



Chairman Loychik, Vice Chairman Demetriou, Ranking member Miller, and Members of the House Armed Service and Veterans Commission – Thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony on H.B. 69.

My name is Terry Stanforth, I am from Fremont (Sandusky County). I am a graduate of the University of Findlay. I served in the Ohio Army National Guard for 20 yrs as a Combat Engineer and retired as an E-8, Master Sergeant. I served 1 tour in Iraq from Feb 2003 to April 2004. I joined the VFW in 2005 and served as a Post Commander for 7 yrs and the District 9 Commander for 1 year. I am also the Commander of Disabled American Veterans Chapter 33, a Trustee of Amvets Post 67 and a member of American Legion Post 608. I am currently the Executive Director of the Sandusky County Veterans Service Office.

When I came home from Iraq, I was first greeted by my family. The next group I was greeted by were Vietnam Veterans. They gave us all a big welcome home and thanked us for our service. I felt humbled to be welcomed by a group of fellow veterans who did not get the same support when they came home. A year later, I joined VFW Post 2947 in Fremont as a Life Member. Due to work and family life, I was not able to get involved for several years. I was the first Post 9/11 Veteran to become the Commander of Post 2947. The rest of my officers were Vietnam and Korean War Veterans. Eventually we were able to get some Gulf War and Post 9/11 Veterans to join but they were unable to become active due to work and family commitments. I recruited many Post 9/11 Veterans to our post and always heard the same thing....."I'm glad to join but I don't have time to be active". My response was always, "family comes first, be as active as time allows you to be."

This H.B., if allowed to pass, it would not benefit our veteran community. Our veterans deserve to be represented by those who have the passion and also the

time to commit to helping our veterans. My current board is made up of 5 retired Vietnam Veterans. All of them are very committed to our community and I could not ask for a better group of Veterans Service Commissioners. They have the time and the experience to be mentors and role models. We all realize that no one lives for ever and at some point we will need to bring on new members of our board. I have been proactive in talking to fellow Post 9/11, Gulf War and Vietnam Veterans about the possibility of joining the Veterans Service Commission in the near future. I've been able to identify several that are capable and willing. The ones that are available to do so right now are Gulf War and Vietnam Veterans.

It would not be practicable or prudent to mandate Post 9/11 Veterans to serve on the board when they don't have the time to do so. There are some out there who are able to commit the time and I commend them for having the dedication for doing so. They are a small group though. It is my option that time and natural attrition will allow our board to be staffed by younger veterans. It would be no different then trying to force Post 9/11 Veterans to serve in public office when they are not willing to or have the time to do so. It would not benefit our voters any more than it would benefit our veterans.

Thank you again for allowing me to provide testimony, I will now stand for questions.