



OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-1500

MANPOWER AND
RESERVE AFFAIRS

January 19, 2024

The Honorable Terry Johnson
Chair, Veterans & Public Safety Committee
Ohio Senate
1 Capitol Square, 226
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing on behalf of military families and the DoD to express support for Representative Kristina Roegner and the language in SB 154 that defines who is included in the term Armed Forces. Defining Armed Forces In State Policy is one of the top ten Personnel and Readiness Policy Priorities for the Department of Defense because of recent force structure changes.

I am writing you as the DoD Lead on this Policy Issue while your assigned Regional Liaison, Shane Preston, is out of office. Recent force structure changes require updates to ensure that states' definitions of military service align with federal law. Ohio can minimize disruptions in benefits and services for eligible service members and dependents by clearly defining "armed forces."

Ohio is home to almost 600 Space Force Guardians and family members. The provisions of SB 154 will help these members retain eligibility for services by aligning the state's definition of Armed Forces with Title 10 United State Code to include Space Force. This policy change will also ensure that military families are equally represented under all state laws defining "military service," "military retiree," and "veteran."

In closing, the Department is grateful for Ohio's continued support for our service members and their families. We are very grateful to Senator Roegner for her interest in addressing this issue, and to the members of your committee for considering this policy. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you might have: 571-309-7589.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric S. Sherman".

Eric S. Sherman
Southeast Regional Liaison
(AL, FL, GA, KY, NC, SC, TN)
Defense-State Liaison Office

CC: Representative Kristina Roegner
Shane Preston