



Senate Judiciary Committee
Senate Bill 145
Proponent Testimony
2 September 2020

Chairman Eklund, Vice-Chair Manning, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in support of Senate Bill 145. My name is Jermaine Ferguson, and I serve as the Legislative Coordinator for The American Legion Department of Ohio headquartered in Delaware, Ohio.

The American Legion Department of Ohio supports Senate Bill 145 because the legislation will help protect our active-duty service members and our veterans from receiving fraudulent call-back numbers associated with trusted organizations and individuals.

According to the ¹U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, Ohio is home to 774,935 veterans, which equates to over 9% of the adult population. Nearly half of our veterans – 385,826 – are over the age of 65 years.

²The U.S. Department of Defense 2018 Demographics Report, Ohio, is home to 6,558 active-duty servicemembers and 3,817 active-duty spouses. Ohio is also home to 28,310 Reserve and Guard members.

Veterans and military service members receive fraudulent calls or recorded messages that claim to assist in VA Benefits, updating military records, "Veterans Choice" programs, and veteran charity scams, which may result in identity theft or financial loss.

In a recent AARP article, "Scams Targeting Veterans," reports that "the median loss for military scam victims in 2019, \$894, nearly triple that for the population at large." Bad actors purposefully target members of the veteran and military community.

In its current form, over half of Ohio's veterans and our active-duty service members and spouses will benefit from the passage of Senate Bill 145. The American Legion Department of Ohio respectfully urges the passage of this bill.

¹ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, *State Summaries Ohio* [website], https://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/SpecialReports/State_Summaries_Ohio.pdf, (accessed 1 September 2020).

² U.S. Department of Defense, *2018 Demographics Report* [website], <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/data-research-and-statistics/military-community-demographics/2018-demographics-profile>, (accessed 1 September 2020).