

Good afternoon, thank you so much for being willing to listen to my testimony and hear my story. My name is Jane Horton and I was born and raised in Columbia Station. Ohio has always been home to me and is where my entire family resides. No matter where I end up in the world, Ohio is a special place that will always be home.

I left Ohio when I was 18 to serve and help with humanitarian relief around the world. A few years later I ended up going to college in NYC where I met the love of my life, Chris. Chris had already joined the military and was training to be a sniper to serve his country during war time. Several years later I moved to Oklahoma with Chris, and we were married that following year. Never could I have imagined that Chris would be killed in Afghanistan a few short years later and I would become a national advocate for Gold Star families across the country. I moved to Washington D.C. and have advised Presidents, Generals, Secretaries, and foreign nations, but my heart has been calling me home to my family in Ohio.

Ohio is the only place that takes me back to who I was before Chris died- to who I was as a young girl, a teenager, and gives me a taste of who I would be had I not become a 25-year-old war widow. While looking for houses in this beautiful state I have been deeply surprised that Ohio is one of the only states in the country that does not offer a property tax exemption for widows of service members killed in action or in the line of duty. Almost every state offers property tax exemptions for 100% service-disabled veterans and also to their widows upon their death- so it doesn't really make sense that those who make the ultimate sacrifice and are killed in war are not included. It often is an oversight, but it's an oversight that affects many families of those killed directly in war.

As I make my home back in Ohio, I humbly ask the state to look at offering property tax exemption to myself and the state's other Gold Star spouses who could desperately use this income to support our families after we lost the breadwinner our families serving this country.

I want to thank you all for considering this for my family, and for the widows of our nations and Ohio's heroes, who have given their lives for this country, and their last full measure of devotion, for each and everyone of us.

My family and I and the entire community of Gold Star and surviving families are grateful.

Respectfully,

Jane Horton