

HB 244 Proponent Testimony
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President, Vanguard Veteran, LLC Apr 27, 2021

As a resident of Ohio for 25 years, a 29-year Air Force Veteran and former dependent of a career active duty Navy officer, I urge you to support HB 244.

We need to create the climate in which active duty Service members and their families desire to be stationed in Ohio and then *will chose to stay here* after they separate from military service. Research shows that at least 1/3 of families will stay at their last duty station and find a civilian job if the job is right and *their family is happy*.

Service members, Veterans and their spouses also possess skills that are highly transferrable and strengthen the civilian workforce. They are more mission-focused, adaptable, technologically savvy and thrive under pressure better than their civilian counterparts. Employers understand the business case for hiring this talent and are doing so in record numbers. The Department of Labor reports that Veteran unemployment is consistently lower than civilian unemployment.

These fine Americans are also civic assets, strengthening the communities in which they live.

We want military families to come and stay in Ohio. The more military-friendly the state is, the more we will be able to draw active duty families to our state, AND the more likely they will want to stay in Ohio to join Ohio's workforce.

When my family and I were ready to separate from active military service, we chose Ohio as the place to raise our children and start a business. Since we were both healthcare providers, we had many options. We chose Ohio because of the family values, work ethic and geographic centrality of the state. There are many other military families who will chose to do the same once they get to know Ohio.

I grew up moving around the world supporting my father's active duty Navy career. Whereas most military children move 6-9 times during in their school career, I only moved five times. That was challenging enough. The toughest moves were when I transitioned from a french speaking kindergarten to an english speaking first grade in Paris, France and when I left a class of 400 in Fairfax, Virginia to join a class of 30 in the middle of my junior year in high school, to graduate from a Department of Defense high school in Keflavik, Iceland.

Not only do military children have to overcome challenges within our domestic school systems, but they also face are other complex cultural and social stressors. I personally experienced these more than once. Anything we can do to support these children "who also serve," to help ease their school transition stress and reassure their parents is right-minded and helps our Service members focus on the mission.

HB 244 is good for our military families and its good for Ohio. What a win-win! I urge you to vote "yes!" Thank you!