



HOUSE BILL 16 TESTIMONY

26 March 2019

Good afternoon, Chair Keller, Vice Chair Riedel, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the House Higher Education Committee. Thank you for allowing me to speak on behalf of Clark State Community College today. My name is Jo Alice Blondin, and I am proud to serve Clark State as President. Clark State strongly supports House Bill 16, and thanks our local House member, Representative Perales, for his efforts in ensuring that active duty military and their families are welcomed to Ohio and provided with affordable higher educational opportunities so that they may progress in their chosen fields and contribute to the economy of our state.

Clark State Community College has a long and proud history of serving our veterans, active duty military, reservists, and their families across region in Southwest Ohio. Clark State is the first Ohio public college to partner with the Community College of the Air Force (CCAF) to offer courses that meet the CCAF requirements for the Associate degree through the Air Force General Education Mobile (GEM) program. Clark State offers workforce training at Wright Patterson Air Force Base (NASIC and AFRL and AF-LCMC) in many areas, such as foreign military sales, public speaking, and leadership development. Clark State is the only higher educational provider on base for the Springfield Air National Guard, and offers courses onsite to active military, reservists, and their families. Clark State provides a 50% discount on tuition to all active military and reservists, and offers a 25% discount for spouses. Clark State is the only site in our region that offers Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) testing through the Department of Defense. Clark State works closely with the Air Force Aid Society to offer short-term certificates for military spouses. Clark State was the first college in Ohio to be designated a “Purple Heart Campus” in recognition of our support of veterans. Clark State’s Student Senate established a Veterans’ Lounge on campus as well as dedicated a Fallen Warrior Memorial to honor those who have made the ultimate sacrifice serving their country.

In other words, Clark State recognizes and understands the important contributions of our military and their families to Ohio, and any program that provides increased access to skill development for active military, reservists, and their dependents will enhance the Ohio economy and the quality of life for all. Since 2015, Clark State has served nearly 2500 students in the above categories, and looks forward to expanding these numbers to encompass those individuals for whom out-of-state tuition is a barrier to beginning, continuing, or completing a degree or industry-recognized credential in Ohio.

Finally, in order for Ohio to reach the ambitious attainment goal of 65% of residents with a degree or credential by 2025, we will need to widen the net to allow for those active military and their dependents to participate in this goal through offering in-state tuition at our public colleges and universities. Treating our active duty military and their families as Ohio residents for the purposes of tuition-- from the very beginning of their move to this state—will make it more likely that these families stay in Ohio after retirement or separation from the military, thereby enhancing our workforce. House Bill 16 is a “win-win” for all. Thank you, and I am happy to answer any questions.