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Chair Gavarone, Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Maharath, and members of the Local Government and Elections Committee, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 287. This bill would expand authorized uses for county credit card expenditures to include charges for temporary and necessary assistance care provided by a county veteran service office.

It is important that as legislators, we help those who have served our country and find solutions to issues that affect veterans on a regular basis. Across the state, veteran service commissions (VSCs) work to help veterans who are in need of a wide range of services, from housing to clothing to transportation and beyond. Senate Bill 287 aims to help these commissions serve veterans more efficiently by authorizing the use of credit card to pay for expenses related to temporary and necessary assistance care provided by these organizations.

The current law (ORC 301.27) governing county credit card use only allows county agencies to use their credit cards for travel, vehicle maintenance, food, phone, and internet expenses. The one exception within ORC 301.27 refers to Ohio Public Children's Services, which authorizes the use of an agency credit card for child assistance. We are seeking a similar exception in SB 287 for veteran service commissions.

By allowing this exception, VSCs can meet the necessary needs of veterans and quickly provide emergency services without the commission relying on other forms of finances such as donations that may not be able to cover costs in a timely manner. If veterans need certain items for an upcoming job or housing after a period of hardship, VSCs can utilize the credit card to quickly conduct transactions and provide assistance to veterans.

In regards to oversight, this legislation would allow VSCs to have oversight on authorized card users and expenditure approval. Additionally, the County Auditor's office will review charges on the card, and any expenses incurred via credit card must fall under funds appropriated for the temporary and necessary assistance care provided by VSCs and other county veteran services offices. Finally, SB 287 would not affect how VSCs conduct their normal business of paying bills or issuing typical veterans financial assistance.

Our veterans have provided invaluable service to our country, and we want to make sure they are taken care of with basic needs later in life. I hope that SB 287 aids VSCs and other county veteran service offices accomplish that goal.

Chair Gavarone, Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Maharath, thank you again for allowing me to deliver testimony on SB 287. I'd be glad to answer questions at this time.