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OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-1500

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Senator Frank Hoagland
Chair, Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee

Proponent Testimony
James D. Rickel
Central Region Liaison
United States Department of Defense-State Liaison Office

Support of: HB92 - Child Abuse and Neglect – Sponsor Representative Cindy Abrams

Chairman and committee members, thank you for this opportunity to provide information on House Bill 92 sponsored by Representative Cindy Abrams. HB 92 ensures the reporting of child abuse to the appropriate military installation when the child is a military family member. This bill makes efforts to determine the military status of parents whose child are subject to abuse or neglect allegation, and to notify the department of defense family advocacy program for appropriate action.

My name is Jim Rickel, the Department of Defense (DOD) Central Region State Liaison, working for the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, Military Community and Family Policy.

HB 92 is about reporting of child abuse to the Department of Defense Local Family Advocacy Program Representative when the child is a military family member. DOD will then ensure proper reporting and procedures are followed within Department of Defense and that resources are made available for the military child, parents and or guardian.

The Secretary of Defense is required by Section 1787 of Title 10 US Code to coordinate with civilian child welfare to obtain information on allegations of child abuse and neglect involving children in military families.

HB 92 will provide a uniformed law and state statute ensuring notification to the military installation when child abuse allegations have occurred. HB 92 will also ensure the chain of command is notified as well, and allows a family to seek the medical and counseling services through the military installation.

Over 70% of military families live off a military installation and in our communities.

The military services have investigative, intervention, and rehabilitative support resources that can assist the state child welfare system in addressing allegations of child abuse.

Ohio has a large military population with several military installations, with the largest at Wright Patterson Air Force base. Ohio has, at last count, by Defense Management Data Center, 19,401 total active military and 35,080 military family members. Ohio is the ninth largest military state

in the Nation. Unfortunately, with that many people, occasionally child abuse occurs. Even one child's life is worth this effort. Currently, 28 other states have passed similar legislation on this issue and several other states are considering legislation for this issue.

We thank Representative Cindy Abrams for sponsoring this initiative and thank you for taking up this issue for consideration. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Very Respectfully,

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