

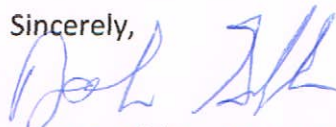
Chair Roemer, Vice Chair Merrin, Ranking Member Troy, and all honorable members of the House Ways & Means Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present proponent testimony on HB 126. I regret that I could not attend the hearing in person, but mission requirements prevent me from traveling to Columbus.

I am an active duty commissioned officer in the United States Public Health Service. I have 26 years of Service including 9 years in the U.S. Air Force as a Public Health Officer and the 17 years in the PHS. I encourage your support of HB 126. Parity in Ohio law among all eight United States Uniformed Services (the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Space Force, Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Commissioned Corps) is important to me. PHS CC officers work across many health disciplines to provide clinical care in Indian Health Service hospitals and federal prisons, as well as in research positions at CDC, FDA, EPA, Interior, USDA, and others. During my PHS career, I have deployed with the U.S. Navy aboard the USNS Mercy to Asia on a humanitarian mission. I was the lead medical officer for the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health Deepwater Horizon response to Louisiana and the Gulf of Mexico. Finally, I deployed to Liberia during our Ebola response to contain and eliminate the disease and prevent widespread introduction to the U.S. and other countries. Officers routinely deploy domestically and internationally to address health disparities and environmental conditions. Most recently, PHS officers deployed to East Palestine, OH to assess health effects from the Norfolk Southern train derailment.

Although I will not personally benefit from the passing of HB 126 as I live in a jurisdiction that is exempt from municipal tax, I feel this issue is important, especially for our junior officers who are early in their career, who are balancing student loan repayments, family and housing needs, and the daily cost of living. PHS officers serve alongside our sister Uniformed Services and should be recognized for the vital role they play in the Nation's health and national security.

Thank you for your consideration; please feel free to contact me if I can provide further assistance or answer any questions.

Sincerely,



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