



Representative Wes Goodman
District 87

House Bill 295 – Sponsor Testimony
Armed Services, Veterans Affairs, and Homeland Security Committee
September 20th, 2017

Chairman Johnson, Vice Chair Lanese, Ranking Member Craig, and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to give sponsor testimony on House Bill 295 today.

Current Ohio law exempts owners of service dogs from paying registration fees if they can show proof that their dog is in fact a service dog. We do this for good reason, as service dogs are vital for improving the quality of life of their owners. It would not be right to charge individuals with disabilities a registration fee for a dog that they have out of necessity rather than choice.

It especially would not be right to charge the fee to veterans who got their disability in service of their country. Unfortunately, the code is currently unclear as to whether veterans with service dogs for service related disabilities such as post-traumatic stress disorder, or traumatic brain injury are exempt.

This was brought to my attention by a county auditor in my district who noted that some counties are currently granting the exemption to veterans and others are not, depending on their reading of the code. I think we can all agree that veterans should not have to pay to register a dog that helps them live with a disability they suffered while serving our country.

This bill ensures that does not happen by explicitly exempting veterans with diagnoses of post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, or other service-related disabilities from paying registration fees for their service dogs. Like other individuals with service dogs, they would still need to show proof that the dog is indeed a trained service dog in order to receive the exemption.

The Ohio American Legion is supportive of the bill. The County Auditors Association of Ohio is supportive of the bill's concept, and I am currently in talks with them to ensure the language of the bill accurately reflects the intent. We may propose a small clarifying amendment in the coming weeks.

I respectfully ask for your support of House Bill 295 and welcome any questions you may have at this time.