



VETERANS AND
PUBLIC SAFETY
COMMITTEE

Witness Form

Today's Date May 24, 2021

Name: Robert Marino Sr.

Address: 729 Battles Ave
P.O. Box 5
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Telephone: (330) 501-9234

Organization Representing: Self

Testifying on Bill Number: Senate Bill 160

Testimony: Verbal Written Both

Testifying As: Proponent Opponent Interested Party

Are you a Registered Lobbyist? Yes No

Special Requests: _____

To: Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee
134 General Assembly of the State of Ohio
Regular Session 2021 -2022

From: Robert L Marino Sr.
729 Battles Ave.
PO Box 5
Niles, OH 44446
330-501-9234

RE: Senate Bill 160

My name is Robert Marino Sr. and I am a retired United States Air Force Master Sergeant. I honorably and proudly served active and in the reserve with the Air Force, Army, and Ohio National Guard. As a Loadmaster in the Air Force active and the Reserves, my service time included over nine thousand hours of flying time with greater than 100 hours of combat flying time in the Persian Gulf. Additionally, I flew missions in Serbia, Saudi Arabia, Central, South America, and all 50 states.

Currently, I am honored to serve in the following veteran organizations: DAV Chapter 11, VFW Post 3767, American Legion 700, Retired Loadmasters, 40 & 8, and as a trustee for the American Legion Ohio Buckeye Boys State, which is the largest in the nation.

When I retired in 2004, I was not aware, nor was I formally informed of VA benefits and eligibility. I learned of VA benefits through research and word of mouth. I readily shared what I learned to help fellow veterans. Through this community engagement with veterans and veteran organizations, former State Representative Glenn Holmes and State Senator Sean O'Brien selected me to serve as their district veteran liaison. During the officials' tenures, we worked tirelessly to help district veterans. To this day, veterans continue to contact me regarding VA contact information, benefits eligibility, and other concerns. I am surprised by the number of Vets who are unaware of benefits. In 2018, I was contacted by Theresa Bartlett regarding the proposed bill before you today. To my knowledge, there is and has not been any other legislation concerning veteran services and eligibility.

The importance of this type of education and the benefit it will provide to veterans is powerful and essential. Often, our elderly veterans find accessing VA benefits highly complex, and veteran service organizations stand ready to help. Senate Bill 160 is a necessary step in our efforts to help educate veterans.

We can all agree it is vital that we serve those who honorably served our country. I strongly encourage you to support Senate Bill 160.

Respectfully,



Robert L Marino Sr.

US Air Force Retired Veteran