



# AMVETS

## Department of Ohio

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### Written Testimony for the Ohio Senate

### Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs Committee

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S.B. No. 77 – Designate June 12<sup>th</sup> as Women’s Veterans Day

Chairman Uecker, Vice Chairman Brenner, Ranking Minority Member Maharath and members of the Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs Committee. I am Don McCauley, Executive Director for American Veterans Department of Ohio (AMVETS). The AMVETS organization was born almost 75 years ago on December 10, 1944 to advocate for America’s Veterans returning from WWII. Congress, under President Harry S. Truman, chartered AMVETS on July 23, 1947. Since then AMVETS has grown over the years to accept and advocate for all Veterans who have honorably served our Nation. The AMVETS Department of Ohio was created on June 14, 1946 to advocate for veterans in Ohio. We currently have in excess of 30,000 members and 112 posts boasting the largest AMVETS membership in the Nation. In fact, AMVETS has a woman veteran from Youngstown, Ohio who will become the first woman AMVETS National Commander in August of 2019 at our National Convention in Louisville, KY.



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History shows the first recorded woman to serve in the United States military was Deborah Sampson of Massachusetts; she enlisted under the name Robert Shurtliff and served pretending to be a man for three years in the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War. During the 1900's women served in the United States Military beginning as early as 1901 as nurses but were considered civilian employees. It was not until 1917 when Loretta Walsh became the first woman to enlist in the United States military (United States Navy) and became a highly decorated soldier. Yet it took another 31 years before law was finally enacted on June 12, 1948 to make women a permanent part of the United States military. Additionally, equal pay based on rank not gender has been in place since this law was enacted. Even still, it was not until 1976 28 years later when a woman would be admitted to a United States military academy. Most recently, the Supreme Court ruled it is unconstitutional for women to be excluded from a draft if it were to be imposed. To date, the United States military has not acted on this ruling yet, soon women could be required to register with the Selected Service. Throughout history women have made valuable and heroic contributions to the United States Military and continue to do so to this day.

Women Veterans deserve the recognition they do not always receive and designating June 12<sup>th</sup> as Women's Veterans Day in Ohio goes a long way in showing our women veterans the State of Ohio supports them. These are only a few of the reasons the AMVETS Department of Ohio stands here today testifying in favor of S.B. 77.

Chairman Uecker, Vice Chairman Brenner, Ranking Minority Member Maharath and the rest of this Committee, I thank you for allowing me to testify and will field any questions you might have at this time.