

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.

My name is CDR Matthew Dahm and I am an active-duty officer who serves in the Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS). I am currently stationed at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) in Cincinnati, OH. I live within the city of Cincinnati which currently levies an income tax of 1.8% on its residents. Since 1957, Ohio has exempted the pay and allowances of active-duty members of the armed forces from municipal income tax. House Bill 126 would amend Ohio law to also exempt the pay and allowances of active-duty USPHS and NOAA officers, such as myself, from municipal income tax.

This bill would have a tremendous impact on my family which includes myself, my wife, and my two children who are both under the age of 7. The rising costs associated with inflation over the last several years has been detrimental to my family's finances as it has assuredly been to the rest of Ohio residents. Passing HB 126 would provide much needed relief and better prepare my family for the future.

Along with other active duty and retired USPHS officers in Ohio, I am attempting to let my legislators know about the work of the USPHS Commissioned Corps. We are the second smallest of the eight federal uniformed services, with an active-duty force of 6,500 officers and a history as a uniformed service dating back to 1889. USPHS officers are veterans, just like veterans of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and Space Force.

USPHS officers serve in 80 countries around the world and served in Iraq and Afghanistan. In the U.S., they work in federal health and regulatory agencies such as the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). We are led by Surgeon General Vivek Murthy.

USPHS officers also provide health services for the U.S. Coast Guard, the Indian Health Service, the Bureau of Prisons, and the Department of Homeland Security. As uniformed service personnel, USPHS officers are deployable on short notice to respond to public health emergencies including pandemics, terrorist attacks, and natural disasters. In 2021 alone, USPHS officers have deployed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the unaccompanied minor crisis at our southern border, Hurricane Ida, and the repatriation of Americans from Afghanistan and the resettlement of Afghani refugees.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony, and I look forward to answering any questions the Committee may have. My contact information is included below.

Respectfully,  
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