



SENATOR STEVE WILSON

**Finance Committee
Senator Steve Wilson**

March 7, 2023

Senate Bill 64

Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Sykes and members of the Senate Finance Committee – thank you for the opportunity for Senator DeMora and myself to give testimony on Senate Bill 64.

This primary objective of this legislation is to expand upon the Ohio National Guard Scholarship Program, which allows Ohioans, who serve our country and state, to receive a well-rounded education, which will provide them with the tools and skills necessary to contribute greatly to society in the 21st century. As a third generation Navy Veteran and as a graduate and former member of the Board of Trustees of Miami University, I understand the importance of higher education and the tremendous advantage it gives our Guardsmen and women.

During the previous operating budget, Major General Harris testified as to how important it was for the National Guard to continue leveraging the Scholarship Program in their recruiting and retention efforts. Throughout my time in the Legislature, we have made tremendous progress on eliminating red tape and making the State of Ohio attractive to the best businesses and the top talent –not only in the United States, but the world. Why would we want any different for our Guardsmen and women?

Ohio's National Guard has proven to be vital during times of emergency. Just in the last four years, our Guardsmen and women have served honorably in the aftermath of the 2019 Dayton tornado, the Coronavirus pandemic, the Hurricane Ida recovery in Louisiana,

and more recently – the disastrous train derailment in East Palestine, Ohio.

By passing this *bipartisan* legislation, our Guardsmen and women will be better prepared and qualified to tackle the ever-evolving job market of the 21st Century. Thank you Chairman Dolan for this opportunity to present testimony with my colleague, Senator DeMora. We will happily answer any questions that the Committee may have.