



**JEAN SCHMIDT
STATE REPRESENTATIVE**

Chairman Roemer, Vice Chairman Merrin, Ranking Member Troy, and members of the House Ways and Means Committee, thank you for allowing Representative Miller and I to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 53, to create the Veteran Opportunity Tax Credit.

As my colleague has said, this bill is straightforward and important. House Bill 53 creates a tax credit for Ohio that mirrors the federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit to encourage employers to hire veterans, spouses of veterans, and disabled veterans. This tax credit will incentivize businesses to hire veterans, ensuring that our workforce remains strong.

Too often, we see our veterans face unnecessary barriers to employment. This bill will help to remove some of those barriers for those who sacrificed so much for us. The Veteran Opportunity Tax Credit is a way for Ohio to show that we do care. It is our hope that this bill will allow Ohio to remain a competitive state to entice workers to work and live in Ohio.

Additionally, this bill is important to help ensure that Wright-Patterson Air Force Base remains open. Every few years, Congress reviews bases across the nation to determine if they will be closed using the Base Realignment And Closure (BRAC). This tax credit shows that Ohio is willing to take care of its service members and veterans, which will improve the score to keep this base open. The base employs more than 30,000 people and supports STEM education for students through its Wizards of Wright programs.

I encourage you to move this bill forward quickly. It is time for Ohio to step up to the stage and follow other states in creating these opportunities for our veterans. Thank you for your time and we are happy to answer any questions.