



Ohio General Assembly
House of Representatives
Columbus

Sponsor Testimony of Representative Jonathan Dever
Regarding House Resolution 318
Before the Armed Services, Veterans Affairs, and Homeland Security Committee
Wednesday, January 24, 2018

Chairman Johnson, Vice Chair Lanese, Ranking Member Craig and members of the House Armed Services, Veterans Affairs, and Homeland Security Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer sponsor testimony on behalf of House Resolution 318, which will urge the President, Secretary of Defense, and Congress to authorize the recruitment and service of individuals with disabilities in the United State Armed Forces.

Recently I attended a dinner where the former Israeli Ambassador to the United States spoke of a program in Israel known as “Special in Uniform.” Israeli law requires citizens over the age of 18 to join the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), with few exceptions. Exceptions from military service are provided to those with physical and developmental disabilities. However, the State of Israel recently began to implement the “Special in Uniform” to integrate individuals with autism and other disabilities into the IDF. Through the program, those with a disability are able to receive basic training and meaningful assignments in the armed services to help support the overall mission.

In our country federal law requires covered employers to make reasonable accommodations for those with disabilities. Although individuals with disabilities may not be able to serve in a forward capacity, these young men and women can provide great support to those on the front line.

Integrating the disability community will increase the well-being of the disabled individuals, but those that enlist beside them. I hope you will join me in advocating for the equal treatment and opportunity of those Americans with a disability. The honor to serve in the United States Armed Services should be available to all.

Thank you, again, for allowing us the opportunity to offer sponsor testimony on House Resolution 318. I would be happy to answer any questions at this time.