



Majority Whip Nick Santucci

House Veterans and Military Development Committee

Sponsor Testimony for House Bill 292

June 11, 2025

Chair Richardson, Vice Chair Mathews, Ranking Member Hall, and Members of the House Veterans and Military Development Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 292, to establish the Ohio Defense Commission.

The establishment of this Commission will provide an avenue to promote and strengthen the defense industry in Ohio. The Commission will be composed of members of the General Assembly, along with representatives from the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, JobsOhio, industries that support the military, and the Governor's Office. The work of the Commission will include administering the defense industry expansion program under section 122.981 of the Revised Code, administering and approving expenditures from the Ohio Defense Fund, studying and developing strategies to promote the defense industry in Ohio, recruiting international businesses to invest in the state for defense industry purposes, and promoting research, development, and manufacturing of technology to counter unmanned aerial vehicle systems in the state.

This Commission will serve as a catalyst for solidifying and expanding Ohio's already strong defense industry, which plays a vital role in both national security and the state's economic vitality. Currently, the industrial base supporting Ohio's federal and military installations generates approximately \$69 billion in total economic activity, accounting for nearly 6% of the state's economy.¹ The establishment of this Commission will help maximize Ohio's competitive advantages in innovation, manufacturing, and workforce development. By fostering a more agile and future-ready defense ecosystem, the Commission will ensure Ohio remains at the forefront of emerging defense technologies and global investment opportunities.

Chair Richardson, Vice Chair Mathews, Ranking Member Hall, and Members of the House Veterans and Military Development Committee, thank you again for giving me the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 292. I would be happy to answer any questions.

¹ JobsOhio, "Military and Federal," <https://www.jobsohio.com/industries/military-and-federal>.