



SB 170 Proponent Testimony
Kimberly McConville, CAE Executive Director

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, I am Kimberly McConville, Executive Director of the Ohio Beverage Association (formerly known as the Ohio Soft Drink Association).

I am here to support SB 170 CDL Driver Test Waiver for Military/Veterans, and offer some perspective from an industry that relies on CDL drivers. We have critical driver shortages now and SB 170 is a way to enlarge the pool of drivers while providing more jobs for our veterans.

Our Industry

I represent nearly 10,000 beverage industry employees statewide. Our members manufacture and distribute some of the most popular non-alcoholic beverages in the world. Our industry has a \$6.4 billion economic impact in Ohio, pays over \$750 million in annual wages and benefits and contributes over \$516 million annually in state taxes. A healthy beverage industry supports an additional 33,814 workers in restaurants, grocery stores, and other retail outlets.

Fleet Management

My members constantly innovate—from diverse beverage portfolios to operational efficiency, this industry is always looking for a better way to go to business. Fleet management is a critical cost center for all our companies. Whether they are investing in hybrid trucks, installing no idle switches or using load and route optimization software, this industry spends heavily on vehicle purchase, function, insurance and maintenance.

But the most critical part of our product distribution is our CDL drivers. Getting our products from production centers to warehouses and into stores, demands qualified drivers. Adding to our challenge is attracting and keeping drivers willing to thread an 18 wheeler through city streets, alleyways and tight loading docks.

Driver Shortage Challenge

You have heard from the Ohio Trucking Association and others about current and projected driver shortages in Ohio and beyond. How does this play out for us? One of my members recently posted two jobs in Twinsburg--one for a warehouse worker and one for a Class A CDL driver. He had over 60 applicants for the warehouse and zero for the driver. Another member in Columbus had a driver shortage earlier this year that idled 4-6 trucks nearly every day.

SB 170 Win-Win

SB 170 is a creative approach to capitalizing on veterans and military personnel who have driving skills and experience from their military service. The bill creates a pilot program that would move these skilled drivers into well paying jobs that demand CDL drivers—saving time and money for drivers and employers.

If our military service members can take advantage of an exemption from the skills test portion of the CDL application, as SB 170 facilitates, they move into civilian jobs quicker. There are evaluation guardrails around this pilot program which the Ohio Department of Public Safety will fulfill. The Department will compile data for the duration of the pilot program (four years), analyzing how well the program achieved the objectives of SB 170.

Bottom Line

Our industry needs more qualified, skilled drivers. Our veterans have those skills and a demonstrated work ethic as well. SB 170 cuts away another layer of time and expense to move those drivers into good jobs. Please consider giving SB 170 your full support. Thank you.