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8 May 2020

Testimony of Lieutenant Colonel Roderick A. Hosler, U.S. Army, Retired, In Support of HB 428

Chair Rick Perales, Vice Chair Ron Hood, Ranking Member Casey Weinstein, and members of the Armed Service and Veterans Affairs Committee. I thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 428.²

My name is Lieutenant Colonel Roderick A. Hosler, U.S. Army, Retired, and I have been a resident of the State of Ohio since 1997. A career Army officer originally from Montana, I arrived in Ohio in 1997 to teach Army Reserve Officer's Training Corps at the Youngstown State University and remained in Ohio upon my retirement. I am currently the President of the Ohio Council of Chapters of the Military Officers Association of America that represents all active, reserve, National Guard, retired members of the uniform services and their dependence and widows in seven local Ohio chapters.

I am writing this testimony in support of HB 428 which authorizes counties that establish a veterans' identification card program to issue veterans identification cards to individuals who have served with the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) which are part of the seven uniformed services of the United States.

The USPHS Commissioned Corps consists of approximately 6,700 officers ranging in rank from ensign to vice admiral, including physicians, nurses, engineers, dentists, veterinarians, allied health professionals, environmental health specialists, pharmacists, dietitians, physical therapists, and scientists. Like members of the armed branches of the uniformed services, USPHS officers are often called upon to put their lives at risk in order to protect the safety and health of American citizens. For instance, Public Health Service Officers are frequently deployed to respond domestically and internationally to infectious disease threats like SARS, Ebola, Zika, and cholera, to name a few. Furthermore, Public Health Service Officers respond to national crises like hurricanes, biological attacks, floods, acts of terrorism and other national crises. Public Health Service Officers have served alongside Armed Services comrades in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Philippines, Timor-Leste, onboard the USNS Mercy off the coast of Indonesia, and elsewhere around the world. In Ohio, Public Health Service Officers work at the CDC's National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, the Food and Drug Administration, and the Environmental Protection Agency, in Cincinnati; the Federal Correctional Institute in Elkton; at Wright-Patterson Medical Center in Fairborn; and at the 9th District Coast Guard Headquarters in Cleveland.

Most recently, members of the USPHS Commissioned Corps have been called to serve our country's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, the USPHS has established medical stations to assist in response in New York which represent 1,000 of the 2,500 hospital beds at the Javits Center in Manhattan. Alongside Army medical personnel, HHS medical professionals—members of the Public Health Service Commissioned Corps and the National Disaster Medical