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Ohio State Senate
Armed Services, Veterans Affairs and Public Safety Committee

Chairman Johnson

Remarks of
Shane Preston
Great Lakes Region
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Testimony In Support of: SB 218

Mr. Chairman and honorable members of the Committee, the Department of War thanks you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the policies reflected in SB 218. The proposed approach would assist with meeting the demands of military communities for family childcare services, by exempting DoW certified Family Child Care providers from duplicative licensing requirements.

My name is Shane Preston, and I am the Great Lakes Regional Liaison at the Defense-State Liaison Office, operating under the direction of Under Secretary of War for Personnel and Readiness. We represent the Department and establish relationships with state and local leaders on issues impacting our service members and their families. These policies are identified by the Office of the Secretary of War, the Military Departments, and the National Guard Bureau as areas where states can play a crucial role.

The Department established the Family Child Care (FCC) program to expand child care availability and to assist in meeting the diverse needs of military families. FCC providers offer military families reliable and personalized care in a homelike setting on and off installations. Military service members relocate to new duty stations every few years, and the Department recognizes the importance of providing these families with access to quality, affordable child development programs, and is committed to meeting the increased demand for child care across the nation.

FCC providers are certified via the military departments and are the largest contributor to the military services' ability to deliver 24-hour and emergency childcare needs. Additionally, some Family Child Care providers offer specialized care for unique mission-related needs in homes both on and off the installation.

Once certified, Family Child Care providers must complete annual training and a competency based comprehensive professional development program similar to installation child development program personnel. When moving with their service member, Family Child Care

providers do not have to complete additional training or another background check when they arrive at their new installation, unless their certification is due for renewal.

The Family Child Care program is designed to ensure the highest standards of quality and safety are met in family child care homes. The certification process is widely recognized as one of the most stringent in the country. Standards set by the Department and the military services ensure strict oversight of service providers, to include background checks, monthly inspections, and unannounced visits. Monitoring of Family Child Care providers is conducted on a regular basis, during all hours of operation, and providers are required to maintain information as it relates to their background checks, inspections, insurance, training records, and visitation logs.

As military spouses relocate every two to three years, due to housing availability, they may end up living off base at their new duty station and be unable to continue with their businesses until they obtain a state license. Many of our families rely on two incomes, and spousal unemployment is among the leading causes of decreased readiness and retention.

Beyond the certification of Family Child Care (FCC) providers, the Department supports military families through a variety of strategic approaches, such as the Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood-PLUS (MCCYN-PLUS) initiative. By using Ohio's Quality Rating and Improvement System as a quality benchmark, MCCYN-PLUS expands access to fee assistance for families using community-based care. This multifaceted strategy is already showing significant results in Ohio; since joining in August 2025, the program has successfully enrolled 115 providers to support 204 military children. Integrating these various approaches—combining federal fee assistance with the removal of duplicative state licensing hurdles—creates a robust support system that directly enhances the quality of life and economic security for our military families.

By exempting Family Child Care providers from licensure and registration that is duplicative of the certification they receive from the military services, Ohio has the opportunity to enhance the quality of life and economic security of both the providers and military families seeking qualified child care options.

We appreciate the opportunity to discuss the policies reflected in SB 218 and are especially grateful to the bill sponsor, Senator Roegner who has championed military families issues for years with unparalleled success.

Respectfully,

Shane Preston

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