

HB 244 Proponent Testimony
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President, Vanguard Veteran, LLC June 14, 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.

Let's create a climate that attracts active duty Service members and their families to be stationed in Ohio. Bringing them to our state while serving in the military will facilitate their choice *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 if they find the right civilian job and *their family is happy*.

Service members, Veterans and their spouses possess skills that are highly transferable 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 choose Ohio as the place to raise our children and start a business. Since we were both health-care providers, we had many options. We chose Ohio because of the family values, work ethic and geographic centrality of the state. I am confident there are many other military families like mine who will chose to live, work and raise their families in 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 experienced five. 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 in domestic school systems, they also face cultural and social stressors. I personally experienced these more than once. Anything we can do to support these children "who also serve," to ease their school transition stress and reassure their parents is right-minded. It also helps Service members focus on the military mission.

HB 244 is good for our military families and it's good for Ohio. What a win-win! I urge you to vote "Yes!" Thank you!