

Chair Johnson, Vice Chair Wilson, Ranking Member Craig, and Veterans and Public Safety Committee members,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Tim Hauser, and this is my second time speaking to you in support of SB 225. When I met with Senator Roegner about a possible bill to name September 22 Veteran Suicide Awareness and Prevention Day for our great state of Ohio, I was unsure what reactions I would get. After showing the Senator some statistics, she said, "We do need this day."

When I recently testified before this committee, I was encouraged by how many organizations either spoke or sent written testimony supporting this bill. I was recently asked to visit veterans at the Dayton VA Medical Center. When speaking with veterans there, I realized this day was long overdue. The simple acknowledgment that people care about veterans goes a long way in our community. Naming September 22 Veteran Suicide Awareness and Prevention Day will be a stepping stone in educating veterans and their family members, neighbors, co-workers, and others. They will learn about warning signs of veteran suicide and about services and support available so they can get their veteran the help they need.

Currently, the VA only uses its platform to inform veterans about services and programs. Many veterans in the VA system have never used the VA's website, so they are not accessing this vital information. It is organizations like the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP), Concerned Veterans for America, and Veterans Assurance Network that are educating veterans and their families on these services, such as the COMPACT ACT.

We are asking you to pass SB 225 to support us in helping our brothers and sisters who may be contemplating suicide. I ask that you consider my testimony and support of SB 225, which will save lives. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.