

TESTIMONY OF NICHOLE R. COLEMAN AND THEODORE B. BRUNER—H.B. 47

This written testimony is submitted by Michael Moses, Legislative Agent, for the Ohio State Association of County Veterans Service Officers (OSACVSO) and Ohio State Association of County Veterans Service Commissioners (OSACVSC), on behalf of Nichole R. Coleman, President, OSACVSO, and Theodore B. Bruner, President, OSACVSC.

Ms. Coleman has been the Executive Director and County Veterans Service Officer for the Hancock County Veterans Service Commission since December 2011. She served as a security specialist in the United States Air Force for three years and then in public relations for four years. Her husband is a 10-year Air Force veteran; her father served in Vietnam with the Army and her grandfathers served in the Korean War and World War II. I am a Desert Storm veteran and also served in Bosnia.

Ms. Coleman is 1st Vice President for the Ohio State Association of County Veterans Service Officers, and also serves as the Women's Veterans Coordinator for the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers.

Mr. Bruner is a member of the Darke County Veterans Service Commission, and is also employed as a deputy sheriff for the Darke County Sheriff's Office. Mr. Bruner served in the United States Army from 1986 to 1991, and was previously Sergeant-at-Arms for the Ohio State Association of County Veterans Service Commissioners.

The OSACVSO and OSACVSC strongly advocate for the passage of House Bill 47. The Ohio State Association of County Veterans Service Officers and the Ohio State Association of County Veterans Service Commissioners share the view that students participating in extracurricular activities or practices should not be penalized for absences due to uniformed military service, provided there is no conflict with the rules of the National Collegiate Athletic Association for post-secondary students.

HB 47 would prohibit public or private schools, post-secondary and higher educational institutions from preventing a student from participating in any part of an extracurricular activity because of an absence due to military service.

Recruiting of students who have reached the age of majority and programs to expose young people to military service have experienced unprecedented expansion in American public schools.¹ These programs and their proliferation in school districts, both urban and rural, are positive developments, providing opportunities for building leadership skills and preparing our young people for an increasingly problematic society. Allowing

¹ *Citizen, Student, Soldier: Latina/o Youth, JROTC, and the American Dream (Social Transformations in American Anthropology)* © 2015 –Gina M. Perez

the integration of an extracurricular activity with a student's initial military training not only makes that young man or woman well-rounded, but more likely to engage in activities which ultimately serve the community and society.

Students who participate in both extracurricular activities after they have joined the uniformed services have laudable reasons for engaging in both pursuits and can keep more young people away from negative and destructive tendencies. Whether their participation is caused by a desire to serve their country or a marginal economic position in the local economy, nothing but good can result from a path which will enable them to become full, complete citizens, both locally and nationally. Citizenship is the central concern fueling this legislation, and allowing students to be dually engaged in extracurricular and uniformed service pursuits is consistent with our country's and our state's vision of civic obligation and social opportunity.

We advocate passage of the Student to Soldier Act, and thank you for allowing us to be heard on this important matter.