

Statement of
James D. Rickel
Central Regional State Liaison
Defense-State Liaison Office
Office of the Deputy Assistance Secretary of
Defense
Military Community and Family Policy
Ohio House Bill 158
June 7, 2017

OH 158 removes disqualification of certain spouses of reassigned military personnel.
Unemployment Insurance for Military Spouses that Relocate Due to Military Transfer

Introduction:

The Defense-State Liaison Office operates under the Office of the Deputy Assistance Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy.

We serve as a DoD resource to state policymakers in their efforts to address the quality of life issues of military families.

DoD believes state policy is the best technique to address these important issues.

Mr. Rickel joined the DoD-State Liaison Office as a Regional Liaison in 2006. Previously, he served on active duty in the U.S. Navy from 1976 to 2006 retiring from the United States Navy as a Command Master Chief (E9).

In his current position, Mr. Rickel monitors quality of life issues for military families in IN, IL, OH, MI, WI, WV, ND and SD.

Statement:

Chairman and Committee Members, I'm Jim Rickel the Central Regional State Liaison for Military Families. I work for the Department of Defense State Liaison Office, which addresses quality of life issues affecting military families as they intersect with state policy.

One of those issues is Unemployment compensation for military spouses who leave a job due to a military transfer.

As you may know, there is an exception to the disqualification for unemployment Insurance benefits if the claimant leaves his or her job for "good cause". However, currently, the "good cause" definition specifically exempts an employee who leaves a job to transfer with a spouse to a new location.

Members of the Armed Forces do not have the choice to decline a transfer. They are directed by a military order to relocate so there is no choice.

Currently, 46 states provide unemployment compensation specifically to military spouses due to a military transfer, and 4 states (OH, PA, ND, and ID) exclude military spouses from such a benefit.

OH HB 158 would remove the "disqualification" of unemployment compensation for the military spouse when he/she leaves employment due to a military transfer and the place of employment is not reasonably accessible.

Realizing that these types of involuntary separations are not the responsibility of the employer, nor within the employer's control, the bill would ensure that the costs in these cases will not be charged to the employer, but rather to non-chargeable benefits account.

Estimates are that the potential claimants under this change would represent less than one hundredth of one percent the total annual unemployment beneficiaries in the state.

We also know from the Defense Manpower Data Center that 51% of military spouses are employed, excluding 13% dual military couples.

Our Military spouses make tremendous sacrifices each and every day with frequent moves and challenges such as school transitions for their children and separation of the family. A military spouse often must work to meet the financial needs of the family depending upon dual income to avoid hardship. The passing of OH HB 158 will alleviate the temporary hardship associated with the gap in employment income for the military spouse.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully Submitted:

James D. Rickel

james.d.rickel.civ@mail.mil

(571) 239-9895