



SB 170
House Transportation and Public Safety Committee
February 28, 2018

Chairman Green, Vice Chair Patton, Ranking Member Sheehy, and members of the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee, my name is Tom Balzer, and I am the president and CEO of the Ohio Trucking Association and the Ohio Association of Movers. Collectively, we represent over 1,000 trucking, moving, logistics, warehouse companies and allied vendor members. On behalf of our members, I would like to express our support for SB 170.

The trucking industry is the lifeblood of the U.S. economy. Nearly 70% of all the freight tonnage moved in the U.S. is transported by trucks. Moving 9.2 billion tons of freight annually requires nearly 3 million heavy-duty Class 8 trucks and over 3 million truck drivers.

The U.S. Department of Labor places the median annual salary for all truck drivers at around \$40,000, but because of the variety of jobs that fall into the truck driver category heavy duty truck drivers typically make much more. Pay for drivers is based on production so entry level drivers can expect to make an increased wage shortly after entry into the industry. The median annual wage for a trucker that works for a private fleet is \$73,000 with some drivers topping \$100,000 per year. Unfortunately, the trucking industry is having difficulty finding drivers to fill these high-paying positions.

Military veterans who have experience operating heavy duty vehicles are uniquely qualified to fill these high-paying jobs. Unfortunately, the "immediacy rule," which requires a veteran to have operated a heavy duty vehicle within two years of being discharged before the CDL skills test can be waived, makes it harder for qualified veterans to transition into a civilian CDL. SB 170 seeks to streamline this transition and encourage our service men and women to pursue a career as a truck driver. The bill would require the Director of the Ohio Department of Public Safety to seek permission by the United States Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration to implement a temporary pilot program. Under this program, the state could waive the CDL skills test for veterans, who have operated similar heavy duty equipment for at least two years in the military.

We appreciate Senator LaRose's diligent work on this legislation and urge your support.

Thank you for allowing me to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Tom Balzer
President/CEO
Ohio Trucking Association
Ohio Association of Movers