



Ohio Legislative Report



Volume One Alpha; Number Three

April 2023

HELPFUL LINKS

UNITED STATES CONGRESS:

www.congress.gov

US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

www.house.gov

US SENATE:

www.senate.gov

OHIO GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

www.legislature.ohio.gov

OH HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

www.ohiohouse.gov

OH SENATE:

www.ohiosenate.gov

OHIO SECRETARY OF STATE:

www.ohiosos.gov

MARCH HAPPENINGS

Senate Bill 43, sponsored by Senator Andrew O. Brenner will extend the homestead exemption for the surviving spouse of a disabled veteran to spouses of a disabled veteran who dies before receiving a qualifying disability rating.

On March 7th SB 43 was voted out of the Senate Ways and Means Committee and recommended for favorable passage. The vote was 5 to 0. On the 29th it passed on the Senate floor with a vote of 31 to 0. The bill goes to the House next where it will be referred to a House Committee for hearings.

Senate Bill 63, introduced by Senator George Lang will require a plaintiff in a tort action alleging an asbestos claim to file specified disclosures. It is generating a lot of interest from proponents and opponents alike.

Senator Lang offered sponsor testimony on March 8th. In the second hearing held on March 15th there were six testimonies offered for the most part from those representing the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, Insurance and Manufacturing Associations, and Law Firms. On March 29th more proponent testimony was heard from representatives of Ohio Business Roundtable, NFIB, and two law firms. Opponents who offered testimony were American Legion Department of Ohio, District 11 VFW, and Ohio Association for Justice.

Senate Bill 63 will be hearing more testimony from both sides and many more hearings as this General Assembly goes forward. This one could get very heated.

Ohio Legislative Report

Is published [at least] once per month to report the latest information about legislative issues –from both Washington, DC and Columbus, OH - that will affect the lives of Veterans and Military Personnel and their families members in Ohio.

It is emailed at no charge to members of the Veteran Service Organizations who subscribe.

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Reflections

“Politics is too serious a matter to be left to the politicians.”

-Charles de Gaulle

HR 1139—*GUARD VA Benefits Act* is one of the four VFW top priorities in Congress. Contact your Congressman.

Cracking Down on Predatory Claims Companies

The VFW's Concerns:

The VFW is concerned that bad actors have been preying on veterans by seeking to access their earned Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits. When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, unaccredited consulting groups that the VFW calls "Claim Sharks" viewed the chaos as an exploitation opportunity. Since the passage of the PACT Act, they have ramped up their efforts even more.

These groups aggressively advertise online and make promises to increase veterans' disability ratings. Some charge thousands of dollars in fees for their services and even request VA login credentials to track when veterans receive future ratings increases. If a veteran receives a disability percentage increase years later, often these companies return seeking more money. Furthermore, they routinely obtain medical opinions from affiliated medical providers, which raises ethical concerns.

Under VA regulations, accredited representatives of Veterans Service Organizations, like the VFW, cannot charge fees for claims services. We gladly provide these services for free. Attorneys and agents may also seek VA accreditation, and may charge certain fees that are capped and can apply only to retroactive benefits. Claim Sharks, however, avoid accreditation in order to impose exorbitant fees and avoid VA oversight. Several years ago, penalties regarding fees were removed to allow accredited attorneys and agents to charge certain fees, leaving a gap in the law that predators are exploiting. The VFW believes that penalties need to be reinstated. Anyone who assists veterans with the preparation, presentation, or prosecution of VA claims should adhere to established fee caps or be subject to penalties.

The VFW urges Congress to:

Pass the Governing Unaccredited Representatives Defrauding VA Benefits Act (HR 1139), known as the ***GUARD VA Benefits Act***. This legislation would reinstate penalties for charging veterans and survivors unauthorized fees relating to claims for VA benefits.

Some Other Bills To Watch In Congress

HR 303: Introduced on January 11th by Congressman Gus M. Billirakis (FL)

This bill amend title 10, United States Code, to permit additional retired members of the Armed Forces who have a service-connected disability to receive both disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs for their disability and either retired pay by reason of their years of military service or combat-related special compensation.

HR 705: Introduced on February 1st by Congressman Mike Bost (IL)

This bill prohibits the VA from transmitting personally identifying information of a veteran or a beneficiary to the NICS solely on the basis that such veteran or beneficiary has an appointed fiduciary to manage their benefits, unless there is an order or finding of a judicial authority that such veteran or beneficiary is a danger to themselves or others.

S 132: Introduced on January 30th by Senator Sherrod Brown (OH)

This bill requires the Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs to jointly carry out a five-year pilot program to assess the feasibility and advisability of providing certain services and a module comprised of specified elements as part of the pre-separation transition process for members of the Armed Forces for the purpose of reducing the incidence of suicide among veterans.

Current Legislation in the 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
- 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

Exciting News

You can now read every issue of

Ohio Legislative Report

On the

Lorain County Veterans Service Commission
website



www.loraincountyveterans.com

2023 OHIO PRIMARY/SPECIAL ELECTIONS CALENDAR

- April 3** Deadline for Voter Registration for May 2 Primary/Special Election
- April 4** Absentee Voting by Mail and Early In-Person Voting Begins
- April 25** Absentee Ballot Applications Must be Received by Your Board of Elections by Close of Business

May 2 PRIMARY/SPECIAL ELECTION DAY

How to Read a Bill

Members of the General Assembly rely on the nonpartisan staff of the Legislative Service Commission (LSC) to draft the bills they request. While the drafting work is performed by LSC, members should become familiar with the form and structure of bills in order to have a thorough understanding of the law-making process. Members can learn about the contents of a bill in a variety of ways such as reading bill analyses and fiscal notes or listening to committee testimony and the comments of sponsors, other legislators, and lobbyists. However, there is no substitute for reading the bill itself.

When reading a bill, a member may have questions relating to the meaning and clarity of the language. These are often the same questions that cause difficulties in administering the law when the bill is enacted. Occasionally, technical or legal terms are required, but normally the language of a bill should be simple and concise. If the language is not clear, the member should seek clarification.

The Ohio Constitution requires legislation to be drafted in a specific format.

The sample bill (Elements of a Bill) illustrates the major parts of a bill.

Taken from the 18th edition of A Guidebook for Ohio Legislators for the 135th General Assembly.

Elements of a Bill		
	As Introduced	
	135th General Assembly Regular Session 2023-2024	
	Senator Ohio	S. B. No. 100
	A BILL	
Title	To amend section 5748.06 and to repeal section 5748.07 of the Revised Code to increase the credit senior citizens may take against school district income taxes.	1 2 3
Style Clause	BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:	
Amending or Enacting Clause	Section 1. That section 5748.06 of the Revised Code be amended to read as follows:	4 5
Body	Sec. 5748.06. For a taxpayer sixty-five years of age or older during the taxable year, a credit shall be permitted against the tax otherwise due under this chapter for such year equal to fifty <u>sixty</u> dollars for each return required to be filed under section 5748.08 of the Revised Code for taxes levied under this chapter. The credit allowed under this section shall not exceed the tax otherwise due.	6 7 8 9 10 11
Repeal Clause (for amended sections)	Section 2. That existing section 5748.06 of the Revised Code is hereby repealed.	12 13
Repeal Clause (for sections repealed outright)	Section 3. That section 5748.07 of the Revised Code is hereby repealed.	14 15

BILLS INTRODUCED DURING THE MONTH OF MARCH

HB 90:

Introduced by Representative Thomas F. Patton (District 17) on March 7th.

Referred to the House Ways and Means Committee.

The bill would amend sections 323.152 and 4503.065 of the Revised Code to authorize a total property tax exemption for the homesteads of totally disabled veterans and their surviving spouses.

HB 123:

Introduced by Representatives Joseph A. Miller, III (District 53) and Adam C. Miller (District 6) on March 21st.

Referred to the House

The bill will enact section 9.51 of the Revised Code to 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 and to encourage that the flag be displayed at the Statehouse in Columbus on Memorial Day.

HB 126:

Introduced by Representatives Adam Mathews (District 56) and Adam C. Miller (District 6) on March 21st.

Referred to the House

The bill will amend section 718.01 of the Revised Code to expand a municipal income tax exemption for military pay.

HB 131:

Introduced by Representative Angela N. King (District 84) on March 23rd.

Referred to the House

The bill will enact section 5534.874 of the Revised Code to designate a portion of United States Route 33 in Auglaize County as the "Army SSgt. Charles V. Kettler Memorial Highway."

More bills on the next page...

HB 132:

Introduced by Representative Angela N. King (District 84) on March 23rd.

Referred to the House

The bill will enact section 5534.875 of the Revised Code to designate a portion of State Route 29 in Auglaize County as the "Army Sgt. Herbert C. Linville Memorial Highway."

HB 133:

Introduced by Representative Angela N. King (District 84) on March 23rd.

Referred to the House

The bill will To enact section 5534.876 of the Revised Code to designate a portion of State Route 66 in Auglaize County as the "Army Sgt. Ronnie Blair Memorial Highway."

Details on every bill can be found on the Ohio Legislature website. You can also check the status of bills as they travel thorough committees and sessions, check to see how the voting went, and read the testimonies of witnesses.

To find a bill put the bill number (i.e. SB 712 or HB 943) into the search bar and go from there.

You can find the Ohio Legislature's website with this link:

www.legislature.ohio.gov

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

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