



Proponent Testimony on House Bill 603 – Military In-State Tuition

Higher Education and Workforce Committee

November 28, 2018

Chairman Duffey, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Ramos and members of the House Higher Education & Workforce Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on HB 603 sponsored by Representative Perales. I am Tom Walsh, Vice President of the Ohio Association of Community Colleges (OACC), which represents the presidents and trustees of Ohio's twenty-three community colleges.

By providing our active duty military members and their families with in-state tuition rates, the overarching goal of HB 603 is consistent with one of the central missions of Ohio's community colleges of providing affordable postsecondary options for our students. HB 603 would waive the one-year residency requirement so that military members and their families, many of whom locate to Ohio due to their service but end up remaining in Ohio permanently. By providing service members and their dependents with postsecondary training opportunities, HB 603 will help these individuals gain the skills required to needed to transition into a job in their community. This bill will help keep more of our military men and women here in our region once their service has ended.

Granting active duty military personnel and their families in-state tuition rates at our public colleges and universities will also help reduce a barrier for many students that may put off pursuing a postsecondary credential or degree due to financial constraints. Reducing the costs of pursuing the credential means more of our brave military men and women can gain the necessary skills sooner, which we know increases the likelihood that they will pursue and complete postsecondary options, thus helping to provide a better educated and trained workforce that we know Ohio's businesses and industry is begging the state for. HB 603 is another smart strategy to help Ohio meet its statewide workforce readiness goal of having 65% of all adults with some type of postsecondary certificate, credential or degree.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to offer our strong support of HB 603 on behalf of Ohio's community colleges. We are thankful for the sacrifices that our military service members and their families have made to protect the freedoms we all enjoy every day and we strongly urge the Committee's favorable consideration of this bill.