

Rep. Gross Committees:

Armed Services and Veterans Affairs
Committee
Economic and Workforce Development
Committee
Behavioral Health & Recovery Supports
Committee
Health Committee

Rep. Miller Committees:

Armed Services and Veterans Affairs
Committee
Behavioral Health and Recovery Supports
Committee
Criminal Justice Committee
Infrastructure and Rural Development
Committee



**The Ohio House of Representatives
Representative Jennifer Gross
Representative Adam Miller**

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HB 407 – Rep. Gross, Rep. Miller - Sponsor Testimony, Wednesday, September 29, 2021

Rep Gross:

Chairman Ghanbari, Vice Chair Loychik, Ranking Member Sheehy, and Members of the House Armed Services and Veterans Affairs Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 407, also known as the Safe Shelter Initiative Program for Ohio veterans.

In Ohio, there are currently over 1,000 homeless veterans and 60 percent homeless veterans are male. Simply put, one homeless veteran is one too many. We are the home of the free because of the brave men and women who chose to defend our great state and country. It is a great honor to have a small part in protecting and assisting our brothers and sisters here in Ohio with this Safe Shelter Initiative Program.

This bill will establish the Safe Shelter Initiative Program for veterans within the Department of Veterans Services. The purpose of this bill is to ensure that no veteran in Ohio will end up involuntarily homeless. The program will be under the supervision of the Director of Veterans Services.

The Safe Shelter Initiative Program will integrate veterans who are in need of housing into shelter and housing programs. The program will also provide vouchers to state and local entities that provide housing services to veterans. Additionally, the program will participate and coordinate with various state and local agencies to assist homeless veterans. The Safe Shelter Initiative Program also includes a method to allocate funding from the Veterans Safe Shelter Initiative Program Fund to provide nightly vouchers, funding for shelters, temporary apartment rentals, and such other means as the Director determines necessary for purposes of the program.

Rep. Miller:

This bill would create the Veterans Safe Shelter Initiative Program Fund in the state treasury and the fund will consist of money appropriated to it by the General

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Assembly. It would also authorize the Governor to call on any state agency to work with the Director for purposes of the program – combatting veterans homelessness.

The Development Services Agency, the Ohio Housing Finance Agency, the Department of Job and Family Services, the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, or any other applicable agency would be required to participate in the program if asked by the Director of Veterans Services to do so. An all hands on deck approach.

As we combat homelessness in Ohio, ending veterans homelessness must be an integral part of that effort and we should use the full force of the state of Ohio to do so.

Thank you once again for this opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on HB 407. We are more than happy to answer any questions.