

BEFORE THE SENATE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

**SENATOR STEPHANIE KUNZE
CHAIR**

**HOUSE BILL 16
PROPONENT TESTIMONY
OF
MIKE SUVER
VICE PRESIDENT, GOVERNMENT RELATIONS
INTER-UNIVERSITY COUNCIL OF OHIO**

SEPTEMBER 18, 2019

The Public Universities of Ohio

The University of Akron
University of Cincinnati
Miami University
Ohio University
Wright State University

Bowling Green State University
Cleveland State University
Northeast Ohio Medical University
Shawnee State University
Youngstown State University

Central State University
Kent State University
The Ohio State University
The University of Toledo

Chair Kunze, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Minority Member Williams, and members of the Senate Higher Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today on behalf of the state's fourteen public universities, all of which are members of the Inter-University Council of Ohio (IUC). My name is Mike Suver and I am the Vice President of Government Relations for the IUC.

The IUC was established in 1939 as a voluntary educational association of Ohio's public universities. Today, the association represents all of Ohio's fourteen public universities. The IUC values providing access to a high quality, affordable education. It is committed to ensuring affordable opportunities for the more than 329,000 students attending our member institutions without sacrificing the quality of their education or experience.

Madam Chair and members of the committee, thank you for your support for higher education and the students we serve. I also would like to thank the sponsor of House Bill 16, Representative Perales, for his service to our country and his dedication to the men and women in the United States Military. On behalf of Ohio's public university presidents, I am pleased to testify in support of House Bill 16.

As you know, the legislation requires the Chancellor of Higher Education to grant Ohio residency to military service members on active duty, as well as their spouses and dependents, for the purposes of qualifying for in-state tuition at state institutions of higher education. Ohio's public universities recognize and appreciate the commitment of those in uniform who generously and selflessly volunteer to serve our country. We appreciate the sacrifices made by service members on active duty. We appreciate those who leave behind a spouse, a child, and loved ones when sent overseas on deployment, sometimes multiple deployments, missing the birthdays, anniversaries, and holidays with family that those back home may take for granted. We appreciate those who put on hold their own education and civilian career to risk their life defending our rights and freedoms. We appreciate the hard work they do, the risks they take, and we are grateful for their service.

For these reasons, and to give a little something back, we are proud to support this legislation, which reinforces Ohio's position as one of the most military service-member friendly states in the country. It rightly complements the existing Ohio GI Promise program enacted in 2009 that offers a similar benefit to our veterans, their spouses, and dependents. The IUC views this bill as an incentive to encourage active duty military from across the country to bring their families, leadership, motivation, and maturity to Ohio's public universities. To compete successfully for business investment and jobs, the state must significantly increase the number of Ohioans with college degrees and other postsecondary credentials. Offering in-state tuition to active duty service members, their spouses, and dependents, regardless of residency, will attract some of the brightest and hardest working people in the country to Ohio's colleges and universities and they may decide to stay. This initiative can help us reach our Attainment Goal.

I also am proud to point out how Ohio's public universities are serving our military now. The University of Cincinnati, for example, has 2,298 military-affiliated students attending the institution, including its College of Law and College of Pharmacy. The University of Toledo Fall of 2018 military population consisted of 465 students, 48 dependents, 3 spouses and 414 veterans across a variety of colleges, including its College of Engineering, College of Business and Innovation, and College of Health and Human Services. Majors declared by these students ranged from mechanical engineering to biology to criminal justice. Ohio State University has 128 active duty students currently enrolled, including undergraduate, graduate, and professional students. Kent State University serves 740 students

and Wright State University currently enrolls 109 students on active duty in some capacity, 90 of which are graduate students. We hope these numbers will grow as a result of House Bill 16.

While the IUC strongly supports this legislation, I am obliged to point out that it may result in a loss of revenue for Ohio's public universities. As the Legislative Service Commission Fiscal Note identifies, state institutions generally can charge a higher tuition rate to out-of-state students than they can for in-state students. This out-of-state student surcharge, on average across the thirteen public universities (excluding the Northeast Ohio Medical University), is approximately \$4,571 per semester. So, under the bill, state institutions will receive less tuition revenue for active duty personnel and family members who would have otherwise attended an institution at an out-of-state tuition rate because the active duty member or dependents are not stationed or residing in Ohio. However, that is an investment we are happy to make in support of our active duty service members.

Chair Kunze, members of the committee, let me once again restate our support for House Bill 16 and our appreciation for the men and women of our armed services on active duty, in the Reserve, the National Guard, their families, and our veterans. I am sure each one of us knows someone who has served or is serving. We owe these individuals a debt of gratitude. I ask your support for this legislation.