



**State Representative Derek Merrin
District 47**

**Substitute House Bill 75 – Sponsor Testimony
Armed Services, Veterans Affairs, and Homeland Security Committee
March 8, 2017**

Good afternoon, Chairman Johnson, Vice-Chairman Lanese, Ranking Member Craig and members of the Armed Services, Veterans Affairs, and Homeland Security Committee. Thank you for allowing me to present testimony on Substitute House Bill 75. This legislation provides an opportunity to support our armed forces and Ohio's economy. Our country has over 1.3 million active duty military members. Many have a spouse that provides valuable support and makes personal sacrifices for America.

Due to their service, military families frequently relocate to fulfill assignments. Military families are ten times more likely than the general public to move interstate. For military spouses, it can be challenging to maintain continuous employment and pursue a career. It is estimated that 35% of military spouses are employed in fields that require a state license or certificate. With states having different licensing requirements, military spouses are often unable to immediately practice their trade or secure employment until they hurdle the bureaucratic licensing requirements in their new state.

Substitute House Bill 75 seeks to streamline the licensing process for military members and their spouses. A military member or their spouse holding a professional license from another state that has equivalent or more stringent licensing requirements than Ohio will receive a permanent license without meeting further requirements. Those holding a professional license from a state with less stringent licensing requirements than Ohio will receive a 12-month license by endorsement without meeting further examination. With a 12-month license, the licensee may engage only within the scope of professional activities permitted in their previous state. To receive a permanent license, a military member or their spouse must complete the requirements by the appropriate state licensing board within the 12-month time frame.

The bill will expedite the licensure process for many well-trained teachers, registered nurses, and professionals to immediately begin contributing to Ohio's economy and providing for their families. Our licensing laws should be rooted in common-sense and not hinder economic growth, especially for military families.

Substitute House Bill 75 is a step forward in reforming Ohio's licensing requirements, and extends a welcoming hand to our military families moving to the Buckeye State. I respectfully ask for your support for this bill, and welcome any questions the committee may have at this time.