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Senator Kyle Koehler
10th Senate District

Senate Armed Services, Veterans Affairs and Public Safety Committee
Senate Concurrent Resolution 7 – Sponsor Testimony
Wednesday, February 26, 2025

Chairman Johnson, Vice Chair Wilson, Ranking Member Weinstein and members of the Armed Services, Veterans Affairs and Public Safety Committee, thank you for allowing me to present Senate Concurrent Resolution 7 for your consideration and discussion today.

The genesis for this resolution was brought to me by a gentleman in my district who, I believe, represents hundreds if not thousands of civilian retirees who no longer have Civilian Retiree Identification Cards available to them which allow them immediate access to military bases across the United States.

In February of 2023, the Department of Defense, pursuant to the federal REAL ID Act, stopped issuing new Civilian Retiree Identification Cards and ended the renewal of existing cards. Civilian Retiree IDs allow retired civilian DoD personnel to easily access military facilities including parks, base museums, historical sites, and campgrounds such as Wright-Patterson Air Force Base FamCamp.

For the last two years, these civilian retirees have been forced to request access from the installation commander at the base and present both a REAL ID driver's license AND retirement documentation. Not just once but each time they want to visit or access a base across the United States.

The new access requirements are significantly more onerous and restrictive than was previously the case when Civilian Retiree ID cards were issued and honored. Civilian employees of the DoD form a vital and indispensable component of our national defense. Our "civilian retired veterans" deserve full recognition and benefits for their service to our country, including continuing ease of access to military recreational areas upon their retirement.

This resolution simply urges Congress to once again issue Civilian Retiree ID Cards to qualifying Department of Defense retirees, and to ensure the cards are accepted for access to military recreational areas without the need for further documentation and permission from base commanders.

Chairman Johnson and committee members, I believe proponent testimony from individuals, like civilian retiree Mr. Robert Beach, will paint a clearer picture of how this affects "civilian retired veterans" across Ohio and the United States. I believe their testimony will be compelling and educational.

Thank you for considering this resolution and I am happy to take your questions.