or party central committees until you are 18);

3. You will be a resident of Ohio for at least 30 days immediately before the election in which you want to vote;

4. You are not incarcerated (in prison or jail) for a felony conviction under the laws of this state, another state, or the United States;

5. You have not been declared incompetent for voting purposes by a probate court; and

6. You have not been permanently disenfranchised for violating the election laws.

I think by now every resident of Ohio is aware that this is an election year, and a general election is going to be held on November 5th. Most voters will have a ballot that will list candidates that are running for federal, state, county, and local offices. In addition, there will be state, county, and/or local issues to be considered.

Everything on the ballot is important. Every voter should vote with a thorough knowledge of every candidate and every issue. The outcome of the election will impact the lives of all Ohioans for many years to come.

Ohio has a diverse group of citizens. Voters come from all walks of life and have different wants and needs. While one citizen is concerned about the economy, jobs, and education their neighbor might be worried about their senior citizen benefits and taxes. The man across the street might be concerned about gun control while his wife thinks women's health is a more important issue.

Voters should spend more time looking into

the background and records of candidates and less time listening to the opinions of relatives and friends or reading the memes on social media. In other words –everyone should do their own homework and not copy from the person next to them.

What can a voter look for when researching the candidates? They could try these to start with:

✓ How did they vote on the issues that are the most important?

✓ How many bills did they introduce while in office? How many became law?

 $\,\,$ V Who are the big supporters (monetary) of their campaign and what do they stand for?

✓ What does their resume say about their experience dealing with the important issues?

✓ How long have they lived in their district and what have they contributed to it?

Since the ultimate goal of every voter is to elect officials who will fight for what the voter wants, it is first necessary for them to know what it is that they want. They could make a list of all the important issues with the most important at the top and the least important at the bottom. Then as they investigate each candidate, they will know better how the candidate rates compared to their own wants and needs and will be able to compare each candidate with the other.

There are plenty of sources an Ohio voter can utilize in their research. If they are an incumbent the

Continued on next Page...

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

OLR welcomes letters to the editor

- * Letters are limited to 250 words.
- * Letters with over 250 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 YOUR LETTERS TO: oh.leg.report@gmail.com

candidate's attendance and voting record can be found on the official website of the government body where they have held positions. If a search engine is used, it is important to study many of the sites shown, not just one or two to get a better overall image of the candidate. There are some websites that will list all the candidates and provide very useful information on each one. One such site is www.ballotpedia.org but there are others as well.

November 5th is about two months away. OLR suggests that every Ohio voter find their county board of elections website and look up a sample ballot so they will know who is running and for which offices (they might be surprised to learn there are eleven individuals running for President?). Look up the issues also. They could impact your future over the next several years -or longer.

- * Know what is important to you.
- * Know who the candidates and issues.
- * Know which ones best align with you.
- * Make a list of who you are voting for.
- * You are now an educated voter.

ELECTION DAY

Tuesday, November 5th

Oct. 07: Deadline for voter registration for Nov. 5 general election (30 days before general election)

Oct. 08: Early in-person absentee voting begins (first day after close of voter registration)

Oct. 29: Applications for absentee ballots to be mailed for Nov. 5 general election must be received by boards of elections by the close of business (7 days before general election)

Nov. 05: 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

If you will turn 18 <u>on or before</u> November 5th, you can register to vote <u>now</u>.

Go to: VoteOhio.Gov

* Last step ...<u>Make sure you vote.</u> If you have questions about registering or voting in Ohio, go to the Ohio Secretary of State website for information and answers. www.voteohio.gov

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OHIO CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I, BILL OF RIGHTS

SECTION #14 ~ SEARCH WARRANTS AND GENERAL WARRANTS

Effective: 1851

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and possessions, against unreasonable searches and seizures shall not be violated; and no warrant shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, particularly describing the place to be searched and the person and things to be seized.

Section #15 $\,\sim\,$ No imprisonment for debt

Effective: 1851

No person shall be imprisoned for debt in any civil action, on mesne or final process, unless in cases of fraud.

Section #16 \sim Redress for injury; Due process

Effective: 1912

All courts shall be open, and every person, for an injury done him in his land, goods, person, or reputation, shall have remedy by due course of law, and shall have justice administered without denial or delay.

Suits may be brought against the state, in such courts and in such manner, as may be provided by law.

Section #17 \sim No hereditary PRIVILEGES

Effective: 1851

No hereditary emoluments, honors, or privileges, shall ever be granted or conferred by this state.

BILLS & RESOLUTIONS INTRODUCED IN AUGUST

HB 652:

Introduced by Representative **D.J. Swearingen** (District 89) on July 15th. It has not been referred to a committee yet.

The bill would enact section 5534.482 of the Revised Code to designate a portion of State Route 2 in Ottawa County as the "Cpl. Robert Dockstader Memorial Highway."

<u>SB 310:</u>

Introduced by Representative **Brian M. Chavez** (District 30) on August 28th. It has not been referred to a committee yet.

The bill would enact section 5534.672 of the Revised Code to designate a portion of I-77 in Noble County as the "U.S.S. Shenandoah Memorial Highway."

Legislation In The 135th Ohio General Assembly

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

- HB 2 Direct state funds for economic growth and community development
- HB 18 Allow military license plate applicant present county veterans ID
- HB 33 Establishes operating appropriations for fiscal years 2024-2025
- HB 53 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 212 Enact the Ohio Property Protection Act
- HB 231 Establish 9-8-8 suicide prevention, mental health telephone line
- HB 232 Create Historical and Patriotic Education license plate
- 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

More Legislation on next page...

- HB 335 Designate Ottawa Cunty 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
- HB 409 Create the Ohio Cold War Victory Medal
- HB 423 Create "Blue Star Banner" license plate
- HB 431 Designate Staff Sgt. Zachary Wobler Memorial Highway
- HB 447 Regards property tax exemptions, restrictions and land value
- HB 453 Designate Staff Sergeant George P. Mizik (USMC) Memorial Highway
- HB 458 To designate "Gold and Blue Star Family Memorial Bridge" and "POW/MIA Memorial Viaduct."
- HB 483 Create "Save a Warrior" license plate
- HB 487 Designate TSgt. Grover Lee Swearingen Memorial Highway
- HB 493 Designate Lance Corporal Gerald Subler Memorial Highway
- HB 494 Designate SSgt Gene F. Morrison Memorial Bridge
- HB 510 Designate Army Lt. Col. Robert R. Melnick Memorial Highway
- HB 517 Allow military to participate in homeownership savings program
- HB 523 Regards info poster on benefits and services for veterans
- HB 611 Designate U.S. Army Private First Class Jerry Bockbrader Mem Hwy
- HB 620 Designate Paulding County Purple Heart Memorial Highway
- HB 621 Designate Van Wert County Veteran's Memorial Highway
- HB 625 Regards American Legion Auxiliary, American Legion license plates
- HB 628 Designate SSG Jack W. Coy Memorial Highway
- HB 629 Make capital appropriations and reappropriations
- HB 631 Designate Major David McGue Memorial Highway
- HB 641 Designate the SSG Jack W. Coy Memorial Highway
- HB 652 Designate Cpl. Robert Dockstader Memorial Highway.
- 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
- HR 431 Observing April 2024 as the Month of the Military Child in Ohio
- HR 434 Honoring American Legion Toledo Post 335 on its Centennial
- HCR 8 To urge the federal government to select Ohio for the permanent headquarters of the U.S. 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 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

More Legislation on next page...

- SB 134 Modifies homestead property tax exemption for disabled veterans
- SB 140 Designate Sgt. Todd M. Bates Memorial Highway
- SB 141 Designate American Gold Star Mothers, Inc. Memorial Highway
- SB 145 Designate Cpl. David A. Johnston 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
- SB 225 To designate September 22 as Veterans Suicide Awareness and Prevention Day
- SB 226 Enact the Ohio Property Protection Act
- SB 257 Allow military to participate in homeownership savings program
- SB 260 Designate SPC Connor Wilson-Reichert Memorial Highway
- SB 281 Regards info poster on benefits and services for veterans
- SB 285 Designate Pharmacist's Mate Third Class Willard L. Shupe Mem Hwy
- SB 288 Make supplemental operating appropriations
- SB 292 Make capital appropriations and reappropriations
- SB 310 Designate U.S.S. Shenandoah Memorial Highway.
- SR 171 Honoring Thomas Mihalis Memorial VFW Post 1079 as it commemorates its One Hundredth Anniversary
- SR 262 In memory of Senior Airman Brian "Kody" Johnson
- SR 315 Recognizing the Month of the Military Child in Ohio, April 2024
- SCR 8 Urge federal govt reduce processing time- veteran disability claim
- SCR 9 Urge Congress support military, veteran mental health treatment

WHAT OTHER STATES ARE DOING

There are many 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 the Ohio General Assembly and some of them are unique to the states they are in.

There are the 'Hey, why didn't I think of that' variety and some that might make you shake your head in bewilderment.

OLR takes a look at some of the Vet/ Military bills in other states. They are bills introduced within the past year or so. They may still be in committees, have passed out of committee, or 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 ARKANSAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

House Bill 1331: Establish June 12 as Women 36 Veterans Day.

House Bill 1143: Amend the property tax exemption for disabled veterans, surviving spouses of disabled veterans, and minor dependent children of disabled veterans; to define "homestead" for purposes of the property tax exemption for disabled veterans, surviving spouses of disabled veterans, and minor dependent children of disabled veterans.

House Bill 1023: Require flags purchased with public funds to be made and manufactured in the United States.

Senate Bill 193: Amend the Arkansas occupational licensing of uniformed service members, veterans, and spouses Act of 2021; to add consideration of national certifications toward initial occupational licensure and extend the application to spouses; to eliminate the one-year limit for veterans to apply service education, training, or certification toward initial occupational licensure.



IN THE UTAH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

House Concurrent Resolution 12: This resolution: encourages public and private employers to post for their employees a list of resources made available through the Utah Department of Veterans and Military Affairs to active military members, veterans, and their spouses.

House Bill 45: This bill: allows for reenlistment bonus assistance to a member of the Utah National Guard;

-modifies the constitution of the Utah State Defense Force;

-adds a provision for the acceptance of gifts to the Utah National Guard;

-amends provisions related to benefits for the executive director of the Department of Veterans and Military Affairs;

-requires the deputy director for veterans services to be a veteran;

-clarifies a definition related to veteran preference eligibility to include the words "service member";



-reenacts provisions related to a leave of absence from employment for reserve members of the armed forces; and

-makes technical corrections.

Senator Bill 108: This bill: renumbers a provision that expands the State Parks Honor Pass Program to all veterans

-with any percentage of disability rating from the Veterans Administration; and

-creates a one-year pilot program that expands free access to state parks on a limited basis to veterans who have an Interagency Military-Lifetime Pass for national parks and are a resident of the state.



IN THE CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

House Bill 5138: To provide free bus service on CT transit to veterans of the U.S. armed forces.

House Bill 5289: The sum of fifty thousand dollars is appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs from the General Fund, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, for the purpose of expanding fine and performing arts therapy programming at the Veterans Residential Services facility and the Healthcare Center.

House Bill 5206: That the general statutes be amended to include certain members of the National Guard in the definition of "veteran" for purposes of determining eligibility for state veterans' benefits.



"The good news, to relieve all this gloom, is that a democracy is inherently self-correcting. Here, the people are sovereign. Inept political leaders can be replaced. Foolish policies can be changed. Disastrous mistakes can be reversed."

-Theodore C. Sorensen



Volume One Bravo; Number Ten

October 2024

HELPFUL LINKS

OHIO GENERAL ASSEMBLY: www.legislature.ohio.gov

OH HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: www.ohiohouse.gov

OH SENATE: www.ohiosenate.gov

OHIO GOVERNOR: www.governor.ohio.gov

OHIO SECRETARY OF STATE: www.ohiosos.gov

OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL: www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov

OHIO CHANNEL: www.ohiochannel.org



'Ohio Legislative Report'

<u> Dhio Legislative</u> Report

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Editor: David K. Root

Statehouse Happenings

The majority of OLR readers are veterans or family members of veterans. Most of them would like to have legislators who understand what they experienced while they served, when they transitioned back to civilian life, and what their needs are even years later. They feel only a veteran can fully understand other veterans.

OLR took a look at the veterans of the 135th General Assembly to let readers know which ones are vying for a seat in the 136th and who are their challengers. There are a total of 226 individuals -republicans, democrats, libertarians and independents -hoping to be elected or reelected to one of the 195 open seats.

The Ohio 135th General Assembly convened on January 3, 2023. There were 99 Senators and 99 Representatives. Of the 132 legislators, only 17 -about 13% -had served or were serving in the United States

Military. Four Senators and 13 Representatives. The general election is about a month away. The first day of the 136th GA will be January 6, 2025.

OLR checked out the 17 veterans who began the 135th to see how many might be returning for the 136th. OLR also looked to see if any were running against another veteran. Only the bios of those candidates who are running



against one of the current veterans were checked.

Ohio's senators are elected to a four-year term and representatives to a two-year term. Since elections are held every two years all 99 seats in the house are up for election every two years, while only half of the senate are up for election every two years. The even numbered districts are elected in one general election and the odd numbered districts in another. In this General election it is the even numbered districts.

In the Senate

There were four veterans at the beginning of the 135th GA. They are **Hearcel F. Craig** (District 15), **Frank Hoagland** (District 30), **Terry A.**

Johnson (District 14) and Steve Wilson (District 7).

Craig and Wilson are in odd numbered districts, so their seats are not up for election this year. Hoagland, a retired Navy Seal resigned last December and Brian Chavez was appointed to fill the remainder of his term. Chavez is running for reelection but is not a veteran. He is running against Iva Faber and there is no indication on his website or Facebook page that he is a veteran.

Johnson retired from the Ohio Army National Guard with the rank of Colonel in 2011 as the Army Guard's State Surgeon . He is running against Shane Marcum who served in the United State Marine Corps from 2018-2019 according to his Facebook account.

In the House

The 135th GA began with 13 veterans. They are: Steve Demetriou (District 35), Haraz N. Ghanbari (District 75), Jennifer Gross (District 45), Adam Holmes (District 97), Beth Lear (District 61), Mike Loychik (District 65), Adam C. Miller (District 6), Tracy M. Richardson (District 86), Brian Stewart (District 12), Daniel P. Troy (District 23), Casey Weinstein (District 34), Scott Wiggam (District 77), and Bernard Willis (District 74). Most but not all are hoping to retain their seat.

Demetriou is running for reelection and Mark Curtis is his challenger. We could find no evidence that Curtis is a veteran. Demetriou graduated from West Point and completed Army Ranger and Airborne training. He was awarded a bronze star for meritorious service while serving in Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom.

Ghanbari hopes to be reelected to his seat and his opponent is Jan Materni. Ghanbari served in the Navy during Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Inherent Resolve and in the Army during



Reflections "voting is a right best exercised by people who have taken time to learn about the issues." -Tony Snow

Operation Joint Forge. He is a Lieutenant Commander currently serving in the Navy Reserve. There is no military service listed on Materni's Facebook page or website.

Gross retired from the AirForce in 2008, after 21 years, as a Lieutenant Colonel. She served during **Operation Provide Comfort and Operation Provide** Promise. The website and Facebook page of her challenger, Landon Meador do not list any military service.

Holmes is trying to retain his seat and his challenger is Scott Wilson. There is no military service listed on Wilson's Facebook page or his website. Holmes spent more than 21 years in the Marine Corps retiring as a colonel in 2016. He flew 40 combat missions during Operation Iragi Freedom and logged over 3,000 flight hours supporting crisis response missions in Somalia, Rwanda, the Middle East and other areas around the world.

Lear served in the Ohio Air National Guard which included active duty at the Pentagon during Operation Desert Storm. She is running for reelection and her challenger is David Hogan. Neither his website nor his Facebook page lists any military service.

Loychik is not running for reelection. Instead, he ran for the senate seat in District 32 but lost in

Continued on next Page...

ELECTION DAY

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the primary election to the incumbent, **Sandra O'Brien**. Loychik spent eight years in the Air Force as a C-130 crew chief. O'Brien did not serve in the military.

Miller is not running for reelection. He chose instead to run for a seat in congress. He is running against incumbent Congressman Mike Carey in the 15th congressional district. Miller is serving as a colonel in the Army JAG Corps (reserve).

Richardson's hoping to retain her seat. Richardson is a graduate of West Point and she earned a Bronze Star while deployed in Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm. She retired last month from the Army Reserve with the rank of Major. Her challenger is Lesley Verbus who lists no military service on her website or Facebook page.

Stewart is running against challenger Brad Cotton. Stewart is an infantry veteran of the Iraq War who earned the Army Commendation Medal twice and the Combat Infantryman's Badge. Cotton

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OHIO CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I, BILL OF RIGHTS

SECTION #18 ~ SUSPENSION OF LAWS Effective: 1851

No power of suspending laws shall ever be exercised, except by the general assembly.

SECTION #19 ~ EMINENT DOMAIN

Effective: 1851

Private property shall ever be held inviolate, but subservient to the public welfare. When taken in time of war or other public exigency, imperatively requiring its immediate seizure or for the purpose of making or repairing roads, which shall be open to the public, without charge, a compensation shall be made to the owner, in money, and in all other cases, where private property shall be taken for public use, a compensation therefor shall first be made in money, or first secured by a deposit of money; and such compensation shall be assessed by a jury, without deduction for benefits to any property of the owner. was a Lieutenant in the Army Reserve with the 2291st Army Hospital and the 256th Combat Support Hospital from 1984 to 1992 according to an article published in the January 3, 2024, Circleville Herald.

Troy is running for reelection against challenger Tony Hocevar. Troy served from 1970 to 1976 in the US Army and US Army Reserve (Medial Corps). Hocevar served from 1974 to 1980. Four years in the US Army in Europe during the Cold War Era followed by two years in the Army Reserves.

Weinstein is a 2004 graduate of the Air Force Academy. He served at the Space & Missile Systems Center in Los Angeles, and at Wright-Patterson, Air Force Base. He is running for the Ohio Senate in District 28. His opponent is Jon Leissler who shows no military service on his website or Facebook page.

Wiggam, who served for four years in the Air Force and received an Air Force Commendation Medal for meritorious service is not seeking reelection. Instead, he is running for Clerk of Courts in Wayne County.

Willis is running for reelection. He retired in 2023 as Colonel after 30 years of service in the Air Force, Air National Guard, and Reserve. His challenger is Derek Alvarado. His website and Facebook page make no mention of any military service.

This covers the seventeen Veterans of the 135th GA and their opponents if they are running for a house or senate seat in the 136th GA. There are no doubt other veterans among the 226 candidates running. There are no complete bios for any of the 31 candidates mentioned in this article: only a snippet of their military history.

It is the hope of OLR that every Ohio voter will further investigate every candidate running for every office to determine for yourself who is and who isn't the best candidate to represent them in the 136th Ohio General Assembly.

OHIO LEGISLATIVE REPORT IS ON FACEBOOK

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





Joseph A. Miller, III

Gayle Manning

State Representatives Miller and Manning participated in ceremonies to dedicate the Lorain County Gold Star Families Memorial Monument in Elyria, Ohio on Gold Star Mothers & Families Day (the last Sunday in September). It is the 13th GSFMM in Ohio.

Photos by: David Paul Photography

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.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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- * Letters with over 250 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.

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State Rep Attends Gold Star Mother's Ceremony

September 29, 2024

Loudonville, OH - State Representative Melanie Miller (at podium) presented a proclamation to members of GFWC Ohio Federation of Women's Clubs during a ceremony to honor Ohio men and women who have lost their lives in service to their country and their families. The ceremony was held at the Mohican Memorial Forest Shrine located in the Mohican Memorial State Forest in Ashland County.

Ohio In-Person Voting ID Requirements



From the website of: The Ohio Voter Rights Coalition. www.ohiovoterrights.org

BILLS & RESOLUTIONS INTRODUCED IN AUGUST

HB 664:

Introduced by Representative **Sharon A. Ray** (District 66) on September 17th. It has not been referred to a committee yet.

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."

<u>SB 315:</u>

Introduced by Senator **Terry Johnson** (District 14) on September 18th. It has not been referred to a committee yet.

The bill would enact section 5534.674 of the Revised Code to designate a portion of State Route 781 in Adams County as the "CPL Willard Boston Wallace Memorial Highway."

Legislation In The 135th Ohio General Assembly

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

- HB 2 Direct state funds for economic growth and community development
- HB 18 Allow military license plate applicant present county veterans ID
- HB 33 Establishes operating appropriations for fiscal years 2024-2025
- HB 53 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 212 Enact the Ohio Property Protection Act
- HB 231 Establish 9-8-8 suicide prevention, mental health telephone line
- HB 232 Create Historical and Patriotic Education license plate
- 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 274 Authorize enhanced homestead exemption for certain homeowners
- 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 Cunty 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
- HB 409 Create the Ohio Cold War Victory Medal
- HB 423 Create "Blue Star Banner" license plate
- HB 431 Designate Staff Sgt. Zachary Wobler Memorial Highway
- HB 447 Regards property tax exemptions, restrictions and land value
- HB 453 Designate Staff Sergeant George P. Mizik (USMC) Memorial Highway
- HB 458 To designate "Gold and Blue Star Family Memorial Bridge" and "POW/MIA Memorial Viaduct."
- HB 483 Create "Save a Warrior" license plate
- HB 487 Designate TSgt. Grover Lee Swearingen Memorial Highway
- HB 493 Designate Lance Corporal Gerald Subler Memorial Highway
- HB 494 Designate SSgt Gene F. Morrison Memorial Bridge
- HB 510 Designate Army Lt. Col. Robert R. Melnick Memorial Highway
- HB 517 Allow military to participate in homeownership savings program
- HB 523 Regards info poster on benefits and services for veterans
- HB 611 Designate U.S. Army Private First Class Jerry Bockbrader Mem Hwy
- HB 620 Designate Paulding County Purple Heart Memorial Highway
- HB 621 Designate Van Wert County Veteran's Memorial Highway
- HB 625 Regards American Legion Auxiliary, American Legion license plates
- HB 628 Designate SSG Jack W. Coy Memorial Highway
- HB 629 Make capital appropriations and reappropriations
- HB 631 Designate Major David McGue Memorial Highway
- HB 641 Designate the SSG Jack W. Coy Memorial Highway
- HB 652 Designate Cpl. Robert Dockstader Memorial Highway
- HB 664 Designate CPL David James Amheiser Memorial Highway
- 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
- HR 431 Observing April 2024 as the Month of the Military Child in Ohio
- HR 434 Honoring American Legion Toledo Post 335 on its Centennial
- HCR 8 To urge the federal government to select Ohio for the permanent headquarters of the U.S. 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 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 134 Modifies homestead property tax exemption for disabled veterans
- SB 140 Designate Sgt. Todd M. Bates Memorial Highway
- SB 141 Designate American Gold Star Mothers, Inc. Memorial Highway
- SB 145 Designate Cpl. David A. Johnston 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
- SB 225 To designate September 22 as Veterans Suicide Awareness and Prevention Day
- SB 226 Enact the Ohio Property Protection Act
- SB 257 Allow military to participate in homeownership savings program
- SB 260 Designate SPC Connor Wilson-Reichert Memorial Highway
- SB 281 Regards info poster on benefits and services for veterans
- SB 285 Designate Pharmacist's Mate Third Class Willard L. Shupe Mem Hwy
- SB 288 Make supplemental operating appropriations
- SB 292 Make capital appropriations and reappropriations
- SB 310 Designate U.S.S. Shenandoah Memorial Highway
- SB 315 Designate CPL Willard Boston Wallace Memorial Highway
- SR 171 Honoring Thomas Mihalis Memorial VFW Post 1079 as it commemorates its One Hundredth Anniversary
- SR 262 In memory of Senior Airman Brian "Kody" Johnson
- SR 315 Recognizing the Month of the Military Child in Ohio, April 2024
- SCR 8 Urge federal govt reduce processing time- veteran disability claim
- SCR 9 Urge Congress support military, veteran mental health treatment

WHAT OTHER STATES ARE DOING

There are many bills that will help veterans, military, or families of veteran or service member in most, if not all the fifty states. Here are some from Georgia.



IN THE GEORGIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

HB 324: A BILL to be entitled an Act to amend Article 1 of Chapter 4 of Title 38 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the Department of Veterans Service, so as to provide for a Veterans Bill of Rights; to provide a short title; to provide for definitions; to provide for licensing practices; to provide for education waivers and requirements; to provide for collaborations for general health and mental health resources; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

HR 1257: A RESOLUTION creating the Joint Study Committee on Combating Homelessness Among Veterans; and for other purposes.

SB 551: A BILL to be entitled an Act to amend Article 1 of Chapter 16 of Title 50 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to general provisions relative to public property, so as to provide for priority parking spaces for veterans on state owned properties; to provide for definitions; to provide for required signage; to provide for a penalty; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes. While not specifically for veterans or military, it will certainly effect them and every other citizen of Ohio. This is Issue 1 as it will appear on your ballot.

> Issue 1 To create an appointed redistricting commission not elected by or subject to removal by the voters of the state **Proposed Constitutional Amendment Proposed by Initiative Petition** To repeal Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 of Article XI, Repeal sections 1, 2 and 3 of Article XIX, And enact Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 of Article XX of the Constitution of the State of Ohio A majority yes vote is necessary for the amendment to pass. The proposed amendment would: 1. Repeal constitutional protections against gerrymandering approved by nearly threequarters of Ohio electors participating in the statewide elections of 2015 and 2018, and eliminate the longstanding ability of Ohio citizens to hold their representatives accountable for establishing fair state legislative and congressional districts. 2. Establish a new taxpayer-funded commission of appointees required to gerrymander the boundaries of state legislative and congressional districts to favor either of the two largest political parties in the state of Ohio, according to a formula based on partisan outcomes as the dominant factor, so that: A. Each district shall contain single-member districts that are geographically contiguous, but state legislative and congressional districts will no longer be required to be compact; and B. Counties, townships and cities throughout Ohio can be split and divided across multiple districts, and preserving communities of interest will be secondary to the formula that is based on partisan political outcomes. 3. Require that a majority of the partisan commission members belong to the state's two largest political parties. 4. Prevent a commission member from being removed, except by a vote of their fellow commission members, even for incapacity, willful neglect of duty or gross misconduct. 5. Prohibit any citizen from filing a lawsuit challenging a redistricting plan in any court, except if the lawsuit challenges the proportionality standard applied by the commission, requirements pertaining to an incumbent elected official's residence, or the expiration of certain senators' terms, and then only before the Ohio Supreme Court. 6. Create the following process for appointing commission members: Four partisan appointees on the Ohio Ballot Board will choose a panel of 4 partisan retired judges (2

> > Continued on next Page...

affiliated with the first major political party and 2 affiliated with the second major political party). Provide that the 4 legislative appointees of the Ohio Ballot Board would be responsible for appointing the panel members as follows: the Ballot Board legislative appointees affiliated with the same major political party would select 8 applicants and present those to the Ballot Board legislative appointees affiliated with the other major political party, who would then select 2 persons from the 8 for appointment to the panel, resulting in 4 panel appointees. The panel would then hire a private professional search firm to help them choose 6 of the 15 individuals on the commission. The panel will choose those 6 individuals by initially creating a pool of 90 individuals (30 from the first major political party, 30 from the second major political party, and 30 from neither the first nor second major political parties). The panel of 4 partisan retired judges will create a portal for public comment on the applicants and will conduct and publicly broadcast interviews with each applicant in the pool. The panel will then narrow the pool of 90 individuals down to 45 (15 from the first major political party; 15 from the second major political party; and 15 from neither the first nor second major political parties). Randomly, by draw, the 4 partisan retired judges will then blindly select 6 names out of the pool of 45 to be members of the commission (2 from the first major political party; 2 from the second major political party; and 2 from neither the first nor second major political parties). The 6 randomly drawn individuals will then review the applications of the remaining 39 individuals not randomly drawn and select the final 9 individuals to serve with them on the commission, the majority of which shall be from the first and the second major political parties (3 from the first major political party, 3 from the second major political party, and 3 from neither the first nor second major political parties).

7. Require the affirmative votes of 9 of 15 members of the appointed commission to create legislative and congressional districts. If the commission is not able to determine a plan by September 19, 2025, or July 15 of every year ending in one, the following impasse procedure will be used: for any plan at an impasse, each commissioner shall have 3 days to submit no more than one proposed redistricting plan to be subject to a commission vote through a ranked-choice selection process, with the goal of having a majority of the commission members rank one of those plans first. If a majority cannot be obtained, the plan with the highest number of points in the ranked-choice process is eliminated, and the process is repeated until a plan receives a majority of first-place rankings. If the ranked-choice process ends in a tie for the highest point total, the tie shall be broken through a random process.

8. Limit the right of Ohio citizens to freely express their opinions to members of the commission or to commission staff regarding the redistricting process or proposed redistricting plans, other than through designated meetings, hearings and an online public portal, and would forbid communication with the commission members and staff outside of those contexts.

9. Require the commission to immediately create new legislative and congressional districts in 2025 to replace the most recent districts adopted by the citizens of Ohio through their elected representatives.

10. Impose new taxpayer-funded costs on the State of Ohio to pay the commission members, the commission staff and appointed special masters, professionals, and private consultants that the commission is required to hire; and an unlimited amount for legal expenses incurred by the commission in any related litigation

If approved, the amendment will be effective 30 days after the election.





Volume One Bravo; Number Eleven

November 2024

HELPFUL LINKS

- OHIO GENERAL ASSEMBLY: www.legislature.ohio.gov
- OH HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: www.ohiohouse.gov
- OH SENATE: www.ohiosenate.gov

OHIO GOVERNOR: www.governor.ohio.gov

OHIO SECRETARY OF STATE: www.ohiosos.gov

OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL: www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov

OHIO CHANNEL: www.ohiochannel.org



'Ohio Legislative Report'

<u> Dhio Legislative</u> 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.

To subscribe, send your name and email address to:

oh.leg.report@gmail.com

Editor: David K. Root

Statehouse Happenings

Another month and once again not much action in the statehouse to report about. There should be plenty to report on for the December issue. According to the Ohio Legislature Website the first Senate Session will be held Wednesday, November 13 and on Tuesday, November 19 for the House. There will be plenty of committee hearings beginning then too. The General Assembly only has until December 20 when the recess is scheduled to begin thus ending the 135th General Assembly.

Last month OLR told our readers what the 17 military veterans serving in the 135th General Assembly would be facing in the 2024 General Election.

A Recap...

In the senate one resigned in December 2023, two are not up for reelection and still have two years left of their four-year terms, and the fourth senator is running against another veteran.

In the house there are 13 veterans. Nine are running for reelection seven have non-veterans challengers and two have challengers for are veterans. There are two who are running for a seat in the Ohio senate -one was defeated in the primary election and the other has a non-veteran challenger. Two are not running for another term in the Ohio General Assembly. One is running for US Congress and the other for Clerk of Courts in his home county.

This month OLR will look at the number of bills sponsored and the voting records of those 17 veterans of the 135th Ohio General Assembly. We will only look at bills that pertain directly to veterans, active-duty military or their families in Ohio. Readers can see the list of those 94 bills beginning on page five.

Senators

Hearcel F. Craig: First served in the Ohio House of Representatives from 2015-2018 before being elected to the Ohio Senate. He serves on three committees and is Ranking Member in two of them. While serving in the 135th General Assembly Craig has been the primary sponsor of 22 bills, one of which directly affects veterans. It has not passed out of committee yet.

Frank Hoagland: Hoagland began serving in the Ohio Senate in January 2017 and resigned in December 2023. While serving in the 135th GA, Hoagland was the primary sponsor of 10 bills. Six of them were veteran/ military related. One of them passed in the Senate and is now in house committees. The other five have not made it out of the senate committees to which they were referred.

Terry Johnson: Dr. Johnson first served in the Ohio House from 2011 to 2018 and was then term limited. In September of 2019 he was selected to fill a vacated senate seat which he still occupies. He is serving on five

committees and is chairman of one and vice chairman of two others. He is the primary sponsor of 20 bills. Four of them are veteran related. Two of them have passed in the senate and are now in committees on the house side, one has not made it out of committee on the senate side and the other just recently introduced has not been referred to a committee yet.

Steve Wilson: Wilson was appointed to fill a vacated seat in the Ohio senate in January 2017 and is now serving for his second full term. He is the chairman of one committee and vice chairman of two. He serves on a total of five. Only one of the bills he is the primary sponsor of is military related. That bill was referred to committee where it remains, having had only one hearing.

Representatives

Steve Demetriou: Currently serving in his first term, he is vice chairman of one of the five committees he serves on. Demetriou is the primary sponsor of nineteen bills, one of which will affect Ohio veterans. That bill passed unanimously out of the house and was sent over to the senate but has not had any hearings.

Haraz N. Ghanbari: First appointed to the seat he now holds in March 2019; Lieutenant Commander Ghanbari serves on five committees and is the chairman of one of them. He is the primary sponsor of six bills in this general assembly. Only one of them is veteran related. That bill was referred to committee just prior to the summer break and has not had any hearings.

Jennifer Gross: Now serving her second term in the house, Gross sits on four committees and is vice chair of one of them. She is the primary sponsor of twelve bills. None of the bills were directly related to Ohio veterans or military.

Adam Holmes: Holmes was sworn into office in January 2019 after being appointed to fill a vacancy

OHIO CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I, BILL OF RIGHTS

SECTION #19A ~ DAMAGES FOR WRONGFUL DEATH Effective: 1912

The amount of damages recoverable by civil action in the courts for death caused by the wrongful act, neglect, or default of another, shall not be limited by law. in the house. He is chairman of one of the five committees he serves on. Holmes is the primary sponsor of ten bills. Three of those bills relate to our veterans. One bill passed unanimously at every step through both chambers and was signed by Governor DeWine in July. A second bill is still in committee and has had three hearings. The third bill was introduced in June and has not had any hearings.

Beth Lear: Now serving for her first term, Lear is vice chairman of one of the three committees she serves on. She is the primary sponsor of fifteen bills. The one bill relating to veterans passed out of committee but has yet to be brought up for a vote on the house floor.

Mike Loychik: Loychik is now serving his second term in the house and serves on four committees and one subcommittee. He is the chairman of one of the committees. Of the eight primary sponsored bills that are his, two are veteran related. One passed out of committee in June and has not been voted on by the full house yet. The other bill was referred to committee but has not had any hearings.

Adam C. Miller: Colonel Miller is now serving his fourth and last term in the house. He serves on five committees and one subcommittee. He is ranking member of one the committees and the subcommittee. He is the primary sponsor of eighteen bills. Six of them relate to Ohio veterans or military. Only one has passed out of committee which still awaits a vote by the full house. The other five bills remain in committees.

Tracy M. Richardson: She is serving in her third term having first been elected to the Ohio House in 2029. Major Richardson -now retired -serves as a member of four committees and is chairman of one subcommittee. She is the primary sponsor of five bills. Two of them are veteran related. One of the bills remains in committee where it has had three hearings. The other passed at all stages unanimously and was

Continued on next Page...

COMMITTEE HEARINGS

Will resume on Tuesday, November 12th

Follow us on Facebook and you will always know when and where hearings will take place. signed by the governor in May 2024.

Brian Stewart: Stewart was first elected to the House in 2020 and is serving his third term. He serves on four committees and is vice chairman for one of them. There are ten bills which he is the primary sponsor of. Only one of those bills pertains to veterans and it remains in committee after having three hearings.

Daniel P. Troy: Troy is now serving his second consecutive term in the house. Previously he had served seven terms beginning in January 1983. He serves as ranking members of a committee and a subcommittee and is a member of four other committees. Troy is the primary sponsor of ten bills. Two of the ten were related to veterans. One bill had four hearings; however, it remains in committee. The other was voted out of committee unanimously and now needs to go to the full house for a vote.

Casey Weinstein: Weinstein was first elected to the Ohio house in 2019 and is serving his third term. He is a member of four committees and the ranking member of a fifth committee. He is listed as the primary sponsor of eight bills. None are veteran/ military related.

Scott Wiggam: Now serving his fourth term, Wiggam was first elected to the House in 2016. He currently serves as chairman of one committee and a member of three others. During this G.A. he introduced thirteen bills as the primary sponsor. None of them affect our veteran or military population.

Bernard Willis: Willis is in his first term in the Ohio house and serves on four committees one of which he is vice chairman. He is the primary sponsor of ten bills. His only bill that pertained to veterans was the same bill that Stewart introduced. They were primary sponsors on the same bill, and it remains in committee.

The Numbers

In the 135th General Assembly there are 132 legislators. 17 of them are veterans of the US military.

The 132 legislators introduced 1,006 bills. 94 of the 1,006 pertain to veterans or military in Ohio or their families. About 9.35%

31 of the 94 veteran/military bills (about 32.6%) were introduced by 10 of the 17 veterans

Dhio Legislative Report

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(about 6%). Only three of the 31 (about .998%) bills were signed into law by the governor.

64 of the 94 (about 68.1%) veteran/military bills were introduced by legislators who did not serve in the US military. Five of the 64 (about .78%) bills became law.

Voting Records

Now that our readers know who introduced what legislation, it is time to find out how they all voted for veteran/military bills. We will look at the votes on bills that came before the full House and Senate; not any of the voting within the committees.

Of the 94 bills introduced, two of the house bills made it over to the senate side and eleven of the senate bills made it over to the house side. But only eight bills (six house and two senate) made it through both chambers and onto the governor's desk for his consideration.

Two House Bills Moved to the Senate

HB 57 and HB 378 both made it through



committee hearings and onto the house floor for a vote. They were both referred to a senate committee but have not received any hearings. HB 57 would amend sections of the Revised Code to index the

homestead exemption amounts to inflation. It passed on the house floor with a vote of 89 to 0. All the veterans voted in favor of the bill with the exception of Representative Loychik who did not vote.

HB 378 would amend sections 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. It passed on the house floor with a vote of 90 to1. All veterans voted yea except for two. Loychik did not vote, and Representative Lear cast a nay vote.

Eleven Senate Bills Moved to the House

The bills that passed on the senate floor were Senate Bills 45, 63, 113, 114, 141, 145, 154, 183, 208, 226, and 257. Six of them were referred to a committee and have not had any hearings yet. Three have been voted out of committee but have not had a vote on the house floor yet. Two still need to be

See Happenings on Page Eight...

READERS LETTERS

Veterans Must Become More Active With Ohio Legislators

As Election Day is now behind us, let us remember that while we may be in a lame duck session we, as Ohioans need to be watching our current legislators for any final push to get bills passed and onto the Governor's desk by the end of the year. Keep your ears and eyes open for any call to actions that are put out. Especially Senate Bill 63, the Asbestos Tort claim bill. That bill is dangerous to not only veterans but any Ohio citizen that was exposed to asbestos when they were younger. If we want better laws for Ohio veterans, we as the Veteran Community need to start standing up and talking to our Legislators in Columbus about real bills that can positively effect Veterans, like Property tax exemptions and better mental and physical health care being made more available to us. We need them to act on bills, not just sit on the bills once in a committee. We as a State need to make our General Assembly remember it is the voters who put them in office to do a job, not corporations or organizations. When the new General Assembly meets in January, I urge all veterans to begin contacting their representatives to encourage them to get better State veteran benefits passed.

Andrea Neutzling

VFW Ohio District 12 Sr. Vice Commander/Legislative Chair Syracuse, OH

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

OLR welcomes letters to the editor

- * Letters are limited to 250 words.
- * Letters with over 250 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 YOUR LETTERS TO: oh.leg.report@gmail.com

MA DISTRICTS



When Honor Flight Cleveland took off on October 11th for a full day in Washington, DC., Representative Joe Miller (District 53) signed on to be the Guardian for a very special Marine Corps Veteran. It was Miller's mother.

Photos by: Bill Synk

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 and all info to: oh.leg.report@gmail.com



"Young people need to vote. They need to get out there. Every vote counts. Educate yourself too. Don't just vote. Know what you're voting for, and stand by that." -Nikki Reed

BILLS & RESOLUTIONS INTRODUCED IN OCTOBER

<u>HB 673:</u>

Introduced by Representative **Jean Schmidt** (District 62) on October 10th. It has not been referred to a committee yet.

The bill would enact section 5534.673 of the Revised Code to designate a portion of State Route 28 in Clermont County as the "CPT Louis John Speidel Memorial Highway."

<u>HB 674:</u>

Introduced by Representative **Sara P. Carruthers** (District 47) on October 10th. It has not been referred to a committee yet.

The bill would enact section 5534.877 of the Revised Code to designate a portion of State Route 129 in Butler County as the "Sgt. Anthony Kress Vinnedge Memorial Highway."

<u>HB 679:</u>

Introduced by Representative **Angela N. King** (District 84) on October 16th. It has not been referred to Committee yet.

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."

Legislation In The 135th Ohio General Assembly

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

- HB 2 Direct state funds for economic growth and community development
- HB 18 Allow military license plate applicant present county veterans ID
- HB 33 Establishes operating appropriations for fiscal years 2024-2025
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- HB 133 Designate Army Sgt. Ronnie Blair Memorial Highway
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- 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
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- 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 Cunty 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
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- HB 423 Create "Blue Star Banner" license plate
- HB 431 Designate Staff Sgt. Zachary Wobler Memorial Highway
- HB 447 Regards property tax exemptions, restrictions and land value
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- HB 620 Designate Paulding County Purple Heart Memorial Highway
- HB 621 Designate Van Wert County Veteran's Memorial Highway
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- HB 641 Designate the SSG Jack W. Coy Memorial Highway
- HB 652 Designate Cpl. Robert Dockstader Memorial Highway
- HB 664 Designate CPL David James Amheiser Memorial Highway
- HB 673 Designate the CPT Louis John Speidel Memorial Highway
- HB 674 Designate the Sgt. Anthony Kress Vinnedge Memorial Highway
- Hb 679 Designate the PFC John Wayne Richard Memorial Highway
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- 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
- HR 431 Observing April 2024 as the Month of the Military Child in Ohio
- HR 434 Honoring American Legion Toledo Post 335 on its Centennial
- HCR 8 To urge the federal government to select Ohio for the permanent headquarters of the U.S. Space Command

- SB 12 Regards veteran-owned business enterprise certification program
- SB 14 Expand veteran eligibility to teach without license
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- 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
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- SB 282 Designate PFC Henry 'Rick' Hausman, Jr. Memorial Highway
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- SB 292 Make capital appropriations and reappropriations
- SB 310 Designate U.S.S. Shenandoah Memorial Highway
- SB 315 Designate CPL Willard Boston Wallace Memorial Highway
- SR 171 Honoring Thomas Mihalis Memorial VFW Post 1079 as it commemorates its One Hundredth Anniversary
- SR 262 In memory of Senior Airman Brian "Kody" Johnson
- SR 315 Recognizing the Month of the Military Child in Ohio, April 2024
- SR 334 Honoring Beavercreek HS AFJROTC B-1 Bombers drill team on winning two Nationals championships
- SCR 8 Urge federal govt reduce processing time- veteran disability claim
- SCR 9 Urge Congress support military, veteran mental health treatment



Happenings, from Page Three

referred to a committee.

SB 45 would designate a bridge spanning the Mahoning River in Trumbull County as the "Veterans Memorial Bridge." It passed on the senate floor with a vote of 32 to 0. Senator Wilson did not vote, and all other veterans voted in favor of passage.

SB 63 would require a plaintiff in a tort action alleging an asbestos claim to file specified disclosures. It passed on the senate floor with a 21 to 10 vote. Voting yea were Senators Johnson and Wilson while Senator Craig voted nay. *Note: This was one of only two bills in the 135th GA that was opposed by veteran service organizations in Ohio.*

SB 113 would prohibit a person who fails to comply with the Military Selective Service System from holding certain public offices or employment with the state, and would require high schools to notify students of any obligation to register for the Selective Service System. A vote of 25 to 4 passed the bill on the senate floor. All the veterans voted in favor of the bill.

SB 114 would designate a portion of United States Route 33 in Fairfield County as the "Lance Corporal James F. Kimple Memorial Highway." It received a 31to 0 vote to pass it on the senate floor with all veterans voting to pass it.

SB 141 would designate a portion of I-77 in Akron as the "American Gold Star Mothers, Inc. Memorial Highway." On the senate floor it received 31 yea votes and no nay votes. The veterans all voted yea.

SB 145 would designate a portion of Refugee Road in Fairfield County as the "Cpl. David A. Johnston Memorial Highway." With a 31 to 0 vote it passed on the senate floor with all veterans voting.

SB 154 would amend sections of the Revised Code to include Space Force in the definition of the armed forces, armed services, and uniformed services of the United States. The vote of 31 to 0 was in favor of the bill. The veterans voted yea except for Senator Wilson who did not vote.

SB 183 would designate a portion of I-90 in Cuyahoga County as the "Lance Corporal Jimmy Rizzo Memorial Highway." It passed on the senate floor with a 31-0 vote with all the veterans voting.

SB 208 would require a city, exempted village, or local school district to include in its open enrollment policy an exception for military children. With the help of all the veterans, it passed on the senate floor with a vote of 31 to 0.

SB 226 would extend the law that prohibits certain governments, businesses, and individuals from acquiring agricultural land to certain other property and name the act the Ohio Property Protection Act. The bill passed on the senate floor with a vote of 31 to 0. All veterans voted to pass it.

SB 257 would make active-duty members of the uniformed services eligible to participate in the homeownership savings linked deposit program. The vote on the floor was 31 to 0 in favor and all the

Continued on next Page...



Thank you for your service and sacrifice and thank you for what you do now as you continue to serve in so many ways. veterans voted.

Eight Bills Go to the Governor

Two of the bills that moved through both chambers and made it to the governor were 'Budget' bills and they contained large amounts of funding for a variety of Veteran and military usage. Everything from scholarships for war orphans, Ohio Veterans Homes, and the Ohio National Guard to veteran organizations and local veteran parks. There were HB 2 and HB 33.

HB 2 directed state funds for economic growth and community development. The final vote in the house had 92 yeas and 5 nays with all veterans voting. Representatives Gross and Willis were the only two voting nays. It then passed on the senate floor with a vote of 31 to 1. All the veterans voted in favor of the bill.

HB 33 established operating appropriations for fiscal years 2024-2025. The final house vote was 67 to 30 in favor of the bill. Eight veterans voted yea, and Representatives Lear, Miller, Wiggam, and Willis voted nay. Gross did not vote. It was 24 to 8 when the senate voted. All veterans voted in favor of the bill except Senator Craig who voted nay.

After passage in the two chambers Governor DeWine passed the bill but with a couple of line-item vetoes. The bill then was returned for a vote to override the vetoes. Where it passed in both chambers. No veteran or military budgeted items were affected by the veto.

Six other bills made it to the governor's desk and were signed into law without any vetoing. They were House Bills 202, 250, 253, and 269. From the other chamber there were Senate Bills 43 and 225.

HB 202 designates a portion of United States Route 62 in Canton as the "Specialist Dennis Alan Combs Memorial Highway." It passed in the House and the senate with unanimous votes. Representatives Richardson and Willis were the only

ATTENTION LEGISLATORS

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

Send your announcement to: oh.leg.report@gmail.com by the end of each month to be included. two veterans who did not vote in the house. All the veterans in the senate voted.

HB 250 revised the Military Enlistment diploma seal. This bill also received unanimous votes in both chambers. All veterans voted in the senate and all but Representatives Weinstein and Willis voted in the house.

HB 253 designated portions of United States Routes 42, 68, and 62 as the "Brigadier General Charles Young Memorial Historical Corridor." It passed in both chambers with unanimously. Representatives Richardson and Willis did not vote, all others did.

HB 269 designated a portion of State Route 60 in Muskingum County as the "Sgt Bradley J. Harper USMC Memorial Highway." Representatives Loychik and Adam Miller were the only veterans not voting when the bill passed unanimously in both chambers.

SB 43 modified the homestead exemption for the surviving spouse of a disabled veteran. The bill passed unanimously in both chambers and all veterans voted except for Representative Gross.

SB 225 designated September 22 as Veterans Suicide Awareness and Prevention Day. It passed both chambers with unanimous votes and every veteran voting.

Giving our readers an overview of which veterans introduced bills or how they voted on veteran/military bills is not meant to influence how anyone votes. This issue of OLR will not be emailed until after the November 5th election to ensure that it doesn't influence any votes. It might give readers a better understanding of which of our elected veterans might need more nudging to get bills passed or who they can turn to if there is legislation they might want introduced.

The 136th General assembly will convene in less than two months. As the 135th goes into a lame duck session and finishes out their two years, now is the time to be thinking and planning for the next two years.

Discover your Ohio Dept. of Veterans Services

Learn about the programs, responsibilities, endeavors and goals of this excellent state agency.

www.dvs.ohio.gov





Volume One Bravo; Number Twelve

December 2024

HELPFUL LINKS

- OHIO GENERAL ASSEMBLY: www.legislature.ohio.gov
- OH HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: www.ohiohouse.gov
- OH SENATE: www.ohiosenate.gov

OHIO GOVERNOR: www.governor.ohio.gov

OHIO SECRETARY OF STATE: www.ohiosos.gov

OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL: www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov

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<u> Dhio Legislative</u> 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.

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Editor: David K. Root

Statehouse Happenings

After a very long summer break, our state legislators went back to work. But it was only for two weeks before their Thanksgiving break. Those two weeks were packed with plenty of hearings and some fast action taking place on many bills. Here is the November hearings recap.

November 11-15

The first hearing was Tuesday morning at 11:00 when Senator Kristina D. Roegner (District 27) gave her sponsor testimony on SB 208 before the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee. Her bill would require a city,



exempted village, or local school district to permit a student who is not a native student of the district to open enroll in the district if the student's parent is an active-duty member of the armed forces of the United States who is stationed in Ohio. Roegner introduced the

bill in December 2023, and it passed in the Senate unanimously in May 2024.

Sen. Roegner gives testimony on Sub SB 208

In the afternoon on Tuesday the House Transportation Committee heard sponsor testimony on five separate bills which would create memorial highways in Ohio.



Rep. Fischer provides testimony for HB 510



Rep. Ghanbari giving testimony on HB 611

Route 11 in Mahoning County as the "Army Lt. Col. Robert R. Melnick Memorial

Highway." The bill was introduced in April 2024 by State Senator Al Cutrona (District 33) when he was a State Representative.

Representative Haraz N. Ghanbari (District 75) offered his testimony on HB 611. The bill, introduced in May 2024, would designate a portion of State Route 199 in Wood County the "U.S. Army Private First Class Jerry Bockbrader Memorial Highway."

Testimony was given by Representative Tex Fischer

(District 58). HB 510 would create a section of State

Members of the committee heard testimony from Representative Jon Cross (District 83) on House Bill 631 which he introduced in June 2024. The bill would

OHIO CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I, BILL OF RIGHTS

SECTION #19B ~ PROTECT PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS IN GROUND WATER, LAKES AND OTHER WATERCOURSES

Effective: 2008

(A) The protection of the rights of Ohio's property owners, the protection of Ohio's natural resources, and the maintenance of the stability of Ohio's economy require the recognition and protection of property interests in ground water, lakes, and watercourses.

(B) The preservation of private property interests recognized under divisions (C) and (D) of this section shall be held inviolate, but subservient to the public welfare as provided in Section 19 of Article I of the Constitution.

(C) A property owner has a property interest in the reasonable use of the ground water underlying the property owner's land.

(D) An owner of riparian land has a property interest in the reasonable use of the water in a lake or watercourse located on or flowing through the owner's riparian land.

(E) Ground water underlying privately owned land and nonnavigable waters located on or flowing through privately owned land shall not be held in trust by any governmental body. The state, and a political subdivision to the extent authorized by state law, may provide for the regulation of such waters. An owner of land voluntarily may convey to a governmental body the owner's property interest held in the ground water underlying the land or nonnavigable waters located on or flowing through the land.

(F) Nothing in this section affects the application of the public trust doctrine as it applies to Lake Erie or the navigable waters of the state.

(G) Nothing in Section 1e of Article II, Section 36 of Article II, Article VIII, Section 1 of Article X, Section 3 of Article XVIII, or Section 7 of Article XVIII of the Constitution shall impair or limit the rights established in this section.

Dhio Legislative Report

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designate a portion of State Route 273 in Hardin County as the "Major David McGue Memorial Highway."

Senator **Vernon Sikes** District 28) gave testimony on his bill, SB 141. It was introduced in July 2023 and passed in the Senate 31-0 last May. The bill would designate a portion of Interstate-77 in Akron as the "American Gold Star Mothers, Inc. Memorial Highway."

Amended House Bill 183 would designate a portion of Interstate-90 in Cuyahoga County as the "Lance Corporal Jimmy Rizzo Memorial Highway." Senator **Nickie J. Antonio** (District 23) introduced the bill in November



 2023 and the senate unanimously passed it in May 2024.



Rep. Cross gives testimony for HB 631



Sen. Sykes giving testimony on SB 141

The committee members passed all five bills favorably out of committee with unanimous votes.

Wednesday morning the House

Insurance Committee heard

Sen. Antonio gives testimony on SB 183



testimony from Senator **George F.** Lang (District 4). He sponsored and introduced Amended Senate Bill 63 in February 2023 and following seven hearings was passed out of committee and then in May 2024 it was passed by the senate with a vote of 21-10. The bill would among other things require a plaintiff in a tort action alleging an asbestos claim to file a sworn statement of specified disclosures within 60 days of filing the complaint.

Sen. Lang testifying on SB 63

November 18-22

At noon on Tuesday the House Economic and Workforce Development Committee met and heard

Continued on next Page...



Sen. Johnson & Sen Chavez giving testimony on SB 257

testimony from Senators Brian M. Chavez (District 3) and Terry Johnson (District 14), sponsors of SB 257. The bill would do the following two things. 1. Include active -duty service members as eligible participants in the home ownership savings linked deposit program and 2.

Eliminate the interest rate applied to repayments for the Ohio National Guard Scholarship Program, if the recipient failed to complete their term of enlistment due to being in active or reserve duty of the armed forces. The senators introduced the bill in May 2024, and it passed in the senate with a 31-0 vote in June.

House Bill 310 had its 4th hearing before the House Pensions Committee . Representative Don Jones (District 95), the Bill sponsor provided an explanation to the motion for a substitute bill. The substitute bill would require the State Teachers Retirement System (STRS) Board to pay the current law cost to purchase



Rep. Jones providing testimony on HB 310

the credit on a member's behalf if they are a veteran by transferring an amount equal to its cost from the Military Veteran Educators Retirement Assistance (MVERA) Fund to the Teachers' Savings Fund and to pay the current law amount of interest on a member's behalf. It also creates the MVERA Fund to pay the costs to cover the amounts required to purchase military service credit on behalf of a member. The

substitute bill was agreed to by the committee with no objection.

The House Transportation Committee had four bills to consider. It was the first hearing for all four and the testimonies provided were from the bill sponsors. Following each testimony all were favorably passed out of committee with a 15-0 vote.

House Bill 641 was introduced in June 2024 by Representatives Josh Williams (District 41) and Elgin Rogers, Jr. (District 44). The bill would designate a portion of Intersate-280 in Lucas County as the "SSG

Jack W. Coy Memorial Highway." Testimony was heard from both representatives as well as Representative Juanita O. Brent (District 22) and a citizen.





Reps. Rogers, Williams, & Brent gave testimony on HB 641

Representative

D.J. Swearingen (District 89) provided his sponsor testimony on HB 642 which would designate a portion of State Route 2 in Ottawa County as the "Cpl. Robert Dockstader Memorial Highway." He introduced the bill in August.

The committee members heard Representative Sharon A. Ray (District 66) give testimony on her bill, HB 664. The bill, introduced in September would designate a portion of State Route 421 in Medina County as the "CPL David James Amheiser Memorial Highway."

Testimony was provided by Representative Jean Schmidt (District 62) on HB 673 which she introduced in October. A portion of State Route 28 in Clermont County would be designated as the "CPT Louis John Speidel Memorial Highway" under her bill.

Wednesday morning SB 63 had a second hearing in the House Insurance Committee. In person testimony was provided by spokespersons for the Ohio Chamber of Commerce and the law firm Tucker Ellis. Written testimony was submitted by eight



Rep. Swearingen gives testimony on HB 652



Rep. Ray testified testimony on HB 664



Rep. Schmidt offered testimony on HB 673

other proponents of the bill.



Rep. J. Miller offering testimony on HB 409

In the House State and Local Government Committee Representative **Joseph A. Miller III** (District 53) provided sponsor testimony on HB 409. His bill, introduced in February 2024, would create the Ohio Cold War Victory Medal and the Ohio Cold War Victory Medal Fund. The medal would be awarded to eligible members of the Ohio National Guard.

Senator Roegner testified before the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee on her bill that would require Ohio school



districts to include an exception for military children in open enrollment policies. She introduced Senate Bill 208 in December 2023 and it passed in the Senate 31-0 in May.

Rep. Lorenz providing testimony on HB 378

On Wednesday afternoon the Senate Ways and Means Committee heard testimony from Representative **Brian Lorenz** (District 60). The bill, HB 378, sponsored by Lorenz and Representative **Nick Santucci**

(District 64) would create an enhanced homestead 100% exemption for the surviving spouses of uniformed service members killed in the line of duty

and continue the exemption until the surviving spouse dies, remarries, or cohabitates with another unrelated person. They introduced the bill in January 2024, and it passed 90 -1 in the House in June 2024.

In the Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee, hearings were held for Senate Bill 281 and House Concurrent Resolution 8. Senator **Hearcel F. Craig** (District 15) provided



Sen. Craig giving testimony on B 281

sponsor testimony on SB 281. He and cosponsor Johnson introduced the bill in May 2024. It would require the Director of Commerce, in consultation with the Director of Veterans Services, to create a veterans' benefits and services poster and make it available to

any employer who requests it to hang in their premises. HCR 8 was introduced in June 2023 by Representatives **Thomas F. Patton** (District 17) and **Brian E. Lampton**



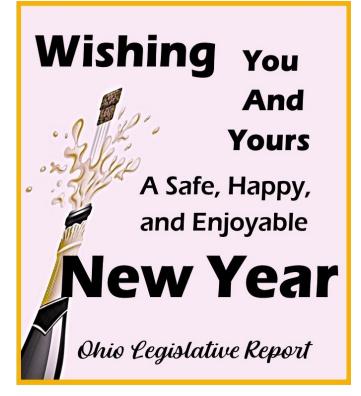
Rep. Patton & Rep Lampton provided testimony on HCR 8

(District 70). Before going to the Senate, the house passed it with a 90-2 vote. The resolution will be sent to members of congress, the president, and the secretary of defense. It urges the federal government to select Ohio for the location of the United States Space Command's permanent headquarters. Both representatives gave testimony before the committee.

Keflections

"I don't like politics. I am not aligned to any political party. I have friends in all political parties."

-Gautam Adaní



BILLS & RESOLUTIONS INTRODUCED IN NOVEMBER

HB 691:

Introduced by Representative Jay Edwards (District 94) and Adam Holmes (District 97) on November 11th. It was referred to the House Transportation Committee.

The bill would enact section 5534.429 of the Revised Code to designate a portion of State Route 13 in Athens County as the "Marshal Teddy Ray Holcomb Memorial Highway."

Legislation In The 135th Ohio General Assembly

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

- HB 2 Direct state funds for economic growth and community development
- HB 18 Allow military license plate applicant present county veterans ID
- HB 33 Establishes operating appropriations for fiscal years 2024-2025
- HB 53 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 the Army SSgt. Charles V. Kettler Memorial Highway
- HB 132 Designate yhe Army Sgt. Herbert C. Linville Memorial Highway
- HB 133 Designate the Army Sgt. Ronnie Blair Memorial Highway
- HB 150 Prohibit rental discrimination based on lawful source of income
- HB 202 Designate the Specialist Dennis Alan Combs Memorial Highway
- HB 212 Enact the Ohio Property Protection Act
- HB 231 Establish 9-8-8 suicide prevention, mental health telephone line
- HB 232 Create Historical and Patriotic Education license plate
- HB 242 Establish the Armed Forces Reserve Component Scholarship Program and related funds
- HB 250 Revise the Military Enlistment diploma seal
- HB 252 Designate the SM1 Cornelius Anthony McCafferty, Jr. Memorial Highway
- HB 253 Designate the Brigadier General Charles Young Memorial Historical Corridor
- HB 254 Expand and enhance the homestead property tax exemption for disabled veterans
- HB 269 Designate the Sgt Bradley J. Harper USMC Memorial Highway
- HB 274 Authorize enhanced homestead exemption for certain homeowners
- HB 286 Designate the Vienna Township Veterans Bridge
- HB 294 Designate the Delaware County Veteran's Memorial Highway
- HB 299 Designate the Specialist Five Frederick Wayne Taylor Memorial Highway
- HB 310 Regards STRS member purchase of military service credit
- HB 317 Designate the Sgt. Cory M. Endlich Corridor
- HB 335 Designate the Ottawa Cunty Veterans Memorial Highway
- HB 350 Designate the Lance Corporal Austin B. Schwenk Memorial Highway
- HB 355 Designate the Licking County Veterans Memorial Highway
- HB 365 Designate multiple memorial highways
- HB 378 Permit homestead exemption-surviving spouses of service members
- HB 383 Designate the Corporal John E. Ruch Memorial Highway

- HB 409 Create the Ohio Cold War Victory Medal
- HB 423 Create "Blue Star Banner" license plate
- HB 431 Designate the Staff Sgt. Zachary Wobler Memorial Highway
- HB 447 Regards property tax exemptions, restrictions and land value
- HB 453 Designate the Staff Sergeant George P. Mizik (USMC) Memorial Highway
- HB 458 To designate "Gold and Blue Star Family Memorial Bridge" and "POW/MIA Memorial Viaduct."
- HB 483 Create "Save a Warrior" license plate
- HB 487 Designate the TSgt. Grover Lee Swearingen Memorial Highway
- HB 493 Designate the Lance Corporal Gerald Subler Memorial Highway
- HB 494 Designate the SSgt Gene F. Morrison Memorial Bridge
- HB 510 Designate the Army Lt. Col. Robert R. Melnick Memorial Highway
- HB 517 Allow military to participate in homeownership savings program
- HB 523 Regards info poster on benefits and services for veterans
- HB 611 Designate the U.S. Army Private First Class Jerry Bockbrader Mem Hwy
- HB 620 Designate the Paulding County Purple Heart Memorial Highway
- HB 621 Designate the Van Wert County Veteran's Memorial Highway
- HB 625 Regards American Legion Auxiliary, American Legion license plates
- HB 628 Designate the SSG Jack W. Coy Memorial Highway
- HB 629 Make capital appropriations and reappropriations
- HB 631 Designate the Major David McGue Memorial Highway
- HB 641 Designate the SSG Jack W. Coy Memorial Highway
- HB 652 Designate the Cpl. Robert Dockstader Memorial Highway
- HB 664 Designate the CPL David James Amheiser Memorial Highway
- HB 673 Designate the CPT Louis John Speidel Memorial Highway
- HB 674 Designate the Sgt. Anthony Kress Vinnedge Memorial Highway
- HB 679 Designate the PFC John Wayne Richard Memorial Highway
- HB 691 Designate the Marshal Teddy Ray Holcomb Memorial Highway.
- 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
- HR 431 Observing April 2024 as the Month of the Military Child in Ohio
- HR 434 Honoring American Legion Toledo Post 335 on its Centennial
- HCR 8 To urge the federal government to select Ohio for the permanent headquarters of the U.S. 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
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- SB 285 Designate Pharmacist's Mate Third Class Willard L. Shupe Mem Hwy
- SB 288 Make supplemental operating appropriations
- SB 292 Make capital appropriations and reappropriations
- SB 310 Designate U.S.S. Shenandoah Memorial Highway
- SB 315 Designate CPL Willard Boston Wallace Memorial Highway
- SR 171 Honoring Thomas Mihalis Memorial VFW Post 1079 as it commemorates its One Hundredth Anniversary
- SR 262 In memory of Senior Airman Brian "Kody" Johnson
- SR 315 Recognizing the Month of the Military Child in Ohio, April 2024
- SR 334 Honoring Beavercreek HS AFJROTC B-1 Bombers drill team on winning two Nationals championships
- SCR 8 Urge federal govt reduce processing time- veteran disability claim
- SCR 9 Urge Congress support military, veteran mental health treatment

Happy Holidays

To: All Our Readers

From: Ohio Legislative Report

Religious Holidays

- Dec 1 First Day of Advent (Christian, Catholic)
- Dec 1 Gita Jayanti (Hindu)
- Dec 8 Bodhi Day (Buddhist)
- Dec 8 Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception (Catholic Christian)
- Dec 12 Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe (Catholic Christian)
 - Dec 20 Yud Tet Kislev (Jewish)
 - Dec 21-25 Pancha Ganapati (Hindu)
 - Dec 22 Yule (Wicca and Christian)
- Dec 25 Christmas (Christian, Catholic)
- Dec 25 Feast of the Nativity (Orthodox Christian)
- Dec 25- Jan 2 Hanukkah (Jewish)
- Dec 26 Zarathosht Diso (Zoroastrian)