



Representative Hearcel F. Craig  
26<sup>th</sup> House District

**Armed Services, Veterans Affairs and Homeland Security Committee  
House Bill 158 Sponsor Testimony  
Representatives Hearcel F. Craig and Rep. Rick Perales  
Unemployment Compensation for Military Spouses  
May 17, 2017**

Chairman Johnson and members of the House Armed Services, Veterans Affairs and Homeland Security Committee, thank you for providing me the opportunity to offer sponsor testimony on House Bill 158. I would also like to thank Representative Rick Perales for agreeing to be a joint sponsor on this legislation.

Currently, Ohio's Unemployment Compensation program disqualifies a military spouse from applying for unemployment benefits when accompanying his or her spouse on a new military assignment because the job separation was not directly caused by the employers.

H.B. 158 would remedy this situation by providing unemployment compensation eligibility for military spouses who leave an Ohio job due to a military transfer. This change is just one thing we can do to lighten the burden on military families and to show our support for those who protect and serve out country. It is our duty to protect the families of the service men and women who sacrifice so much for our freedoms.

Most recently Louisiana enacted a law to allow military spouses to receive unemployment compensation<sup>1</sup>. However, the three remaining states: Idaho, North Dakota and Ohio are the only states which excludes military spouses from the

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<sup>1</sup> Louisiana State Legislature, 2016 Regular Session House Bill 1142. Effective date: 08/01/2016.

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general unemployment benefits who had been forced to leave their previous employment because of the active duty member's Permanent Change of Station (PCS). Comparatively there are twenty – six states including our neighboring states of Indiana, Michigan, and Pennsylvania provide this benefit specifically to military spouses. The remaining twenty states have some sort of general law or regulation that military spouses would qualify for just as those who are civilians<sup>2</sup>.

A study by the Military Spouse Employment Report estimated unemployment in 2012 for armed forces spouses aged 18-24 was 30%, nearly three times higher than the civilian rate of 10%. For the age group of 25-44, the unemployment rates were 15% compared to 5%.<sup>3</sup> These are alarming statistics because we could be doing more to help these families as they serve this state and country.

Military families make tremendous sacrifices, especially in times of mobilization. Frequent moves, school transitions, and separation of the family are common. A military spouse often must work to meet the financial needs of family not unlike the general population who depend upon dual income to avoid hardship.

I know as well as anyone the budgetary concerns of our current state government. I would not come before this committee and recommend a bill that is not conscious of these concerns. It is vital that Ohio is a leader in implementing this important initiative. I believe we must show our military families that they are just as important to this great state when it comes to this matter.

At his point, I would like to ask Rep. Perales to speak about the fiscal costs of House Bill 158.

Chairman Johnson and members of the House Armed Services, Veterans Affairs and Public Safety Committee, I thank you for allowing us to offer testimony.

I ask for your support of House Bill 158 and would be happy to address any of your questions.

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<sup>2</sup> “The In’s and Out’s of Unemployment Compensation for MilSpouses” National Military Family Association. June 2016.

<sup>3</sup> “Military Spouse Employment Report” Institute for Veterans and Military Families. February 2014.