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

Senate Transportation, Commerce, and Workforce Committee

House Bill 133 – Military License Reciprocity

Sponsor Testimony

02 October 2019

Chair McColley, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Transportation, Commerce, and Workforce Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding House Bill 133 with my joint sponsor Representative Casey Weinstein. House Bill 133 will mandate temporary licenses for professional occupations for **active duty** military members and their spouses for a timeframe of up to six years. This bill has 89 of my fellow colleagues as cosponsors. It passed on the House floor with 97 affirmative votes, and no negative votes.

For those of you on this committee who have had the honor of wearing our nation's uniform, you know first hand how military service affects families. I cannot calculate the number of times my own service has impacted my family; often positively, but at times negatively. It has been widely reported that spousal unemployment is among the largest hardships faced by service member's spouses. The problem is so wide spread that the Office of Military Community and Family Policy under the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense has named professional license reciprocity as one of their top priorities. Since Rep Butler and

I introduced this bill during the 132nd General Assembly, four states have passed temporary military reciprocity, while Arizona has passed total license reciprocity. We are behind the curve and well overdue in passing this law in Ohio.

Out of an estimated 3,600 military spouses in Ohio, 35% of them work in a profession that requires a license or certificate, such as; real estate agents, doctors, nurses, teachers, and cosmetologists. Those professionals have a difficult time finding a job when moving to a new state with conflicting licensure requirements. Under this bill, that hardship will be alleviated by requiring any state or local agency to issue temporary licenses and certificates to members of the military and their spouses who are licensed in another state and have moved to Ohio for active duty assignments.

In order to receive a temporary license or certificate to practice your profession in Ohio, the following requirements must be met:

- The individual holds a valid license or certificate to practice the trade or profession issued by another state or jurisdiction;
- That license or certificate is current and the individual is in good standing in the another state or jurisdiction; and
- The individual presents adequate proof to the state licensing agency that the individual or the individual's spouse is on military duty in Ohio. "Military duty" includes service in the uniformed services on active duty, in the active guard and reserve, and as a military technician dual status.

More and more, Department of Defense mission locating decisions are being influenced by state laws benefiting military members and their families. With HB 133, Ohio has an opportunity to stand out as a military-friendly state and have a leg up over other states without reciprocity. As the DoD makes these difficult basing decisions, we as a legislature should ensure that Ohio leads in every category for potential mission and base expansion opportunities.

Our warfighters and their families will benefit immeasurably from this legislation. My thanks to former Secretary of the Air Force Heather Wilson for bringing this legislation to my attention and my joint sponsor, Representative Casey Weinstein for joining with me on this endeavor. Thank you to Representatives Jim Butler, Derrek Merrin, and Senator Teresa Gavarone for championing similar legislation on this critical issue. Additional thanks goes out to Mr. Jim Rickel of the DoD's Military Community and Family Policy for joining us in this venture and helping to make Ohio one of the top military and veteran friendly states in the nation.

Chair McColley, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Transportation, Commerce, and Workforce Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding House Bill 133. I would be happy to answer any of your questions after testimony from my joint sponsor, Representative Weinstein.