Representative Janine Boyd
Ohio House District 09

Sponsor Testimony House Bill 468

Good afternoon Chairman Johnson, Vice Chair Lanese, Ranking Member Craig, and esteemed colleagues of the Armed Services, Veterans Affairs, and Homeland Security Committee. It's my honor to share my testimony with you today as joint sponsor of HB 468 with Representative Perales, who was gracious enough to welcome my interest in his important legislation.

From what I've found in my research, and as is actually indicated on the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs website, the VA has made strides to affect the often long wait times commonly associated with treatment and care for our Veterans. For instance, back in April last year the DVA launched a new online tool intended to make actual wait times more transparent for Veterans, in real time. The online tool includes access to the average times patients are waiting to be seen in their local area; how Veterans describe their experiences scheduling primary and specialty –care appointments at specific VA facilities; timeliness of appointments for care needed right away; and the quality of health care delivered at VA medical centers, compared with local private-sector hospitals. While this tool is a great step in the direction of mitigating long waits at the VA, all of us here also understand how difficult it can be for state employees to take time from their respective roles to attend to their healthcare needs and medical appointments. Immediately I think of our Troopers, for instance. This bill is an opportunity for us to assist our state employees who have served our country and continue to contribute to our state.

I'm honored to be a part of this bill that provides additional paid leave time to our Veterans who now work for Ohio, and with the Representative, I humbly ask for your support.

Representative Perales and myself will now entertain any questions of the Committee.