

**Senate Bill 238
2/19/2020**

Dear Chairman McColley and the members of the Transportation, Commerce, and Workforce Committee,

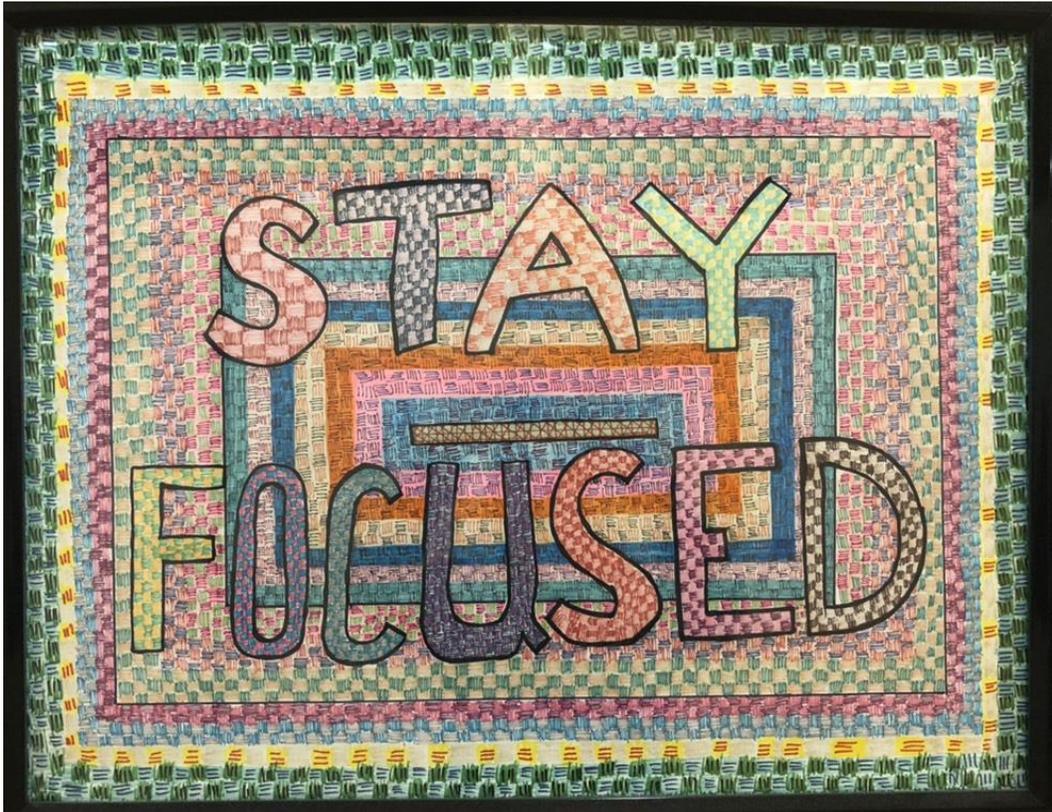
Please accept this letter in support of Senate Bill 238.

My name is Matthew Slater and I am the Director of Veterans Services for a private, non-profit Family & Community Services, Inc. (FCS). FCS is located in Northeastern Ohio and is the largest and most comprehensive non-profit provider of homeless services to veterans in Ohio. We have over 120 units of transitional, emergency, and permanent housing that target serving homeless veterans and their families. Since 2013 we have been working with art therapy to help our homeless veterans recover from their trauma. Veterans who find themselves homeless have often been through multiple traumas of not only combat but also their training. Many times they have had childhood traumas or because of the trauma experiences while serving are further traumatized through loss of income, family, and home. Veterans often feel that they must continue to protect their families, friends, and country by protecting them from traumas that we as civilians could never understand; that there are no words to describe this traumatic experience. The veteran is correct. Sometimes words fail. Art therapy has allowed the veterans we serve to express their trauma in a more holistic way. Through art the veteran is not just working through the trauma experienced in his/her head but throughout their entire being. Through art veteran can share their personal story in a way without having to stand in front of everyone and speak on death, killing, loss, embarrassment, rape, drug use and other topics that can be incredibly difficult to express. We have studied this impact on our homeless veterans through Kent State University and see the impact it is making on not only helping veterans achieve housing, and income but also in a sense of wellbeing, empowerment, quality of sleep, reduction of pain.

We recently worked with Goodyear's Marketing Department to hold three focus groups with past veterans we had served. No staff was present as we wanted the veterans to feel free to express themselves and give honest feedback on what did they enjoy, what helped them the most and what continues to impact them; art therapy unanimously was at the top of all three of these categories.

Art therapy is not just a little bit of art being done. It is therapy as art. This is not something that someone trained in art or can "draw well" can do. Someone who has not gone through the rigors that the board certified art therapist go through can and will do harm. Simply put Art Therapy needs to be licensed as other modalities of therapy are.

Please see examples of veterans telling their experiences, their stories, and expressing their trauma below.













Sincerely,

Matthew Slater
 Director of Veterans Services
 1121 Exeter Rd.
 Akron, Oh 44303
 330-773-7000 ext. 117
 Mslater@fcsohio.org