

HB716 Proponent Testimony

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Chairman Johnson, Vice Chair Kick, Ranking Minority Member Craig and members of the House Armed Services, Veterans Affairs, and Homeland Security Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in support of House Bill 716. I am Cassie B. Barlow, Colonel (retired), United States Air Force. I am also the Chief Operating Officer at the Southwestern Ohio Council for Higher Education. I write to you today in both of my roles – retired AF member and former Commander of Wright Patterson AFB from 2012-2014, and workforce development professional.

My family and I were honored to serve our country for 26 years, moving 13 times to different locations all around the world. My family, like many others, had two breadwinners. Having two breadwinners in the family today is the norm in most military families. My husband is an attorney and chose to support my career by following me around the world. What this meant for him was that every time we relocated, he needed to start over with his career. This was a challenging situation for him to try to reestablish himself every two years. When we moved to Ohio, he was yet again challenged with the question of how best to practice his trade in a new State.

I served as a commander in several of my postings in the Air Force and witnessed the struggle of military spouses having to get recertified and licensed in their trade in several new States. For every spouse that must earn a new State license, time in their field is lost, and money is lost for each military family.

This reciprocity bill is critical for military members and their families being heartily welcomed into our State. Immediately allowing spouses to live, work and play in our State, not only makes them quickly feel comfortable in their new surroundings but also contributes to the State tax base in a much more expedient way. Military spouses very much want to be part of their new community, and there is no better way than contributing to the local economy in their chosen occupation.

When military members retire or choose to separate from the military and stay in a particular State, the benefits offered in that State are a critical determinant for this decision. Licensure reciprocity is a significant benefit for the military in Ohio and can help military members trying to make this critical decision of where they will settle with their families.

Chairman Johnson, Vice Chair Kick, Ranking Minority Member Craig and members of the House Armed Services, Veterans Affairs, and Homeland Security Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to offer written testimony in support of House Bill 716.