

Good Afternoon Chair Manchester, Vice Chair Brenner, and Ranking Member Weinstein. I would like to thank the committee for inviting Veterans organizations to speak today. The American Legion Dept. of Ohio receives funding from ODVS yearly which 95% of the allocation we receive is to supplement salaries of our department service officers. We do this to ensure service officers can maintain a fair salary compared to federal, state, and county jobs in similar fields and continue to offer VA claims services to Veterans free of charge. Currently we have 7 full-time, 2 part-time department service officers and 1 administrative assistant. In 2024 our department service officers had a 79% success rate with 1.3 million dollars in winnings for our Veterans which was spread across 219 separate BVA hearings. The remaining 5% of ODVS funding is used for our Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation programs which include Gifts for Yanks, a program where our organization offers gift cards/ Christmas gifts to Veterans who are receiving care in Ohio VA Medical Centers and Ohio Veterans homes. Veterans Education and Employment, in this program we assist veterans with free resources to help write resumes, Job Placement assistance, and veteran employment awards. Veterans Affairs Voluntary Services, in this program we work with legionnaires from across the state who are willing to volunteer their time and VA medical centers to put on activities for the patients the most popular being bingo. Finally we have legislative, under the legislative umbrella you have myself who goes to the statehouse and works with representatives and senators to advocate on behalf of veterans across the state of Ohio. Again I would like to thank the committee for the ability to give this written testimony.