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Ohio Senate

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**Sponsor Testimony on Senate Bill 305**  
**Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs Committee**  
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Chairman Uecker, Vice Chair Wilson, Ranking Member Thomas, members of the Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide Sponsor Testimony on Senate Bill 305. This legislation would create a Military Voting Liaison position in the office of the Secretary of State. This position would not only work with military personnel and their families to conduct training prior to deployment but also remain in contact with military voting assistance officers in the field.

Our service members willingly risk their lives to protect our democratic institutions. Voting is a fundamental tenant of those institutions. Because of this, we should assist those who are eligible and willing to vote in any way we can.

In 2011, I, along with many other members of the legislature, co-sponsored legislation which completely overhauled Ohio's UACAVA laws. We made it easier than ever for our military members to cast a ballot while deployed or stationed abroad. Ohio took an important step forward, but as time went on UACAVA voting statistics revealed there was still more work to be done. In 2014, 67% of military personnel said they were not confident their vote would be counted during the election or found the absentee voting process overly complex. It was reported in 2016 that nearly 100,000 fewer absentee ballots were sent out to military personnel from 2012.

The Military Voting Liaison will help to stem this problem for Ohio's service members. The position will help military personnel prior to deployment, register to vote, understand the absentee voting process, and assist in signing up for absentee ballots. Having a Military Voting Liaison would allow for Ohio's service members to have not only the necessary information presented to them before deployment, but also the confidence that the vote they protect will be counted.

The tools are in place for military members and their families to securely and efficiently cast a ballot. It's time Ohio is proactive in training our brave service members on how to use those tools.

Again, Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify today, I would be happy to answer any question.