



HB 16 Proponent Testimony
Senate Higher Education Committee
September 18, 2019
Stephanie Keinath
Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce

Chairwoman Kunze, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Williams and members of the Ohio Senate Higher Education Committee. I'm Stephanie Keinath, Director of Public Policy and Economic Development with the Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce. The Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce represents over 2,400 businesses, which employ over 200,000 employees in a 10 county region. Additionally, we provide direct advocacy and support for our service men and women in our region, specifically at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. Wright-Patterson Air Force Base remains the #1 single site employer in the State of Ohio, with over 28,000 direct employees on base. Service members at WPAFB and other Ohio military installations are often transient and will receive new base assignments every two years. This means that there are new service members and their dependents that are new to Ohio every two years. It is especially important for us to engage their dependents in our great college network, as the dependents are more likely to stay in Ohio when their parents are later transferred to another assignment.

Additionally, there is an amendment that will soon be introduced that allows this legislation to be applied to all service branches, including National Guard and reserve. This important amendment has our full support, as it will make this important benefit available to all eligible service members.

HB 16 will honor the service of these members and their dependents by making them eligible for in-state college tuition on the 1st day of their arrival in Ohio. This critical legislation will incentivize service men and women and their dependents to take advantage of Ohio's rich college network immediately. These service members have dedicated their lives and their careers to serving our country and because of this unique circumstance, they don't always have the same opportunity to establish long term residency in a state, as someone who isn't a service member.

Please take note, the US Department of Defense is watching. State support of quality of life initiatives for military families, like HB 16, have become critical factors in determining where new military missions will be located. As Ohio continues to support and position itself as a military friendly state, HB 16 will have a direct and positive impact. Passage of HB 16 will make Ohio a more attractive destination as future military missions and Ohio jobs are considered for Ohio.

Thank you for your time and I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.