

**Committees:**

Finance

Finance Subcommittee on Higher  
Education – Chair

Armed Services, Veterans Affairs, and  
Homeland Security

Higher Education and Workforce  
Development

State and Local Government



**Contact Information:**

Office: 614-644-6020

Email: Rep73@ohiohouse.gov

**Commissions/Special Committees:**

Veterans' Caucus – Chair

Task Force on BRAC and Military Affairs – Chair

Ohio Aerospace and Aviation Technology  
Committee

Ohio Third Frontier Commission Advisory Board

Ohio Latino Affairs Commission

**State Representative Rick Perales**  
**Ohio's 73<sup>rd</sup> House District: Western Portion of Greene County**

Chair Johnson, Vice Chair Lanese, Ranking Member Craig, and members of the committee, I thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of House Bill 468, a bill that provides additional sick leave for veterans attending appointments at the VA.

As many of you may know, working with the VA is not a quick process. Ohio's veterans face a long wait time to receive care at VA facilities both across our state and across the country. Unfortunately, our veterans are all too familiar with the full parking lots and long lines at VA centers, as well as the extended hold times when calling in to seek medical advice on basic issues.

As a full-time state employee, a veteran receives a certain amount of sick leave per year. Our veterans should not have to spend a majority of this limited time waiting in line. HB 468 seeks to relieve unnecessary stress on our veteran community in a few ways.

This bill would entitle veterans who are full-time state employees up to 96 hours of paid sick leave per calendar year to attend medical appointments, examinations, or receive treatment from the Department of Veterans Affairs. If a veteran occupies a full-time and

permanent position after January 1<sup>st</sup> of the calendar year, this legislation would require the Department of Administrative Services to adopt regulations providing for a prorated leave credit.

As full-time state employees, our veterans currently receive up to 80 hours of paid sick leave per year. The additional 96 hours will only be granted to those state employees who use the VA or a VA service provider for their medical needs.

Sen. Hoagland brought this urgent need in the veteran community to my attention and we have chosen to run legislation concurrently as SB 190 and HB 486. The legislation will give much-needed relief for our veterans working for the state. As many of you may know, our VAs are often unable to keep up with the high volume of veterans that seek medical care from their facilities. Many of our Veterans have been let down by the VA. As a State, we may not be able to solve all the problems facing the VA, but as an employer, we have the opportunity to step in and alleviate a burden that our veterans face. Our veterans should not have to budget the majority of their sick leave to waiting. This extra time will allow our service men and women to seek the care they need without increasing the burden on them or their families. Our veterans should **never** have to choose between their health or a paycheck.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify on behalf of HB 468. I will be glad to answer any questions.