

**INTERESTED PARTY TESTIMONY OF
OHIO STATE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS
*****H.B. 155*******

Chairman Perales, Vice Chairman Hood, Member Weinstein

My name is Kevan Wain, and I'm President of the Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Officers.

I served in the United States Army from 1983 to December 1988. I received Army Commendation Medals, the Army Achievement Medal, the Army of Occupation Medal for service in West Berlin, Germany.

I'm a Member of the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers.

I have been employed as a County Veterans Service Officer for the Columbiana County Veterans Service Commission since 2005.

I have previously served the Ohio State Association of County Veterans Service Officers as the Second Vice-president, and have served as the President of the Association of County Veterans Service Officers since September 2018.

As you know, county veterans service commissions receive a half-mill from each county's property tax that funds the agency. You will hear (or have heard) testimony from Mr. Smith who is a Commissioner, one of the five appointees by the county common pleas court. As a service officer, I guess you could say, I'm boots on the ground working on a daily basis with veterans and their dependents to process VA claims, advise them of available benefits, and generally do everything possible under R. C. Chapter 5901 and Title 38 of the United States Code to serve veterans.

We work very closely with veterans service commissioners and share a common interest in keeping an efficient process for delivering veterans services. This not only fulfills the statutory mandate and the moral commitment to veterans, it also is a tremendous economic stimulus to each county because of the federal monies returned to counties.

During the past few months I had the opportunity to work with Rep. Ginter and others to try to implement HB 155 in such a way so as not to disrupt services or add any more layers to county government, and I also appreciate the time taken to draft this legislation to protect the important war relics that honor the service and sacrifice of veterans for this country.

I understand there is now an amended version of HB 155. The Veterans Service Officers Association believes this is important legislation, but we, too, want to avoid any issues in the implementation. We are happy to support this bill in its amended form. We want to work in harmony with other county agencies to see that veterans are well-served, and that their service and the memories of those who have fallen are honored and respected.

The Ohio State Association of County Veterans Service Officers supports HB 155 as amended to remove the reference to the veterans service commissions both as to the receipt of any fines or maintenance, repair, installation or restoration of veterans' memorials.

**INTERESTED PARTY TESTIMONY OF OHIO STATE
ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE COMMISSIONERS
*****H.B. 155*******

Chairman Perales, Vice Chairman Hood, Member Weinstein

My name is Jared Smith, and I'm President of the Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Commissioners.

I'm a disabled combat Veteran with 2 tours to Iraq and a third tour to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba where I was responsible for all movement within and around the Department of Defense's only maximum security strategic detention facility.

I received the Army Commendation Medal for distinguished combat Valor for action in Iraq in 2004.

I was inducted into the Ohio Military Hall of Fame for Valor.

I currently work for the state of Ohio as a Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialist. I was recognized as the 2017 DVOP of the Year for the State of Ohio, and the 2019 National DVOP of the year.

I serve Veterans in multiple capacities in my spare time.

In 2016 I was appointed as a Washington County Veterans Service Commissioner representing the VFW.

I'm a life member of the VFW, DAV, and the AMVETS, and also an annual member of the American Legion and am my Post's 1st Vice Commander.

During the past few weeks I've had the opportunity to work with Sen. Schaffer's office and Rep. Rogers' office and I appreciate the time they have taken to prepare this legislation which recognizes the sanctity of relics that served to give tribute to the enormous sacrifices made by veterans for this country.

We were able to craft some language which I understand will be in an amended version of HB 155. The Veterans Service Commissioners Association believes in veterans serving veterans, and, while we think this is important legislation, we wanted to avoid any issues in the implementation. In short, we saw no role or reason to be part of the process to take fines assessed by the courts against perpetrators and distribute them to the chartered service organizations. We are happy to support this bill in its amended form. We want to work in harmony with other county agencies to see that veterans are well-served, and that their service and the memories of those who have fallen are honored and respected.

The Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Commissioners supports HB 155 as amended to remove the reference to the veterans service commissions both as to the receipt of any fines or maintenance, repair, installation or restoration of veterans' memorials.