



OHIO COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS
Affiliated with the Military Officers Association of America

Chairman Johnson, Vice Chair Lanese Ranking Member Craig, and members of the House Armed Services, Veterans Affairs, and Homeland Security Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to testify in favor of House Bill 158.

HB 158 would amend section 4141.29 of the Ohio Revised Code to permit persons who quit work to accompany the persons spouse on a military transfer to be eligible for unemployment compensation benefits.

Unemployment compensation is important to military families, who cannot afford to lose income during a military move. Working spouses had an average of 25.2 months on station in a previous survey – working spouses lose approximately 6-9 months of salary per relocation. Providing unemployment compensation is both pragmatic and a matter of principle: Military family moves to fulfill military requirements and spouses should not be penalized by states for "voluntarily" leaving employment.

Some states provide eligibility to all employees who are moving as a result of their spouse relocating to accept a job outside of their current commuting distance. Other states provide specific eligibility for military spouses who have "voluntarily" left their position as a result of a military move.

The primary element to clarify in a change to current statutes concerning disqualifications for receiving unemployment compensation is to ensure that a claimant should not be viewed to have voluntarily left a job to accompany his or her spouse as part of a military move. In addition, many states ensure that discrimination in the workplace toward military spouses is minimized by stipulating that claims related to military spouses do not accrue to the employer's unemployment filing experience.

This is a readiness and retention issue for military families. When families can move together their stress and worries are minimized and the expense of the move is reduced as only one household is required. Both can focus on their careers and family without the concerns of being geographically separated.

Military spouses too often face challenges in maintaining a career due to permanent change of duty station moves every few years. Studies have shown that one in three military spouses in the labor force require licenses or certification for their chosen career field. Career like teaching, nursing, or social work require state licenses or certifications to be updated in every state. This process can impose significant costs to the highly mobile military family. This legislation will help military spouses continue their careers and reduce the financial burdens on military families.

This proposed legislation would encourage resident and nonresident veterans to locate in Ohio to engage in a second career after their military service.

Ohio is one of four states that does not have similar legislation.

Members of Ohio's General Assembly have shown their gratitude and appreciation to members of the Uniformed Services, both serving and having served, and their families, for their service and sacrifice, this proposed legislation would provide another benefit that would be appreciated.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposed legislation.

**Colonel John C. McCoy, USAF (Ret)
Legislative Director
Ohio Council of Chapters
Military Officers Association of America
Mccoyjc1@aol.com
614.864.816**