



AMVETS

Department of Ohio

Proponent Written Testimony for the
Ohio Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee

Tuesday, April 29, 2025

Don McCauley

Executive Director

American Veterans (AMVETS) Department of Ohio

(614) 431-6990

dmccauley@ohamvets.org

H.B. 96 State Operating Budget for fiscal years 2026 - 2027.

Chair Manchester, Vice Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Weinstein, and the remaining honorable Ohio Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee members. I am Don McCauley, a U.S. Army Veteran and Executive Director of The American Veterans (AMVETS) Department of Ohio. I thank the Chair and other committee members for allowing me to testify as a proponent of the Veterans' Organizations portion of H.B. 96, the operating budget for fiscal years 2026-27. Your support is crucial to our cause and appreciated.

During the current biennium budget, the AMVETS Department of Ohio received appropriations of \$450,000.00 per annum. The Governor has proposed in the 2026-27 biennium budget that the AMVETS continue to receive \$450,000.00 per annum. The AMVETS Department of Ohio is grateful for the funds we receive annually from the state. The appropriation we receive funds our Department Service Officer program. Our Department Service Officers' job, assisting Ohio's veterans in obtaining their VA benefits, is an integral part of the claims process. We currently have seven AMVETS Department Service Officers on staff in 6 VA facilities in the State: Chillicothe VA Hospital, Cincinnati VA Hospital, Cleveland VA Hospital, Columbus VA Ambulatory Center, Dayton VA Hospital, and Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. The proposed budget will allow us to maintain our current level of service, and any increase would potentially expand our operations to serve Ohio's veterans better. AMVETS, with its unique

focus on providing comprehensive support to veterans, plays a crucial role in the Ohio economy. This unique focus ensures that every veteran in Ohio receives the support they need, contributing to the state's mission to be not just a veteran-friendly state but a veteran state.

According to statistics from the Veterans Administration, Ohio veterans and their families received over 3.9 billion in VA compensation and pensions for the fiscal year 2023, thanks to the efforts of Veteran Service Organizations like AMVETS and the County Veterans Service Commissions. Ohio appropriates approximately 2.4 million annually to Veterans Organizations. This is a return on Ohio's investment of more than 1600 to 1 of income put into the state economy by veterans and their families, thanks to those efforts. This significant economic return on investment, which you know, is a testament to the vital role AMVETS plays in the Ohio economy and the high return on investment in veterans. Your contribution to this significant return on investment is a source of pride for all of us.

Chair Manchester, Vice Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Weinstein, and the remaining honorable members of the Ohio Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee, I am deeply grateful for your time and attention today. Your dedication to understanding and addressing the needs of Ohio's veterans is commendable. Thank you for allowing me to provide proponent testimony for H.B. 96, the operating budget for fiscal years 2026-27. Your time and attention are appreciated.