

HB 569 - Authorize establishment - Ohio Hidden Hero Scholarship Programs

Testimony of David K. Root

Before the Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee

Wednesday, December 14, 2022

Chairman Johnson, Vice Chairman Cirino, Ranking Member Martin, and members of the Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee thank you for allowing me to stand before you this morning to supply testimony in favor of House Bill 569.

My name is David Root, and I am currently State Legislative Chairman for the Department of Ohio VFW. I am also a Past State Commander for the Ohio VFW. I served four years in the US Navy and made three cruises to the Gulf of Tonkin in the 1960s. That makes me old enough to have witnessed many of my fellow veterans and even a few of my own family members find themselves in need of a full-time caregiver.

About 25 years ago I was my mother's caregiver for nearly three years so I am aware of the toll it can take on a person. It can disrupt employment, schooling, volunteer work, social activities and even family life. When the caregiver of a 100% disabled veteran finds the need to further their education a scholarship could be the only way they can afford to do so. Attending college and working while being a caregiver is nearly impossible. These 'Hidden Heroes' need all the help we can offer them. *The Hidden Heroes Scholarship Program* will be the help they need.

Legislation passed by this general assembly and previous general assemblies has moved Ohio closer and closer to becoming the most veteran friendly state in the country. HB 569 can be one more steppingstone on the path to achieving that title. Ohio needs this bill, our veterans need this bill, and our veteran's caregivers – the Hidden Heroes -need this bill.

Ohio's State universities, colleges, and community colleges support this bill and even our private colleges asked that the bill be amended to include them. Ohio Veterans services, Blue Star Families, and numerous education associations all support it. Your colleagues in the House unanimously supported it just prior to the summer recess.

I urge you to follow the examples set by the House and vote for favorable passage of House Bill 569.

I thank you again for allowing me to give proponent testimony today and I will be happy to answer any questions the members of the committee might have.