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S.B. 416
(1_136_3059-2)
136th General Assembly

Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

[Click here for S.B. 416's Bill Analysis](#)

Version: In Senate Armed Services, Veterans Affairs, and Public Safety

Primary Sponsor: Sen. Patton

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: No

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Highlights

- The bill may allow a political subdivision to avoid the administrative costs of filling a vacancy in an elective office in the rare circumstance that an elected official is deployed on military duty. Any such savings likely would be minimal.
- A public body that does not already have the capability to host meetings that allow remote participation may incur minimal costs to allow a deployed elected official to attend virtually.

Detailed Analysis

The bill allows an elected official of the state or a political subdivision who is an active or reserve member of the armed forces of the United States or the Ohio National Guard, and who is deployed, to retain the official's position and, notwithstanding the Open Meetings Law, to attend meetings of a public body of which the official is a member through teleconference, video conference, or other similar synchronous electronic technology. Under the bill, such an official may hear and vote on matters before the public body and is not considered absent for purposes of provisions of law that require attendance at a minimum number of meetings, that declare an office vacant upon a specified period of absence, or that treat such absence as nonfeasance in office.

The number of elected officials who are simultaneously active or reserve members of the U.S. armed forces or part of the Ohio National Guard, and potentially deployable, is not known, as this information is not centrally tracked. However, based on anecdotal evidence, LBO assumes the bill's provisions will be triggered infrequently. By allowing a deployed official to retain office and participate in meetings virtually, the bill may permit a subdivision to avoid the administrative steps and associated costs of declaring and filling such a vacancy, including the appointment or

election of a successor. Any such savings likely would be minimal. Public bodies that do not already host meetings that allow for remote participation may incur minimal costs to acquire or arrange for it to accommodate deployed elected officials. A license for a video conferencing or online meeting platform may cost up to several hundred dollars per year.