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Proponent Testimony H.B. 69

Chairman Loychik, Vice-Chair Demetriou, Ranking Member Miller, thank-you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony in favor of House Bill 69. This bill will require each county veterans' service commission to include as a member at least one veteran who was in military service after September 11, 2001.

The increase in military conflicts since September 11, 2001 has created a new generation of Post-9/11 veterans, including myself. I was born and raised in Canton, Ohio. I served in the United States Navy from 2005-2009, United States Navy Reserve from 2009-2011. I had an individual augmentation deployment with the United States Army's Multi National Security Transition Command- Iraq working in the J6 communications shop in Baghdad, Iraq from 2008-2009. I was honorably discharged from active-duty service and medically discharged from the reserve forces due to medical complications from my combat deployment to Iraq. I moved down to Columbus in 2009 after separating from active duty to pursue a college education under the Post 9-11 G.I. Bill. I am a 2012 graduate of THE Ohio State University with a bachelors degree in political science with a minor in security and intelligence.

Despite there being more than 20 years of military conflict after 9/11, today, just 12% of the Veteran Service Commission slots statewide are filled by a post-9/11 veteran. H.B. 69 will strengthen the number of post 9/11 representation by requiring that at least one slot be filled by this growing generation of veterans. The Veterans Service Commissions in the past were required to fill one spot by a WWI veteran, and another spot with a WWII veteran, so it is therefore

reasonable to return to a similar requirement for post-9/11 veterans, as House Bill 69 would do.

There are numerous post 9/11 veterans of various age groups, and I believe these veterans are more than qualified to serve if given the opportunity. By having individuals who a part of the Post 9-11 veteran community that this commission serves is extremely important considering the disconnect between those who have served and those who have not. This allows the commission to get direct and instant feedback on various issues that the commission works on from current serving veterans.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak in support of HB 69, and I will now try to attempt any questions you may have.