



Testimony before the House Higher Education Committee
C. Todd Jones, President and General Counsel
Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Ohio
October 11, 2023

Thank you, Chairman Young, and members of the House Higher Education Committee for allowing AICUO to submit written testimony on behalf of Ohio's independent, non-profit colleges and universities in support of House Bill (HB) 242.

AICUO represents 52 non-profit institutions of higher education across the state. Our members educate 134,000 students, and award one-third of the baccalaureate degrees in Ohio each year, and an even higher share of our state's degrees in mathematics, natural and biological sciences, and other key areas of study.

HB 242, introduced by Representatives Miller and Stein, would establish the Armed Forces Reserve Component Scholarship Program for Ohioans serving as a member of a reserve component of the U.S. Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard, or Space Force.

This program, modeled after the existing Ohio National Guard Scholarship Program, will assist in furthering educational attainment for men and women serving in our Armed Forces Reserve. In the previous fiscal year, the Ohio National Guard Scholarship Program provided nearly 2,600 scholarships to National Guard members. HB 242 will go even further to assist our armed forces members and provide tuition support to over 10,000 reserve members.

Ohio's independent colleges are proud to be a welcoming place to all service veterans. As I am sure you know, Ohio was the first state in the nation to create the Collegiate Purple Star designation which recognizes "those public and independent colleges and universities in Ohio that are supportive and inclusive of military-connected students." AICUO independent colleges are happy to be active participants in the program. Ohio's independent colleges also participate in the federal Yellow Ribbon program, a cost-matching program that covers the full cost of tuition and fees for longer serving veterans, spouses, and their children through a combination of federal and institutional aid.

However, we believe more can be done for Ohioans who choose to join the armed forces and reserve forces. HB 242 will continue to aid Ohio's economy by helping our best and brightest remain in Ohio during and after their service career.

AICUO applauds Representatives Miller and Stein's efforts to provide tuition assistance to the men and women in the Armed Forces Reserve today and future members to come.