



State Representatives Dontavius Jarrells and Adam C. Miller

Representative's Sponsor Testimony on Behalf of HB 415 Regarding Expanding the Eligibility for In State Tuition for Ohio's Veterans before the Higher Education and Career Readiness Committee (As Prepared)

Thank you members of the committee, Chair Lanese, Vice Chair Young, and Ranking Member Ingram for allowing us to testify on behalf of HB 415.

This important bill would expand eligibility for veterans, their spouses, and dependents for in state tuition. The expansion better reflects the great variety of military service and prevents classifying one type of service over another. This bill would provide in state tuition to any member of the Ohio National Guard, Reserve Component, or veteran – their spouse and dependents, who has 15 days of active duty or active duty training in a service year.

We need these veterans to come or stay in Ohio. We need them to utilize their skills and expertise in their next career to power our economy. We need them starting businesses. We need them as job creators here at home. Anything we can do to keep these young men and women better educated and here at home is a win for our state and our veterans.

The last General Assembly passed into law HB 16 that expanded in state tuition eligibility for veterans and their spouses and dependents. This was a tremendous step forward in recruiting and retaining skilled and experienced people into Ohio's economy. The recently implemented HB 16 provides in state tuition if the veteran served one or more years on active military duty and was honorably discharged or received a medical discharge that was related to the military service. The bill passed with widespread support.

The one year of active duty service requirement eliminates a large number of National Guard Members, Reservists, and veterans who have honorably served our state and nation, but were not deployed, or were deployed on active duty for less than a cumulative year.

These men and women serve an important role in our military and on occasion are assigned to their home base – but not on active duty – because of their expertise or importance of their role at home. A veteran could have been deployed for a short time overseas and after a 6 year

enlistment, still not qualify for Ohio's in state tuition benefit because they didn't have one year of cumulative active duty status.

Ultimately, they and their families sacrificed, as they stood ready to serve at a moment's notice. They should not miss out on in state tuition because their name was not called. That is why this bill includes adding spouses and dependents. They have served and sacrificed.

These are good, loyal service members, who by the nature of their service, served under a different title under the US Code. Reducing the requirement from one year to fifteen days in any service year for active duty or active duty training, better reflect the life of a modern warrior and ensures that we provide this tuition benefit to all those who have honorably served.

Thank you for your time. We will be happy to answer any questions.