



State Senator
TINA MAHARATH

3rd District

Sponsor Testimony
Senator Tina Maharath
Senate Bill 87
Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs Committee
Wednesday, March 25, 2019

Good afternoon, Chairman Uecker, Vice Chair Brenner and members of the Local Government, Public Safety, and Veterans Affairs Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to present Senate Bill 87, a bill that aims to allow any veteran and any unemployed mobility impaired person to obtain a free identification card that is valid for eight years.

During the 132nd General Assembly, House Bill 300 was unanimously passed in both chambers and signed into law by Governor Kasich. House Bill 300 was enacted to provide that any nondriver identification card that is issued to a resident of Ohio, who is permanently or irreversibly disabled must be issued with an 8-year expiration date and to exempt such cardholders who are also unemployed from the identification card fees. Senate Bill 87 seeks to make a very simple change to expand the existing law to cover all veterans and unemployed mobility impaired individuals.

State-issued identification cards serve many purposes for citizens to function in today's society; however, purchasing an identification card can be both a financial and physical burden for many people. According to the most recent Census, there are approximately 752,153 veterans living in the state of Ohio. As legislators, we should strive to make sure we are providing as many opportunities and resources as possible to our veteran community. By making state-issued identification cards free to veterans, we are ensuring that all veterans, regardless of socioeconomic status, can obtain identification in Ohio.

To ensure equal access to obtaining identification cards, it is also important that we look to some of our most vulnerable communities. As highlighted by the passage of HB 300, obtaining identification for citizens with disabilities can also be burdensome; however, the definition leaves out those who are mobility impaired. Section 955.011 of the Ohio Revised Code defines mobility impaired individuals as:

Any person, regardless of age, who is subject to a physiological defect or deficiency regardless of its cause, nature, or extent that renders the person unable to move about without the aid of crutches, a wheelchair, or any other form of support, or that limits the



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person's functional ability to ambulate, climb, descend, sit, rise, or perform any related function. "Mobility impaired person" includes a person with a neurological or psychological disability that limits the person's functional ability and also includes a person with a seizure disorder and a person who is diagnosed with autism.

Citizens with mobility impairments do not always fall under the disability definitions enacted in the previous legislation but still face the same burdens in obtaining identification as those who are covered by law. Senate Bill 87 expands the scope to include unemployed mobility impaired citizens within the scope of eligibility to receive a free state identification card.

I appreciate your attention to this piece of legislation that would benefit both our most deserving and most vulnerable citizens. I respectfully request your favorable consideration of Senate Bill 87. Thank you and I am happy to respond to questions from the committee.