



Senator George Lang
Senate Bill 335
Sponsor Testimony
Senate Ways and Means Committee

Chairman Blessing, Vice Chair Roegner, and Ranking Member Martin, thank you for allowing my joint sponsor, Senator Hoagland, and I the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 335, which aims to modify the homestead property tax exemption for disabled veterans.

Under current law, a disabled veteran who has been honorably discharged, and has one or more service-connected disabilities with a total (100%) disability rating, or who has a total disability rating for compensation based on individual employability, is eligible for an enhanced homestead property tax exemption of up to \$50,000 of the fair market value of their primary residence.

Senate Bill 335 builds on this enhancement for a disabled veteran's homestead exemption by allowing a veteran with any percentage disability rating, who has been honorably discharged, to qualify for the exemption if they have one or more service-related disabilities. In addition, SB 335 modifies the exemption amount and method of calculation by making the amount of the exemption equal to a veteran's percentage disability rating, multiplied by his or her current tax liability.

As under the current exemption, SB 335's enhanced exemption for disabled veterans extends to the surviving spouse of the veteran, until the spouse dies or remarries. Also similar to current law, the bill does not require the veteran to meet an income test. Furthermore, as with all current homestead exemptions, the bill's enhanced disabled veteran exemption applies to manufactured and mobile homes regardless of whether they are taxed as real property or subject to the manufactured home tax.

Not only does SB 335 enhance the calculation method and amount of a veteran's homestead property tax, but it also makes it easier for eligible veterans to apply. Under continuing law, a veteran must apply to the county auditor for the homestead exemption. The veteran must include documentation with this initial application that shows their discharge status and disability rating. The required documentation must come from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. However, SB 335 authorizes the disability documentation to come from a county veterans' service commission. To obtain these records, a veteran must make a request to a county veterans' service officer of the county in which the veteran resides.

As with all current homestead exemptions, local taxing units would be reimbursed by the state for the reduction in property tax revenue that results from the bill's modified disabled veterans homestead exemption. The reimbursement would be allocated from the GRF.

In summary, SB 335 aims to serve our State's disabled veterans by enhancing their homestead property tax exemption through fair and adequate calculation and increased eligibility methods. This bill seeks to honor the sacrifice of our veterans', and further cement Ohio's reputation as one of the most veteran-friendly states in the Union. By allowing SB 335 to become law, we help our disabled veterans secure the freedoms of life, liberty, and property, for which they have given so much to defend. We appreciate your time, and I will now turn it over to my joint sponsor, Senator Hoagland.