



# Ohio Legislative Report



Volume One Alpha; Number Four

May 2023

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UNITED STATES CONGRESS:

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OHIO SECRETARY OF STATE:

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## Ohio Legislative Report

Is published electronically every to report on the latest information about legislative issues taking place in Columbus and Washington that will affect the lives of Veterans and Military Personnel and their families in Ohio.

It is emailed at no charge to all who would like to receive it.

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Editor: David K. Root

## Statehouse Happenings

March and April were not your 'business as usual' type of months for the members of the Ohio General Assembly.

On February 15th Representative Jay Edwards (District 94) dropped four bills that are part of the state budget for Fiscal Year 2024-2025. During March and April nearly every house committee and subcommittee was caught up in hearings for the bills with testimony from hundreds of individuals, corporations, organizations, state department heads, and groups of every size all asking for a piece of the state's financial pie.

HB 23 deals with the transportation budget, HB 31 is the workers' compensation budget, and HB 32 has to do with the industrial commission budget. But the big daddy of them all is House Bill 33. It 'Establishes operating appropriations for fiscal years 2024-2025'. The bill started out on 4,311 pages with total General Revenue Funds averaging about \$43 billion for each year. HB 33 is the one that pertains to the veterans and military in Ohio and is the one to watch.

On March 21st the House Subcommittee on Transportation Committee meeting heard testimony from The Department of Veterans Services, The Adjutant General's Department, The Department of Ohio VFW, American Veterans Department of Ohio, Disabled American Veterans, Department of Ohio, and the American Legion Department of Ohio. All reported on their use of previously budgeted funds, their need of funds during the next two fiscal years, and/or the need to increase their funds.

The biennium budget is introduced every two years at the beginning of the new general assembly (odd numbered years). The house is supposed to hold hearings, pass a balanced budget and then send it to the Senate so they can hold hearings and pass a balanced budget. If the senate makes any amendments to the budget passed by the house, it must go back to the house so they can agree to the amendments. Once both chambers agree on the budget it is sent to the governor for him to sign off on or veto.

A balanced budget must be agreed to by the senate, house, and governor no later than June 30th –the day before the new fiscal year begins.

April 26th, House Bill 33 passed in the House with a 56 to 14 vote. The next day it was introduced in the Senate.

By the way... House Bill 33 is now

We are happy to announce  
**O.L. Report**  
now has  
**Letters to the Editor**

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# PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA

## *Some of their 2023 POLICY PRIORITIES*

For more than 75 years, PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA—the nation’s premier nonprofit of choice for disabled veterans, their families, and caregivers—has led the fight for accessibility and provided a full circle of support from the point of injury or diagnosis to all of life’s milestones. With offices inside every Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) spinal cord injury and disorder (SCI/D) center across the U.S., PVA is unmatched. Staffed with licensed architects, medical professionals, legal experts, and leaders in research and education, PVA fights to help veterans with SCI/D or diseases, like MS and ALS, receive the benefits they earned, the specialized health care they deserve, the accessible homes and vehicles they need, and the meaningful careers they want.

For these veterans to thrive, they must have access to high-quality, comprehensive health care and timely delivery of all earned benefits. They must also have equitable access to the same opportunities and freedoms available to all Americans.

### Protect Access to VA’s Specialized Health Care Services

To ensure access to VA’s health care system, it must receive sufficient funding. Without it, VA will be unable to provide veterans proper care, hire and retain health care professionals and support workers, and maintain and expand VA medical infrastructure. PVA advocates for proper funding for the SCI/D system of care through the Independent Budget—a partnership with DAV, PVA, and VFW. In addition to adequate funding, other reforms are needed to ensure VA can meet veterans’ health care needs.

#### Staffing

VA must effectively use the pay and workforce provisions approved in Public Law 117-103 (RAISE Act provisions) and the PACT Act (Public Law 117-168) to recruit and retain necessary health care professionals. VA must also increase retention incentives and reform its hiring processes, including working with Congress to make needed reforms. Congress must also take additional action to boost pay caps for other providers not included in the RAISE Act provisions and Pact Act.

#### Infrastructure

VA’s infrastructure processes need to be reformed and staffing increased to allow the department to effectively use needed funding. VA also must develop a nationwide infrastructure plan to better address the SCI/D system’s unique care delivery model.

## Bills To Watch In The US Congress

**HR 1529:** Introduced on March 10th by Congressman Morgan Luttrell (R-TX-008).

The bill, known as *Veterans’ Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2023* will require the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to increase the amounts payable for wartime disability compensation, additional compensation for dependents, the clothing allowance for certain disabled veterans, and dependency and indemnity compensation for surviving spouses and children. Specifically, the VA must increase the amounts by the same percentage as the cost-of-living increase in benefits for Social Security recipients that is effective on December 1, 2023. The bill requires the VA to publish the amounts payable, as increased, in the Federal Register.

The VA is authorized to make a similar adjustment to the rates of disability compensation payable to persons who have not received compensation for service-connected disability or death.

**HR 1282:** Introduced on March 1st by Congressman Gus Bilirakis (R-FL-012)

**S 344:** Introduced on February 9th by Senator Jon Tester (D-MT).

These two companion bills are known as *Major Richard Star Act* and will provide that combat-disabled uniformed services retirees with fewer than 20 years of creditable service may concurrently receive, without reduction, veterans’ disability compensation and retired pay or combat-related special compensation.

**S 414:** Introduced on February 14th by Senator Jon Tester (D-MT).

The bill is known as *Caring for Survivors Act of 2023* and will amend title 38, United States Code, to improve and to expand eligibility for dependency and indemnity compensation paid to certain survivors of certain veterans, and other purposes.

# OPINIONS

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Bill Will Exempts Disabled Vets

Dear Editor,

I am writing to express my strong support for Ohio House Bill 90 which proposes property tax exemptions for 100% permanently disabled veterans. The bill also includes veterans sixty-five years or older and their surviving spouses. Under current Ohio law, there is a property tax credit for the residence, or "homestead," of disabled vets.

The standard exemption is up to \$25,000 of the true home value. Additionally, an extended version of up to \$50,000 for homes of honorably discharged military vets with a total disability and surviving spouses of emergency responders who died in the line of duty. This new proposed law completely exempts a disabled veteran's home from taxes.

I am disappointed that my local senator, Kristina D. Roegner (R-Hudson), has not committed to the bill. Other states with property tax exemptions for 100% disabled veterans justified the exemption as a moral obligation and a way of recognizing disabled veterans' unique challenges. House Bill 90 would enable disabled veterans to focus on their health, recovery, and daily needs while preventing them

from being homeless. The proposed legislation acknowledges these challenges and seeks to address them.

In conclusion, I urge you to contact your lawmakers, including my local senator, to support Ohio House Bill 90. Let us honor their service and sacrifice by supporting this critical legislation.

Dr. Douglas Cabarle

### Gulf War Vet Says No To Asbestos Bill

As I was reading the text on Ohio Senate bill 63, I was in complete shock on how detailed an individual's summary must be to file an asbestos claim. Reading that bill brought me back to a dark time in my life. I am a Gulf War Veteran that was exposed to toxins released by burn pits and oil well fires. I spent 25 years of my life fighting for what I believed was my right to healthcare through the VA. 25 years of my life fighting an agency created to not only help me but my fellow veterans as well. Time and time again sending in proof that my illnesses were in fact caused by the exposure I endured during my time deployed to the middle east only to be denied by the VA. Veterans in this country have been gaslit

*Continued on Page Four...*

## OUR OPINION

### We Support Senate Bill 64

Citizen Soldiers have served Ohio since 1788. Known today as the Ohio National Guard, they have served in every major war from the War of 1812 to the War on Terrorism.

They answer the call when natural disasters strike and when the people get out of control. They serve in Ohio, in other states and overseas. They go where they are asked, when they are asked, for as long as they are needed.

Currently men and women of the Guard may apply for scholarships to help cover the cost of higher education. They must be actively enrolled as a full-time or part-time student working toward a bachelor's degree. Senators William P. DeMora (District 25) and Steve Wilson (District 7) sponsored SB 64 and it will expand and improve the scholarship program and make it even better.

SB 64 Expands the Ohio National Guard Scholarship Program to include a \$750 per eligibility unit award for recipients enrolled in graduate level courses. It creates an incentive under which individuals who extend their contract or enlistment by three years are awarded an additional 32 eligibility units under the scholarship and it clarifies that individuals who have enlisted, re-enlisted, extended enlistment, or who have accepted a warrant, commission, or appointment in the Ohio National Guard are eligible for the scholarship.

It is our hope that Senate Bill 64 will become law. We feel it will help the guard with recruitment and retention. Ohio in turn will get more well-educated men and women to benefit all of us.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

*Ohio Legislative Report* welcomes your letters to the editor.

-Letters are limited to 150 words.

-Letters containing more than 150 words may be edited.

- Letters will be subject to editing for accuracy, clarity, length, and taste.

- Letters must include writer's name, address, and phone number for the purpose of verification.

EMAIL LETTRS TO: [oh.leg.report@gmail.com](mailto:oh.leg.report@gmail.com)

## MORE LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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by the government long enough. This gaslighting has caused undo stress and turmoil in a veteran's life and it needs to end. Ohio Senate bill 63 will continue to gaslight Ohio veterans and their families and add unnecessary stress to a veteran that already has enough stress proofing to the VA that their illnesses are service connected. I for one think this bill should be voted down if it makes it to the floor for a vote. Enough is enough. Veterans deserve better than this. We defended our country and constitution only to have our elected officials turn their backs on us and force us to unnecessary restrictions and demands such as the ones included in this bill. Please call your state representatives and tell them to vote no on bill 63.

Tim Hauser  
Cofounder Veterans Assurance  
Network

### Senate Bill Not Good For Veterans

S.B. 63, an asbestos claim related bill that is currently being kicked around in the Ohio Senate Insurance Committee, needs voted down. It will hurt any

Ohioans who have been directly or indirectly exposed to Asbestos this includes Veterans around the state of Ohio that was directly and indirectly exposed and their family members.

Those who served on Navy ships that had asbestos in them, were probably never told who manufactured the asbestos or what the brand name of it was. Which is one of the MANY specified disclosures that is listed as mandatory if passed.

This is not related to VA Disability but more specifically towards holding the makers of the asbestos products accountable for their product in the civilian side of the coin. If this bill passes, it could possibly lead up to issues within the VA. Call your Senators and tell them NO on SB 63.

Andrea Neutzling

### Bill Would Strip Vet's Control of CVSC

The passage of Ohio House Bill 69 is not for Ohio's veterans' benefit. On its surface, the bill seems to imply that (mostly) younger vets have little to no input on the decisions made by the commissions. As a post-9/11 veteran working as the Director, I can tell you nothing could be

further from the truth. My office has seven employees who are post-9/11 vets. No issue that has not first passed through a post-9/11 veteran for review is ever presented to the board for consideration. To say that we, as post-9/11 vets, don't have a "seat at the table" demonstrates a lack of understanding of how many Veteran Service Offices work.

However, the true goal of this legislation is not to increase the number of post-9/11 veterans on the commissions. Rather, it is to covertly get into law what the County Commissioners Assoc. of Ohio has wanted for decades: control of the veteran service commissions. This bill, if passed, would begin to strip away control of the veteran service commissions from the county veterans and place it in the hands of the county commissioners. This should be no surprise to anyone when they realize that the sponsor (a veteran himself) of HB 69 is both a past county commissioner and a member of the CCAO board of directors.

Jacob D. Smith (MPA)  
Executive Director,  
Lorain County Veterans Service  
Commission

## Reflections

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world: indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."*

*-Margaret Mead*

You can watch live every session of both chambers, all the committee hearings, Governor DeWine's press conferences, and much more on the Ohio Channel.

They are also archived for viewing at a later date.

[www.ohiochannel.org](http://www.ohiochannel.org)

# Legislation In The 135<sup>th</sup> Ohio General Assembly

Pertaining to Ohio Veterans, Active Duty, Reserve & National Guard, and their Families

- ◇ HB 18 Allow military license plate applicant present county veterans ID
- ◇ HB 33 Establishes operating appropriations for fiscal years 2024-2025
- ◇ HB53 Authorize refundable tax credits for hiring certain veterans
- ◇ HB 57 Index the homestead exemption to inflation
- ◇ HB 60 Increase amount of and expand the homestead exemption
- ◇ HB 69 Revise membership of county veterans service commissions
- ◇ HB 90 Authorize property tax exemption for disabled veterans, spouses
- ◇ HB 123 Designate Honor and Remember flag to honor fallen service members
- ◇ HB 126 Expand municipal income tax exemption for military pay
- ◇ HB 131 Designate Army SSgt. Charles V. Kettler Memorial Highway
- ◇ HB 132 Designate Army Sgt. Herbert C. Linville Memorial Highway
- ◇ HB 133 Designate Army Sgt. Ronnie Blair Memorial Highway
  
- ◇ HR 95 Urge Congress to extend GI Bill benefits
  
- ◇ SB 12 Regards veteran-owned business enterprise certification program
- ◇ SB 14 Expand veteran eligibility to teach without license
- ◇ SB 15 Authorize Military License Plate Program permanent registration
- ◇ SB 43 Modify homestead exemption-surviving spouse of a disabled veteran

- ◇ SB 45 Designate Veterans Memorial Bridge in Trumbull County
- ◇ SB 63 Require plaintiff in asbestos claim to file specified disclosures
- ◇ SB 64 Expand Ohio National Guard Scholarship Program
- ◇ SB 110 Designate Sgt. Anthony Kress Vinnedge Memorial Highway
- ◇ SB 113 Regards failure to comply with Military Selective Service System
- ◇ SB 114 Designate Lance Corporal James F. Kimple Memorial Highway

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## Ohio Legislative Report Is Evolving For You

We have introduced some new things in this issue of Ohio Legislative Report. We hope you will like them.

One is our Opinion Page. We will be offering our opinion on legislation bills, resolutions, and events in our Ohio General Assembly. Remember as you read... these will be our opinions. You may not agree and that is okay; you don't have to. You of course can write to the editor and voice your opinion if you would like. All we ask is that you follow the rules so we do not need to edit your letter any more than is necessary.

Another new item in this issue is the 'Back in the day...' column that you will find on page six. This may not be in every issue but when we do run it, it will cover something from Ohio's rich history pertaining to our government, the statehouse, or other similar topics. If you have ideas that you think we should do, let us know in an email.

Also in the name of education you can use, we will in every issue print one of the section from the Ohio Constitution. We are starting at the beginning and Article I—Bill of Rights. Section 1 is Inalienable rights. Next month it will be Section 2 the next month Section 3 and we will continue until we have given you all 24 sections in Article I.

We will continue to keep you informed about the bills and resolutions that will effect our Ohio veteran and military families. If there is something you would like us to cover send us your idea in an email.

## OHIO CONSTITUTION

### ARTICLE I, BILL OF RIGHTS

#### SECTION 1, INALIENABLE RIGHTS

*Effective: 1851*

All men are, by nature, free and independent, and have certain inalienable rights, among which are those of enjoying and defending life and liberty, acquiring, possessing, and protecting property, and seeking and obtaining happiness and safety.

# ***Back in the day...***

Chillicothe (Ross County) served as the capital of the Ohio Territory after it separated from the Northwest Territory in 1800. It remained the capital until the government temporarily moved to the city of Zanesville (Muskingum County) in 1809. The capital returned to Chillicothe in 1812 before finally settling in Columbus in 1816.

## **Capitol Timeline**

- 1795 Lucas Sullivant begins surveying land for the town of Franklinton, which later becomes part of Columbus.
- 1800 Chillicothe named territorial capital; first Statehouse erected.
- 1803 Ohio becomes 17th state admitted to the Union.
- 1809 Capital moves to Zanesville.
- 1812 Capital returns to Chillicothe temporarily. Columbus named the permanent capital, and 10 acres are donated by Ohioans for Capitol Square.
- 1816 Capital moves to Columbus.
- 1838 Thomas Cole, landscape painter, wins third place in design competition for Statehouse. Statehouse, as completed, favors Cole's design more than first or second place designs. General Assembly authorizes Act to begin building a new Statehouse.
- 1839 Cornerstone laid.



- 1840 Statehouse Act repealed; work stops.
- 1846 General Assembly passes new Statehouse Act, but prison labor shortage delays work.
- 1848 Money is appropriated to expedite construction.
- 1852 Original Statehouse burns to ground.
- 1857 Legislators meet in Statehouse for first time.
- 1859 Abraham Lincoln speaks on the east stairs of the Statehouse as part of the Lincoln/Douglas debates.
- 1861 Statehouse is officially completed;

Lincoln speaks to a joint session of the Ohio Legislature in the House Chamber.

- 1865 Lincoln's casket is displayed in the Rotunda.
- 1901 Judiciary Annex (the Senate Building) is completed.
- 1906 Alice Roosevelt Longworth unveils the McKinley Monument. The largest known crowd (50,000

people) gathers on the Statehouse grounds for this event.

- 1989 Renovation Master Plan approved.
- 1990 Construction begins.
- 1993 Senate Building restoration and Atrium completed.
- 1996 On July 5th, 1996 a joint session of the legislature commemorated the reopening of the renovated state capitol.

**Learn about the *Ohio Department of Veterans Services*. Discover all of the programs, responsibilities, endeavors and goals of this excellent state agency.**

**[www.dvs.ohio.gov](http://www.dvs.ohio.gov)**

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# BILLS INTRODUCED DURING THE MONTH OF APRIL

## **HR 95:**

Introduced by Terrence Upchurch (District 20) and Adam C. Miller (District 6) on April 18th.  
Referred to the House Armed Services and Veterans Affairs Committee.

The resolution urges the Congress of the United States to enact H.R. 1255 to make direct descendants of Black veterans of World War II eligible for Veterans Administration housing loans and education benefits.

## **SB 110:**

Introduced by Senator George F. Lang (District 4) on April 19th.  
Referred to the Senate Transportation Committee.

The bill will enact section 5534.877 of the Revised Code to designate a portion of State Route 129 in Butler County as the "Sgt. Anthony Kress Vinnedge Memorial Highway."

## **SB 113:**

Introduced by Senator Frank Hoagland (District 30) on April 25th.  
Referred to the Senate Veterans and Safety Committee.

The bill will amend section 4117.10 and to enact sections 3.19 and 124.95 of the Revised Code to prohibit a person who fails to comply with the Military Selective Service System from holding a public office or employment with the state.

## **SB 114:**

Introduced by Senator Tim Schaffer (District 20) on April 25th.  
Referred to the Senate Transportation Committee.

The bill will enact section 5534.873 of the Revised Code to designate a portion of State Route 33 in Fairfield County as the "Lance Corporal James F. Kimple Memorial Highway."

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Details on every bill can be found on the Ohio Legislature website. You can also check the status of bills as they travel through committees and sessions, check to see how the voting went, and read the testimonies of witnesses.

To find a bill put the bill number (i.e. SB 712 or HB 943) into the search bar and go from there.

You can find the Ohio Legislature's website with this link:

**[www.legislature.ohio.gov](http://www.legislature.ohio.gov)**

**A bill is a document by which a member of the General Assembly proposes to enact a new law or amend or repeal an existing law. The term "bill" is used to refer to the document from the time it is drafted and delivered to the member until it is considered and approved by both the House and the Senate. After passing both houses, a bill becomes an "act" and must be presented to the Governor for acceptance or rejection. If accepted, or if the Governor does not take any action for ten days, it becomes a "law."**

An idea for a new law or a change in an existing law might originate with a member of the General Assembly, an administrative agency of the state, the Governor, a special interest group, or a private citizen.