

Ohio House of Representatives



**State Representative Andrea White
District 41**

**State Representative Brian Lampton
District 73**

**HB 244 – Sponsor Testimony
Senate Primary & Secondary Education Committee
1 June 2021**

Chair Brenner, Vice-Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 244 with my joint sponsor, Representative Lampton. This legislation is important to support our military families, who already sacrifice so much for our freedom and who often must move on average six to eight times during their children’s growing up years. It is also important for our state as we seek to remain a vital partner for our nation’s defense and a host to strategic military installations which drive innovation and economic growth across Ohio. Representative Lampton will share more details about the bill’s expanded opportunities for military children.

Representative Lampton:

HB 244 will expand educational opportunities for Ohio’s military children to help ease their transition as their families move in and out of Ohio. The bill would specifically allow local education agencies to permit children of military families to participate in both virtual school enrollments and advance enrollments as they prepare to move to a new military installation with orders in hand. Additionally, HB 244 waives the proof of residency requirements until ten days after the student establishes residency in the district.

Under the legislation, a school district’s board of education has the ability to permit a school-aged child of a member of the uniformed services who is relocating to the state on active duty, and who is not a resident of the district during the enrollment period, to apply for enrollment in a school district in the same manner and at the same times as students residing in the school district.

With the location of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in the Dayton region, school enrollment for our military families is an issue we see far too often. Many of our military families face the monumental task of relocating their entire family to a new area without advanced notice. With this bill, we seek to relieve a portion of that stress while providing children with a stable educational environment.

When military children move midterm, because of their parents' service, they are often disadvantaged due to missed deadlines for course completion or registration. With this legislation, students would be able to start courses virtually to maintain continuity and avoid losing credits. While the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, otherwise known as MIC3, provides opportunities for assistance during transition, it does not address virtual school support. As a member of MIC3, I understand the vital importance of creating a learning environment for military children that allows for continuity in their studies.

Under current law, military families transferring on official military permanent change of station orders are not eligible to register for courses until they are physically located within district boundaries. This creates ambiguity in the enrollment process and uncertainty in coursework expectations for these children, since many know which school district they will be attending before they physically move.

Military service members are routinely reassigned to new duty stations on a three- to four-year rotation, most often in the summer. Their children need access to courses during permanent change of station transfers to alleviate the need for summer school, which many of these students utilize, to make-up for courses missed due to the transition.

If coursework is required to help the child graduate on time, parents can enroll their children in the receiving state's virtual school network to make up gaps in graduation requirements. If students transfer midterm, parents can enroll their children in the sending or receiving state's virtual school network so their children can avoid receiving incomplete grades. Representative White...

Representative White:

It is critically important that Ohio continues to grow its reputation as a welcoming state for our military families. First and foremost – we want to impact lives through family-friendly policies and programs that reduce stress and help children flourish in the midst of difficult transitions. We also need to help ensure that our state continues to remain a strategic partner and host for our nation's military installations. One of these locations in our region is Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, the state's largest single-site employer with over 32,000 jobs. Headquarters to some of the Air Force's largest missions, Wright-Patt serves as a key center of innovation, technology incubation, and economic growth driving advances not only in

defense but in healthcare, advanced manufacturing, aviation, and more. More than 40 percent of the Air Force's budget flows through Wright-Patt.

Added together with the base, Southwest Ohio's federal installations contribute more than \$16.5 billion in combined regional economic impact each year and employ more than 88,000 people. This includes active duty, guard and reserve military members, federal civilians and government contractors. These Federal installations and strategic partners are economic anchors of their regions and they continue to lead the nation when it comes to supporting our military.

To put this into perspective, there are over 90 different military installations across Ohio. Some of these Military Installations include: The Ohio National Guard—Located in Toledo, Ohio, it is currently the nation's second largest Air Guard; The Air Reserves--- Located in Youngstown, Ohio, it is the only unit within the Department of Defense to perform Aerial Spray; and The NASA Glenn Research Center--- Located in Cleveland, Ohio, a center that plays a vital role in the exploration of the moon and space.

In addition to these military installations, Ohio is home to both the largest jet engine producer in the world, GE Aviation, and the last heavy armor plant in the U.S., located in Lima. Even more, over 3,200 suppliers partner with organizations like Agility Prime, a new Air Force launched program to accelerate the commercial market for "flying cars," as well as top universities to conduct research for the military and NASA. These strategic partnerships and military installations help drive technological innovation and create a ripple effect of impact that's changing not only our region and state, but our nation and beyond.

State-side Federal installations are critical to our nation's defense and Ohio plays a major role as the facilitator to many strategic projects. By continuing to make Ohio more military-friendly, we will help retain these installations and position our state to attract even more, which in turn will allow our service members to advance their careers while enjoying the welcoming climate that Ohio has to offer.

As we continue to recognize the impact that service members have on the great State of Ohio, we must continue to find new ways to support them by removing unneeded barriers and obstacles for their families as they seek to transition to our state. By doing so, we will not only improve their quality of life, but also help solidify our reputation as one of the best places to call home even after retirement.

Chair Brenner, Vice-Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony with Representative Lampton. We are happy to answer any questions committee members may have at this time.