



Ohio Legislative Report

Volume One Bravo; Number Three

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'Ohio Legislative Report'

Ohio Legislative Report

Is published electronically at the start of each month to report on the latest information about legislative issues taking place in Columbus that could affect the lives of Veterans, 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

Committee hearings were light again in February. Hopefully business will be back to normal once primary elections are over.

The House Transportation Committee heard sponsor and proponent testimony on February 13th for House Bill 355. The bill would designate State Route 161 in Licking County as the "Licking County Veterans Memorial Highway." The testimony the committee heard was from bill sponsor, Representative **Thaddeus J. Claggett** (District 68) and then from Doug Stout of the Linking County Library. Strout related the stories several veterans beginning with Isaiah Beaumont who moved to Licking County in 1813 and is one of almost one hundred Revolutionary War soldiers who moved to Licking County after the war. Beaumont served in George Washington army and took part in Washington's famous crossing of the Delaware in December of 1775.



Rep. Claggett (top) and Stout Testify for HB 355

A motion was made to favorably pass HB 355 out of committee and the vote that followed was a unanimous 9 to 0.

On the Senate side, there were three committee hearings held during the final week of the month.

On the 27th the Senate Education Committee heard testimony from Senator **Kristina D. Roegner** (District 27) sponsor of Senate Bill 208. Her bill would amend the Ohio Revised Code to require a city, exempted village, or local school district to include in its open enrollment policy an exception for military children.



Roegner Testifies for SB 208

Next on the agenda was Amended House Bill 250 which would amend the Ohio Revised Code to revise the Military Enlistment diploma seal by renaming the "Military Enlistment Seal" to the "Military Seal" and establish new pathways for a high school student to earn the seal. The primary sponsors of the bill are Representatives **Jessica E. Miranda** (District 28) and **Tracy M. Richardson** (District 86). It was the second hearing for HB 250 and there was no testimony provided.

The Senate Veteran and Public Safety Committee also had a hearing on the 27th. First up was Senate Bill 154, a bill sponsored By Senator Roegner. It was the 3rd hearing for the bill and there were no witnesses. After being amended to make some technical changes, the committee voted to pass the bill out of committee and recommend its passage.

The committee then heard testimony on two Senate Concurrent Resolutions, SCR 8 and SCR 9. Both were sponsored by Senator **Tim Schaffer**

See Happenings on Page Four...

BILLS & RESOLUTIONS INTRODUCED IN FEBRUARY

HB 409:

Introduced by Representative **Joseph A. Miller, III** (District 53) on February 12th.

It has not been referred to a committee yet.

The bill would amend section 5902.02 and to enact sections 5902.09 and 5919.21 of the Revised Code to create the Ohio Cold War Victory Medal.

SB 225:

Introduced by Senator **Kristina D. Roegner** (District 27) on February 21st.

It has not been referred to a committee yet.

The Bill would amend section 5.481 of the Revised Code to designate September 22 as Veterans Suicide Awareness and Prevention Day.

HB 431:

Introduced By Representative **Roy Klopfenstein** (District 82) on February 27th.

It has not been referred to a committee yet.

The bill would enact section 5534.614 of the Revised Code to designate a portion of U.S. Route 127 in Paulding County as the "Staff Sgt. Zachary Wobler Memorial Highway."

OUT IN THE DISTRICTS



Willis & Others Recognized By Vet Organization


February 24, 2024

Dublin, OH - AMVETS Dept of Ohio held the 36th annual Legislation Breakfast during the Mid-Winter Conference. Legislators recognized for their 'veteran friendly' work were Senator Steve Wilson, Representative Steve Demetriou, and Representative Bernard Willis (pictured above with plaque).

TOWN HALL MEETING

*Where: Ross Township Administrative Building
4055 Hamilton Cleves Road, Hamilton, OH 45014*

When: Monday, March 25th from 5:00-6:00 PM

 **Jennifer Gross**
R-West Chester



PRIMARY ELECTION DAY

March 19th

Polls are open 6:30 AM to 7:30 PM

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS

If you have news or photos of a state representative or senator doing veteran/military stuff in their district, send it to us.

Email photos and all info to:
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OUR OPINION

Honor Our Gold Star Families

The 135th General Assembly is a little more than halfway through the two year session and so far, there have been no less than six bills introduced aimed at expanding homestead exemptions for Ohio veterans and/or their spouses. Only two of them have become law.

Senate Bill 43, sponsored by Senator **Andrew O. Brenner** (District 19) corrected a technical issue that prevented certain surviving spouses of disabled veterans from being eligible for the exemption. The bill sailed through both chambers and was signed into law by the Governor last July.

House Bill 57, sponsored by Representatives **Thomas Hall** (District 46) and **Steve Demetriou** (District 35) indexed the amount of the property tax homestead exemption so that the exemption amounts increase according to increases in the prices of all goods and services composing the national gross domestic product (GDP). HB 57 passed the house in May of last year and while in committee on the senate side the bills language was written into the state operating budget bill (HB 33) and became law.

There are four other bills, HB 60 sponsored by Representative **Daniel P. Troy** (District 23), HB 90 sponsored by Representative **Thomas F. Patton** (District 17), HB 254 sponsored by Representatives **Tracy M. Richardson** (District 86) and **Adam Holmes** (District 97), and SB 134 sponsored by former Senator **Frank Hoagland** that are still in committees. They have all had at least one hearing and as many as three or four.

The special Joint Committee on Property Tax Review and Reform was created in the budget bill and

began meeting in January with the task of submitting a report to the General Assembly by December 31, with recommendations to reform state property tax law. It is quite possible that the four homestead tax exemption bills will remain in committee until the Joint Committee wraps up their meetings and submits their report to the G.A.

There is one other homestead tax exemption bill that we hope will not be delayed and can make it to the Governors desk as quickly as possible.

Introduced by Representatives **Brian Lorenz** (District 60) and **Nick Santucci** (District 64) on January 16th, House Bill 378 will not give a tax exemption to a veteran. This bill would instead exempt all taxes on a homestead owned and occupied by the surviving spouse of a service member killed in the line of duty while serving in the uniformed services of the United States until the surviving spouse dies.

It is said by many that the hardest job in the military is the job of the military spouse. While the soldier, sailor, or marine is deployed, the spouse must not only do the job of husband, wife, father, and mother, but they must also do it while constantly worrying about the health and safety of their deployed loved one. It is a job that greets them first thing in the morning, follows them throughout the day and tucks them into bed at night. They live in constant fear that one day uniformed officers are going to walk to their front door and ring the bell.

It is hard to imagine if you have never lived like that. If you have never been a military spouse. But try to imagine what life would be like after those

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

OLR welcomes letters to the editor.

- * Letters are limited to 250 words.
- * Letters with over 250 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 LETTERS TO: oh.leg.report@gmail.com

Reflections

"As lawmakers, our job is to listen to our constituents. If our phones are ringing off the hook with people demanding to know where we stand on an issue, we pay attention."

- Chris Murphy

Happenings, from Page One

(District 20).

Senate Concurrent Resolution 8 would urge the President of the United States, the United States Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and the United States Congress to take prompt action to reduce the processing time for veterans' disability benefit claims.

Testimony was heard from five individuals representing three different veteran organizations. They were David K. Root, Legislative Chairman, Dept. of Ohio VFW, Andrea M. Neutzling, Senior Vice Commander, Dept of Ohio VFW,

Kristina A. Smith, President, District 2 Dept of Ohio VFW Auxiliary, and Timothy A. Page and James Preston of Ghosts of War Motorcycle Club. Written testimony was also submitted from Michael D. White, State

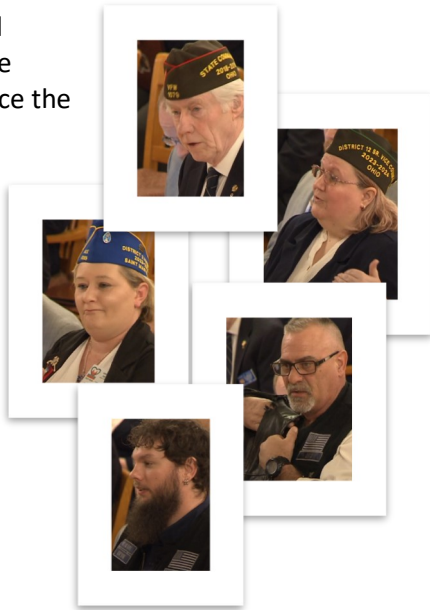
Legislative Chairman, Dept. of Ohio American Legion. Following SCR 8, oral and written proponent testimony for SCR 9 was provided by the same six witnesses. SCR 9 would urge the U.S. Congress to support the provision of prompt and comprehensive mental health treatment to military personnel and veterans who are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and other service-related stress disorders.

The next morning the Senate Transportation Committee heard testimony on House Bill 269 from bill sponsor by Representative **Adam Holmes** (District 97).

The bill would enact section 5534.847 of the Ohio Revised Code to designate a portion of State Route 60 in Muskingum County as the "Sgt Bradley J. Harper USMC Memorial Highway."

Sergeant Bradley was killed in action on August 3, 2005 while service in Iraq with Lima Company of Brookpark, Ohio.

Following testimony it was moved to pass the bill out of committee and recommend its passage and the vote was unanimous.



Testifying for SCR 8 and SCR 9 (clockwise from top) Root, Neutzling, Page, Preston and Smith.

Next on the agenda was Senate Bill 45 for its second hearing. The bill would enact section 5534.612 of the Ohio Revised Code to designate a bridge spanning the Mahoning River in Trumbull County as the "Veterans Memorial Bridge." and is sponsored by Senator **Sandra O'Brien** (District 32). There was no testimony submitted. The committee voted it out of committee and recommended its passage.

That afternoon the Senate agreed to the recommendations of the committee and passed House Bill 269 and Senate Bill 45 with a vote of 32 to 0.

OHIO CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I, BILL OF RIGHTS

SECTION # 10 TRIAL FOR CRIMES; WITNESS

Effective: 1912

Except in cases of impeachment, cases arising in the army and navy, or in the militia when in actual service in time of war or public danger, and cases involving offenses for which the penalty provided is less than imprisonment in the penitentiary, no person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous, crime, unless on presentment or indictment of a grand jury; and the number of persons necessary to constitute such grand jury and the number thereof necessary to concur in finding such indictment shall be determined by law. In any trial, in any court, the party accused shall be allowed to appear and defend in person and with counsel; to demand the nature and cause of the accusation against him, and to have a copy thereof; to meet the witnesses face to face, and to have compulsory process to procure the attendance of witnesses in his behalf, and a speedy public trial by an impartial jury of the county in which the offense is alleged to have been committed; but provision may be made by law for the taking of the deposition by the accused or by the state, to be used for or against the accused, of any witness whose attendance can not be had at the trial, always securing to the accused means and the opportunity to be present in person and with counsel at the taking of such deposition, and to examine the witness face to face as fully and in the same manner as if in court. No person shall be compelled, in any criminal case, to be a witness against himself; but his failure to testify may be considered by the court and jury and may be made the subject of comment by counsel. No person shall be twice put in jeopardy for the same offense.

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officers ring the bell and tell you that your loved one has been killed. That you are never going to see them again. Imagine what it will be like when you tell your children they are going to have to grow up with only one parent.

Life will never be the same again for that military spouse. They will have to raise the children on their own with no help. They will have to survive financially on one income. Their life will never be the same on holidays, birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, weddings, and funerals. It will be that way for the rest of their life.

House Bill 378 will help. If the General Assembly passes the bill and Governor **Mike DeWine** signs it into law, the Gold Star Spouse will be forever exempt from paying tax on their homestead. There are some stipulations that must be met, but basically it will be no more tax for the rest of their life. No worries about losing the home because they can't pay the taxes. It will be helpful and it will eliminate at least one financial burden.

Ohio Legislative Report firmly supports the bill and urges the Ohio legislators to fast-track it so it will become law as soon as possible. Our Gold Star families need it now.

Legislation In The 135th 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
- HB 53 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
- HB 150 Prohibit rental discrimination based on lawful source of income
- HB 202 Designate Specialist Dennis Alan Combs Memorial Highway
- HB 231 Establish 9-8-8 suicide prevention, mental health telephone line
- HB 242 Establish the Armed Forces Reserve Component Scholarship Program and related funds
- HB 250 Revise the Military Enlistment diploma seal
- HB 252 Designate SM1 Cornelius Anthony McCafferty, Jr. Memorial Highway
- HB 253 Designate Brigadier General Charles Young Memorial Historical Corridor
- HB 254 Expand and enhance the homestead property tax exemption for disabled veterans
- HB 269 Designate Sgt Bradley J. Harper USMC Memorial Highway
- HB 286 Designate Vienna Township Veterans Bridge
- HB 294 Designate Delaware County Veteran's Memorial Highway
- HB 299 Designate Specialist Five Frederick Wayne Taylor Memorial Highway
- HB 310 Regards STRS member purchase of military service credit
- HB 317 Designate Sgt. Cory M. Endlich Corridor
- HB 335 Designate Ottawa County Veterans Memorial Highway

More on the NEXT PAGE...

- HB 350 Designate Lance Corporal Austin B. Schwenk Memorial Highway
- HB 355 Designate Licking County Veterans Memorial Highway
- HB 365 Designate multiple memorial highways
- HB 378 Permit homestead exemption-surviving spouses of service members
- HB 409 Create the Ohio Cold War Victory Medal
- HB 431 Designate Staff Sgt. Zachary Wobler Memorial Highway
- HR 95 Urge Congress to extend GI Bill benefits
- HR 189 Honoring Thomas Mihalis Memorial Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1079 on its Centennial
- HR 221 Honoring Dan Shroyer as a 2023 National Veterans Golden Age Games Champion
- HR 222 Honoring Dr. John Eichelberger as a 2023 National Veterans Golden Age Games Champion
- HR 258 Honoring American Legion DeWitt McConnell Post 235 on its Centennial
- HR 302 Honoring Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1090 on its Centennial
- HR 316 Honoring Jay Wilson American Legion Post 112 on its Centennial
- HCR 8 To urge the federal government to select Ohio for the permanent headquarters of the United States Space Command
- HCR 9 Adopt Restoration of America's Readiness (ROAR) Resolution
- 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 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
- SB 152 Designate Cpl. Jack O. McClure Memorial Highway
- SB 154 Include Space Force in armed forces, armed and uniformed service
- SB 167 Designate Marine Corporal Tim W. Russell Highway
- SB 169 Designate Cortland Veterans Memorial Bridge
- SB 183 Designate Lance Corporal James Patrick Rizzo Memorial Highway
- SB 191 Designate PFC Richard 'Rick' Wesley McFarland Memorial Highway
- SB 208 To require a military exception in an open enrollment policy
- SB 225 To designate September 22 as Veterans Suicide Awareness and Prevention Day
- SR 171 Honoring Thomas Mihalis Memorial Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1079 as it commemorates its One Hundredth Anniversary
- SR 262 In memory of Senior Airman Brian "Kody" Johnson
- SCR 8 Urge federal govt reduce processing time- veteran disability claim
- SCR 9 Urge Congress support military, veteran mental health treatment