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**Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee
Senate Concurrent Resolution 8 — Sponsor Testimony
January 24, 2024**

Chairman Johnson, Vice Chair Wilson, Ranking Member Craig, and members of the Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on Senate Concurrent Resolution 8.

This resolution urges the President of the United States, the U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and Congress to take prompt action to reduce processing time for veterans' disability benefit claims. This is an issue that was brought to my attention by one of my constituents, who is a veteran.

According to the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA), the average time to complete disability-related claims in February of 2023 was 102.2 days and increased to 149 days in December of 2023. The VA describes processing time for claims over 125 days as backlog. Additionally, the number of backlogged claims was at 378,000 in December of 2023.

It is simply unacceptable to take over three months to process a veteran's disability-related claim, especially in cases where the claim is denied and sent to be appealed. Additionally, the time to process claims should be improving, not getting worse. This resolution is a step in the process to send a message to the federal government that the Ohio General Assembly strongly encourages them to provide our nation's veterans full and fair consideration of their disability benefits claims in a timely and responsive manner.

Our veteran's deserve answers from a more accountable and transparent Department of Veterans Affairs.

Thank you once again Chairman Johnson and members of the committee for the opportunity to present this legislation to you today. I will be glad to answer any questions at this time.