



Proponent Testimony on H.B. 16 (In-State Tuition to Military Families)
Rachel Castle
Director, Defense Programs, Dayton Development Coalition
Before the Higher Education Committee
Ohio House of Representatives
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Chair Keller, Vice Chair Riedel, Ranking Minority Member Ingram, and members of the Higher Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 16, which grants in-state tuition rates to active duty members of the Armed Services, their spouses, and dependents attending Ohio state institutions of higher education.

I would also like to thank Representative Rick Perales for his leadership on this bill, which is important to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, our state, and our national defense.

My name is Rachel Castle. I am Director, Defense Programs, of the Dayton Development Coalition, an economic development organization that seeks to attract, retain, and grow jobs in the 14-county Dayton region. Our responsibility includes attracting and retaining new missions and jobs at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and Springfield Air National Guard Base.

With nearly 30,000 workers, Wright-Patterson is the largest single-site employer in Ohio. Attracting and retaining jobs at the Base is critical not only to the Dayton region, but to the entire state.

Quality of life issues for military families are expected increasingly to drive decisions by the military when selecting which defense installations will receive new jobs. In order to

maintain enlistment targets, the military needs environments for its bases that are friendly to spouses and families.

The military has made it very clear that it will use its leverage as a local economic driver to improve the family-friendly laws and regulations that affect its service members. In other words, in order for Ohio to remain competitive with other states to gain new military jobs, we need to enact legislation that supports military spouses and families.

Ensuring in-state education tuition rates for spouses and dependents of military members is an important issue for the Department of Defense. This bill will allow dependents to claim in-state tuition eligibility even if a military member has not established domicile in Ohio on the first day of a term of enrollment in an institution of higher education.

In the next few years, the Air Force and Department of Defense will make decisions where to base new missions and locate jobs. Ohio military installations, including Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Reserve, and National Guard Bases will be in the running for some of the new missions, which could involve thousands of jobs.

Passage of House Bill. 16 would show that Ohio is willing to do its part to support our servicemen and women and their families.

Again, thank you Madam Chair.