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Ohio's 73rd House District: Western Portion of Greene County

**House Higher Education Committee
House Bill 16 – Military In-State Tuition
Sponsor Testimony
26 MARCH 2019**

Chair Keller, Vice Chair Riedel, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the House Higher Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity today to testify on behalf of House Bill 16, a bill that would help reduce the cost of education for Active Duty Service members and their eligible family members.

We all recognize the tremendous sacrifices service members and their families make for citizens of the United States. Their service to our country is brave and commendable, and it is the reason I am so passionate about supporting our service members and veterans. Oftentimes, retired service members struggle to find uses in the civilian world for the valuable skills they learned during their time in Active Duty. Beyond that, some servicewomen and men serve their country honorably but have a different vision for their lives beyond the military.

Moreover, dependents of Active Duty members sometimes find themselves calling a new place home every few years or even months. Without a place to permanently call home, it is hard to justify limiting a dependent's college choices to the state in which his or her parent or guardian was last stationed or their service member's home of record.

Ohio's universities currently have varying levels of support for our Armed Forces members and their dependents. This bill will ensure consistency across the board by waiving the 1-year residency requirement and immediately making our Active Duty members and their dependents eligible for in-state tuition. With House Bill 16, we have the opportunity to drastically reduce the economic burden of attending postsecondary institutions for service members who wish to further their education and their families in Ohio.

Logistically, Ohio attracted nearly 22,000 out-of-state freshmen in 2016 alone, and many people who attend college in our great state choose to stay. These college graduates then influence our work force and economy, and make an impact on the community around them. If we could make Ohio's higher education institutions viable options for current Active Duty members and their families, we could be growing our workforce; from both dependents remaining in the state for school and career opportunities, and these service members who may choose to make Ohio their home after they hang up their uniform.

Although difficult to quantify, it is my opinion and many others' that the return on investment will be significant. For example, the recent announcement of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base's selection for the F-35 Sustainment Mission, which will bring at least 400 new jobs to Ohio, is another indicator that, in totality,

these military and veteran-friendly bills enhance our state's ability to attract military missions and installations.

Beyond the numbers, this is a small step we can take to show our military members and their families that we support them and that we appreciate them during their service to our country. We have received the support of the Inter-University Council, the voluntary educational association of Ohio's public universities. Additionally, this bill is supported by the Office of Military Community and Family Policy under the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, as it is one of the Top 10 Key Issues they are addressing nationwide. This bill has the support of 33 of our colleagues, was passed unanimously out of this committee last General Assembly, and passed unanimously on the House Floor as HB 603 with a vote of 87-0.

It is for these reasons that I request favorable consideration of House Bill 16. Chair Keller, Vice Chair Riedel, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the House Higher Education Committee I thank you for the opportunity to testify today and will answer any questions you may have.