

Good afternoon Chairman Bird, Vice-Chairman Fowler-Arthur, and Ranking Member Robinson. And all my fellow members on the primary & secondary education committee.

A few months ago, my office was contacted by Ben Hunt. Mr. Hunt is the Assistant Principal of Academics at Mount Notre Dame High School. He was making preparations for the graduation ceremony for the class of 2023. Two of his students were admitted and planned to attend military academies and another student was planning to attend a university on an R.O.T.C. scholarship. Mr. Hunt thought it was appropriate to honor these decisions with a Military Enlistment Seal on their High School Diploma.

However, as Mr. Hunt soon discovered, current Ohio law only allows a student to receive the Military Enlistment Seal if a student has directly enlisted in a branch of the armed services or has participated in a junior reserve officer training program. Mr. Hunt passionately believes that those planning on attending military academies and those going to university on an R.O.T.C. scholarship should also be eligible for this honor - and I agreed.

This oversight leaves many high school graduates without the proper seal on their high school diploma. These students have made the important decision to serve, but they are preparing for their future by attending an academy or university first. Every May, high school graduates and their families gather to celebrate the hard work and accomplishments of the past 13 years of their life, marking the end of one chapter and the beginning of their adult life. It is only right that we recognize the decisions of our graduates and show our pride for our military.

H.B. 250 amends this oversight by adding two more possible qualifications for a military enlistment seal on a high school diploma. Students would then be able to celebrate and honor their decision to attend an R.O.T.C. or a military service academy with this seal on their high school diploma.

Students that attend R.O.T.C. programs and military service academies make a commitment to serve in the armed forces after the completion of their education. Although they do not directly enlist out of high school, their path leads towards service to our country.

We should be proud of our students that choose to serve our country in the highest capacity by enlisting in the armed forces. It is a decision made with maturity and honor. This bill would allow for us to commend all our high school graduates that intend to make that decision and show our pride for those that sacrifice so much to defend our nation.

I would like to thank my joint sponsor Representative Richardson and I would like to thank Chairman Bird and all members of the Primary and Secondary Committee for allowing us to testify on H.B. 250.