



## **Proponent Testimony on House Bill 16 – Military In-State Tuition**

Senate Higher Education Committee

*September 18, 2019*

Chair Kunze, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Williams and members of the Senate Higher Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 16 sponsored by Representative Perales. I am Tom Walsh, Vice President of the Ohio Association of Community Colleges (OACC), which represents the presidents and trustees of all twenty-three of the public two-year institutions throughout the state.

Granting in-state tuition to all active duty military personnel and their families living in Ohio will help reduce a financial barrier that for far too many individuals may prevent them from pursuing a credential or degree at a public two or four-year institution. By waiving the one year residency requirement for in-state tuition, HB 16 is consistent with one of the central missions of our community colleges: to provide an affordable and accessible postsecondary options for all students.

HB 16 builds upon a number of recent programs that are designed to provide innovative, affordable pathways to encourage more students to earn a postsecondary degree including the Ohio GI Promise, Forever Buckeye and the Guaranteed Transfer Pathways programs. This bill is yet another smart strategy to help Ohio meet its “Complete to Compete” workforce readiness goal of having 65% of all adults with some type of postsecondary certificate, credential or degree. By reducing the cost to gain the skills and education necessary to transition into a job in the region, HB 16 will help keep more men and women of our armed forces here in Ohio and allow them to become permanent members of their community.

We are grateful for the sacrifices that military service members and their families make for all of us every day. HB 16 will ultimately increase affordable access to Ohio’s world-class public colleges and universities and we are pleased to support this bill. Once again, thank for the opportunity to testify and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.