

## **SB 131 Proponent Testimony**

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Chair Johnson, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Williams and members of the Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in support of Senate Bill 131. I am Cassie B. Barlow, Colonel (retired), United States Air Force. I am also the President at the Southwestern Ohio Council for Higher Education. I write to you today in several of my roles – retired AF member and former Commander of Wright Patterson AFB from 2012-2014 and workforce development professional.

My family and I were honored to serve our country for 26 years, moving 13 times to different locations all around the world. My family, like many others, had two breadwinners. Having two breadwinners in the family today is the norm in most military families. My husband is an attorney and chose to support my career by following me around the world. What this meant for him was that every time we relocated, he needed to start over with his career. This was a challenging situation for him to try to reestablish himself every two years. When we moved to Ohio, he was yet again challenged with the question of how best to practice his trade in a new State. This same challenge exists for military members who are exiting the military to start their civilian careers. It is a challenge for them to have their military certifications recognized.

I served as a commander in several of my postings in the Air Force and witnessed the struggle of military families having to get recertified and licensed in their trade in several new states. For every military member or spouse that must earn a new State license, time in their field is lost and money is lost for each military family.

This bill is critical for military members and their families being heartily welcomed into our state. Immediately allowing military families to live, work and play in our State, not only makes them quickly feel comfortable in their new surroundings, but also contributes to the State tax base in a much more expedient way. Military families very much want to be part of their new community and there is no better way than contributing to the local economy in their chosen occupation.

When military members retire or choose to separate from the military and stay in a particular state, the benefits offered in that state are a critical determinant for this decision. Licensure and certification reciprocity is a significant benefit for military in Ohio and can help military members trying to make this important decision of where they will settle with their families.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 131. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.