



Department of Ohio, District 12

Nicolette Bolte, Commander

Robert Leach, Quartermaster

TO: Honorable Bob D. Hackett, Chair, Senate Insurance Committee
Honorable George F. Lang, Vice Chair, Senate Insurance Committee
Honorable Hearcel F. Craig, Ranking Member, Senate Insurance Committee
FROM: Andrea M. Neutzling, Senior Vice Commander, District 12, Veterans of Foreign Wars Dept. of Ohio
DATE: May 2, 2023
RE: IN OPPOSITION OF SB 63 (135TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY)

Chairman Hackett, Vice Chairman Lang, Ranking Member Craig and distinguished members of the Senate Insurance Committee, my name is Andrea Neutzling; I'm the newly elected Senior Vice Commander of District 12 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Ohio and co-chair for their Legislation Committee; a 100 percent Service Connected Army Veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom, and a Burn Pit veteran. I'm here on behalf of my VFW comrades of District 12, and also as an Ohioan from Senate District 30.

While I understand the focus of Senate Bill 63 is to try to reduce the over-naming of defendants in asbestos claims and to prevent false claims, it will, at the same time, make it harder on individuals with justifiable claims. Anyone who has dealt with the VA and their claims process knows the VA likes to follow State and/or Federal laws when it suits them, and even though this bill isn't supposed to affect Veteran benefits, it could open the door to denying valid claims from those who served. I have been told by fellow Veterans in my District that have filed asbestos related claims with the VA that they have been sent these forms for specific disclosures.

As anyone who has served in the United States Military or has worked as the lowest person in the pecking order of a construction site, or any Blue Collar job, can tell you: that we don't ask for the specific information of the products we are working around nor are we usually told that information.

During my year in Iraq, I worked directly in my base's burn pit up to three days a month. I can tell you what was put into the pits to be burned: plastic water bottles; lithium-ion batteries; various metal products; vehicle tires; discarded hospital supplies, and much more. Can I tell you the brands and product names of any of those? No, I can't even if I had just seen it yesterday, because not being the one in charge of the contracts I never paid attention to small seemingly unimportant things like that.

In 2004, Ohio was one of the first states to pass a law making it so Ohioans cannot file asbestos-related claims until after they get sick and have an established asbestos-related health condition -- one of the first states in the nation to do so. That bill was created to help reduce claims, especially false claims. And while trying to reduce the over-naming of the defendants in asbestos-related tort claims makes sense, going about it this way seems over the top and extremely detrimental to the citizens of Ohio who elected you -- the members of this esteemed Committee -- into office to ensure that our rights and livelihoods are not trampled upon.

As others have stated in opposition to this bill, if this passes what will be next? One prime example for this question is the train derailment that happened in East Palestine. We do not know yet what all health issues are going to be following around the citizens of East Palestine, nor as of right now has Norfolk Southern said who they were transporting the chemicals for. When those tort claims begin to be filed, I am 75 percent certain that there will be an over-naming of any company that produces, distributes, or disposes of those chemicals, until the company releases who the chemicals were from and who they were going to. As someone who grew up in Southeastern Ohio and was drinking C8 contaminated tap water, after the news reports on C8 started circulating I began to make sure I didn't develop any of the health problems from C8 as I was already in the military. I still monitor my health because my toxic exposures in the

Army led me to taking immunosuppressants as part of my regimen for my respiratory conditions. Some of the same cancers than can be caused by C8 can also be caused by the toxins I inhaled while on my deployment. Because there won't be a way to differentiate between C8 and the Burn Pits I won't ever be able to file a tort claim against DuPont, if I would ever be diagnosed with any of the overlapping diseases.

I strongly urge the Insurance Committee to kill and bury this bill and encourage Vice Chairman Lang – who introduced this bill – as well as those in support and those in opposition to sit down and work together to create a bill that we can all agree on.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrea M. Neutzling". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "A".

Andrea M. Neutzling

Senior Vice Commander, District 12 Veterans of Foreign Wars

Department of Ohio

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