



Committee Minutes

COMMITTEE: Armed Services and Veterans Affairs
CHAIRPERSON: Haraz N. Ghanbari
DATE: June 23, 2021
TIME: 11:00 AM
ROOM: Room 017 (Overflow Room 018)

The Committee was called to order at 1103. The Clerk called the role.

With a quorum being present the committee proceeded as a full committee.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved without objection.

Senate Bill 160 was called forward for its first hearing with Senator Sandra O'Brien providing sponsor testimony.

Senator O'Brien testified that the bill has been created as a collaborative effort among many Veterans Services professionals who have too often seen veterans go without care. SB160 would require certain healthcare professionals in Ohio to inform veterans in their care about healthcare and financial services that are available to them through the United States Veterans Affairs Administration. The Senator also testified that congressionally chartered veteran service organizations or county departments of veteran services are also included in the bill. The Ohio Department of Health would be responsible for enforcement through their annual department reports. Sen. O'Brien also testified that this bill has the potential to save the state millions of dollars through Medicaid by directing veterans to the VA and that the bill passed the Ohio Senate without opposition.

Rep. Gross asked if there has been any pushback from the Ohio Department of Health regarding enforcement of the bill.

Sen. O'Brien responded that there was no pushback as there is no financial cost and that the bill is likely to save money in Medicaid.

Ranking Member Miller thanked the Senator for bringing forward the bill. He asked why "veterans information" is not defined in the bill.

Sen. O'Brien answered that the phrase was deliberately left broad so that the bill could be tailored to individuals when the time arises.

Ranking Member Miller stated that he is very interested in the content of Interested Parties meetings and asked the Senator to elaborate on those discussions.

Chairman Ghanbari asked what language in the bill defines which veterans are eligible for what benefits. The Chairman said that the Ohio definition of veteran is much more broad than that

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which is used by the federal government.

Sen. O'Brien stated that she will return an answer to the committee at a later date.

With no further questions the first hearing of SB160 was completed.

Chairman Ghanbari called forward House Resolution 75 for its first hearing with Reps. A. Miller and J. Miller providing sponsor testimony.

The sponsors testified that HR75 expresses gratitude and thanks to the Ohio National Guard for their work at food banks across Ohio during the COVID-19 Emergency Response.

Chairman Ghanbari commended the National Guard for their response to the COVID crisis but also that the Guard was essential during the civil unrest in 2020. The Chairman asked what the thought process was to only include the Guard's work at food banks.

Rep. J. Miller stated that he initially opted for including only work at food banks because that is where he has first-hand experience with the Guard's service. He stated that he would be completely open to including other topics in the resolution. Rep. A. Miller agreed.

Chairman Ghanbari asked the sponsors to work with the Adjutant General to get a top-down view of the mission to adequately congratulate Guardsmen.

Rep. Gross stated support and offered that the sponsors should talk to the heads of the Army and Air Guards to make sure that no one is missed in the resolution.

The sponsored thanked the representative.

Rep. Fowler-Arthur said that she appreciates the focus on the work of the Guard. She stated that she has knowledge of members of the Guard who have not been properly compensated for their service during the COVID pandemic and if there is space for this resolution to rectify that situation.

Rep. A. Miller responded that he is familiar with that issue and stated that the committee is in good place to address that concern with the senior leadership of the Guard and the Governor's office.

Rep. Richardson thanked the sponsors for their efforts to bring forward this resolution and that she wants to make sure that we are recognizing exceptional service. She asked how the committee could assist with making sure all those who served exceptionally could be recognized.

The sponsors stated that the committee would work with the Adjutant General's Department to ensure that all those deserving will be recognized.

With no further questions the first hearing on HR75 was concluded.

Chairman Ghanbari stated that sponsors were still working changes on Am. SB59 and that a vote would not be taking place at the moment.

Chairman Ghanbari took a point of personal privilege to announce that his great uncle, John Paul LaForce, has recently passed. He was a veteran of the U.S. Army and served overseas in Germany.

Chairman Ghanbari recessed committee for five minutes.

Chairman Ghanbari called the committee to order.

The Chairman Ghanbari informed the committee that parties are nearing a solution on Am. SB59 and that the committee will recess at the call of the Chair.

Chairman Ghanbari called the committee to order at 3:45PM.

The Clerk called the role.

With a quorum being present the committee proceeded as a full committee.

Vice Chair Loychik moved that the committee report Am. SB59 and favorably recommend its

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passage.

With eleven in favor and none opposed the motion carried.

The role was left open until 6PM on June 23rd.

With no further business the committee adjourned.

Haraz N. Ghanbari, Chair

Committee Secretary

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