

Good afternoon, Chairman Bird and the members of the primary & secondary education committee. I am unable to attend the committee meeting but did want to offer my testimony in support of HB 250 and its revisions to ORC 3313.6114 regarding the Military Enlistment diploma seal.

I am the Assistant Principal for Academics at Mount Notre Dame High School in Reading, Ohio and believe that the current ORC language, while well-intentioned, created an unforeseen gap regarding Ohio's students who choose to serve their country.

Mount Notre Dame usually has multiple students attend service academies or take ROTC scholarships each year. In both cases, they are choosing to serve and defend our nation as officers in our armed forces. This past school year, the first with required diploma seals, we were taken aback when we realized that these students did not qualify for the Military Enlistment Seal, due to the narrow language in ORC which defined this as enlistment in a branch of the armed services or participation in junior reserve office training programs.

While I am in full agreement that those students joining via an enlisted pathway deserve the seal to be recognized for their service, it seems like we are doing a disservice to other students who are committing themselves to serve, but as officers. I feel that our state can do better to recognize the bravery and passion that these students have for wanting to sacrifice and serve their country.

Therefore, I am in support of the proposed revisions to HB 250 adding language that allows students who participate in ROTC or military service academies to also earn the seal. Similarly, I am in support of the suggestion of a revised name to the seal, such as the "Military Service Seal."

I would like to thank Representative's Miranda and Richardson for their support of this bill, and I would like to thank Chairman Bird and the entire Primary and Secondary Education committee for their time considering it.