

ARMED FORCES TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM - Testimony

Summary: Authorize State of Ohio Tuition Assistance for all Armed Force Reservists, regardless of component or branch.

Background:

1. Current scholarship program is restricted to Ohio National Guard. ONG comprises ~ 16,000 Army and Air National Guard Members.
2. State budget allocates ~ \$19M for tuition assistance for an average of 2,200 scholarships per year. (Sources: Redbook, LBO Analysis of Executive Budget Proposal, Adjutant General and OHNG Main Operating Appropriations Bill H.B 110)
3. Ohio's NG budget is ~ \$60M / yr. This does NOT cover payroll, only operating expenses.
4. OHNG payroll is paid from federal monies, not state.
5. All other Reserve Forces in Ohio number $\leq 11,000$ (Army Reserve = 5,600, Naval Reserve ~1,150, Marine Corps Reserve ~ 1,000, Air Force Reserve ~ 2,500, Coast Guard Reserve < 500)
6. The Army Reserve has Immediate Response Authority (IRA) (DoD Directive 3025.18), allowing local units to "take immediate action to save lives, prevent human suffering or mitigate great property damage in a situation of urgency when there is insufficient time to get approval from higher headquarters."
7. The Army Reserve also has a major role in the Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA)(DoD Directive 3025.18) mission.

Proposal:

1. State of Ohio provides tuition assistance to all drilling Armed Forces Reservists, regardless of component or branch.

Cost Analysis:

1. Using the same % as for the NG ($2,200/16,000=13.75\%$), the approx. number of scholarships provided to all remaining Reservists would be 1,512 ($.1375 \times 11,000$). Cost would be ~ \$13M/yr ($\$19M / 2,200 = \$8,637 \times 1,512 = \$13.1M$).
2. This would be a miniscule percentage of the State of Ohio's current budget (\$86B/for FY '24-'25).