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**Sponsor Testimony- Senate Resolution 204  
Ohio General Government Budget Committee  
November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

Chair Peterson, Vice Chair Wilson, Ranking Member Craig and members of the General Government Budget Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Resolution 204.

For the past several months I have had numerous discussions with our active and retired military about United States Military personnel being required to have the COVID vaccine. The chief concern has been; “We just do not know enough about this vaccine,” or “It really has not been out long enough to see what kind of effects this will have on all of us.” Questions have been raised, such as: “Will this vaccine affect my ability to have a child,” and “Why should I get the vaccine if I have the antibodies and/or have already had COVID?”

This morning, I spoke with First Lieutenant Jonathan Lightfoot, a pilot for the 112<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron in Swanton, OH, whose letter has been made available to you. The Secretary of Defense mandated the COVID vaccine on August 24, 2021. Lt. Lightfoot quickly submitted a religious exemption due to the use of stem cells in the vaccine- something that goes against his moral conscience. He never thought that he would be punished for standing up for his personally held beliefs, a right that he swore to defend for all.

Individual citizens understand the benefits and the risks of their decisions. This is especially true of the men and women in our military who have or are currently putting their life on the line to protect this country. Who better understands personal benefits and risks than those of us who have personally chose to risk the ultimate sacrifice we may give? We fought with great risk to protect individual liberties and freedom.

Our military members, myself included, swore this oath:

I, (state your name), do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the united States against all enemies, foreign and domestic: that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same: and that I will obey the orders of the president of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to the regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. So help me God.

And now, the true patriots of this nation-who fight to defend the freedom we all enjoy, have been backed into a corner, unable to freely choose what is best for them. All they want is to be able to make a decision for their own personal well-being.

We must allow our Operational Commanders the ability to find a solution that will not compromise their operational commitments and defend the rights, liberties, and freedoms of our country. Our military have already written a blank check to stand their post to keep this Great Nation Free. Not to be punished like some criminal.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony for Senate Resolution 204 and I will be happy to answer any questions at this time.