



Proponent Testimony on House Bill 16 – Military In-State Tuition

House Higher Education Committee

March 26, 2019

Chair Keller, Vice Chair Riedel, Ranking Member Ingram and members of the House Higher Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 16 (HB 16) sponsored by Representative Perales. I am Tom Walsh, Vice President of the Ohio Association of Community Colleges (OACC). OACC represents the presidents and trustees of Ohio's twenty-three public two-year institutions and works to advance our community colleges through advocacy, policy and professional development.

By providing our active duty military members and their families with in-state tuition rates, the overarching goal of HB 16 is consistent with one of the central missions of our community colleges by providing affordable and accessible postsecondary options for all students. HB 16 would waive the one-year residency requirement so that military members and their families, many of whom locate to Ohio due to their service but end up remaining in Ohio permanently. By providing service members and their dependents with postsecondary training opportunities immediately, this legislation will help more of our military personnel and their dependents gain the skills required to needed to transition into a job in their community. We believe that this bill will help keep more of our military men and women here in our region once their service has ended.

Granting active duty military personnel and their families in-state tuition rates at our public colleges and universities will also help reduce a barrier for many students that may put off pursuing a postsecondary credential or degree due to financial constraints. Reducing the costs of pursuing a credential will increase the likelihood that more individuals will gain the necessary skills sooner, thus helping to provide a better educated and trained workforce that we know Ohio's businesses and industry is begging the state for. HB 16 is another smart strategy to help Ohio meet its statewide workforce readiness goal of having 65% of all adults with some type of postsecondary certificate, credential or degree.

We are grateful for the sacrifices that our military service members and their families make every day on our behalf and Ohio's community colleges are pleased to support HB 16. Once again, thank you for opportunity to testify and we strongly urge the Higher Education Committee's favorable consideration of the bill.