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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.

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Editor: David K. Root

Statehouse Happenings

A new year has begun, and legislators have been sworn into office. The opening session of the 136th General Assembly was Monday, January 6. But before we delve into what might happen with that one, we need to wrap up the 135th General Assembly and see what happened during its final weeks. Here is the committee action in December.

December 2 – 6

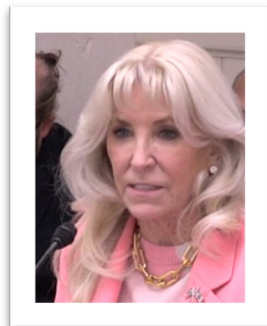
The first bill scheduled for a hearing on Tuesday morning was Senate Bill 208 in the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee. It was the 3rd hearing for the bill and there was no testimony provided. The bill would require school districts to include an exception for military children in open enrollment policies. There are multiple other portions to the bill but none of them pertain to our military. It was introduced by Senator **Kristina D. Roegner** (District 27).

Tuesday afternoon the House Transportation Committee had eight bills scheduled -three were veteran related bills. They were HB 674, HB 679, and HB 691. HB 691 had its first hearing. The bill's primary sponsors, Representatives **Jay Edwards** (District 94) and **Adam Holmes** (District 97) provided written testimony as did one citizen. A motion was made to favorably report the bill out of committee and a vote of 13 to 0 followed. The bill will designate a portion of State Route 13 in Athens County as the "Marshal Teddy Ray Holcomb Memorial Highway".

Next was House Bill 679 for its first hearing. The bill was introduced by Representative **Angela N. King** (District 84) in October and will designate a portion of State Route 47 in Darke County as the "PFC John Wayne Richard Memorial Highway". King provided sponsor testimony followed by a vote to favorably pass the bill. The vote was 13 to 0.



Rep. King providing testimony for HB 679



Rep. Carruthers gives testimony for HB 674

Representative **Sara P. Carruthers** (District 47) provided sponsor testimony on the bill she introduced in October 2024. HB 674 will designate a portion of State Route 129 in Butler County as the "Sgt. Anthony Kress Vinnedge Memorial Highway". It too passed favorably out of committee with a 13 to 0 vote.

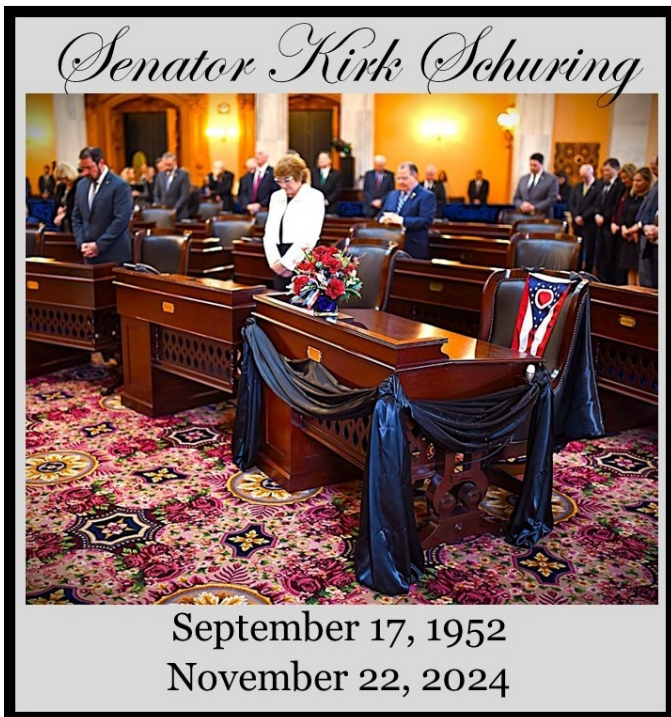
Later that afternoon, the House State and Local Government Committee heard proponent testimony for Senate Bill 62. Senators **Bill Reineke** (District 26) and **Andrew O. Brenner** (District 19) introduced the bill in February 2023. The bill would designate October 4

See Happenings on Page Three...

READERS LETTERS

I am going to take a few minutes of your time to encourage you, the readers of the OLR, to keep your eyes on all the legislation that will be coming up this year. I want to encourage all readers to show up for support of a bill or even against a bill; do a write-in testimony or an in-person testimony. We need to start showing our State Legislators that they need to take in the considerations of the citizens of the State of Ohio, the ones who put them into the positions to make and change the laws. There are many companies taking advantage of the laws of Ohio and making it easier for them to be predators to the citizens of Ohio; veterans, elderly, and disabled especially. I have already set up a meeting with Senator Brian Chavez (District 30) this month and working on setting up meetings with other House of Representatives members that fall into VFW District 12 area of Responsibility. While we can rely on the same people going and giving testimonies, the more visible Veterans are, the more voices speaking/writing out the more the Legislation will listen to us.

Andrea Neutzling
District 12 Sr. Vice Commander
Department of Ohio VFW



OHIO CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I, *BILL OF RIGHTS*

SECTION #20 ~ POWERS RESERVED TO THE PEOPLE

Effective: 1851

This enumeration of rights shall not be construed to impair or deny others retained by the people; and all powers, not herein delegated, remain with the people.

SECTION #21 ~ PRESERVATION OF THE FREEDOM TO CHOOSE HEALTH CARE AND HEALTH CARE COVERAGE

Effective: 2011

(A) No federal, state, or local law or rule shall compel, directly or indirectly, any person, employer, or health care provider to participate in a health care system.

(B) No federal, state, or local law or rule shall prohibit the purchase or sale of health care or health insurance.

(C) No federal, state, or local law or rule shall impose a penalty or fine for the sale or purchase of health care or health insurance.

(D) This section does not affect laws or rules in effect as of March 19, 2010; affect which services a health care provider or hospital is required to perform or provide; affect terms and conditions of government employment; or affect any laws calculated to deter fraud or punish wrongdoing in the health care industry.

(E) As used in this Section,

(1) "Compel" includes the levying of penalties or fines.

(2) "Health care system" means any public or private entity or program whose function or purpose includes the management of, processing of, enrollment of individuals for, or payment for, in full or in part, health care services, health care data, or health care information for its participants.

(3) "Penalty or fine" means any civil or criminal penalty or fine, tax, salary or wage withholding or surcharge or any named fee established by law or rule by a government established, created, or controlled agency that is used to punish or discourage the exercise of rights protected under this section.

Happenings, from Page One

Rutherford B. Hayes Day. Testimony was heard from members of the Rutherford Hayes Heritage and saw written testimony from Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library and Museum, and Ohio History Connection.

Wednesday morning the House Insurance Committee held the third hearing for Amended Senate Bill 63. This bill, which would require a plaintiff in a tort action alleging an asbestos claim to file specified disclosures was introduced in February 2023 by Senator **George F. Lang** (District 4) and since that time received amendments. Before hearing opponent testimony from a representative for The Ohio Association for Justice more changes were brought forth -enough to make the bill Substitute Senate Bill 63. The changes addressed many of the issues and concerns from opponents of the bill such as the Ohio American Legion, Ohio Veterans of Foreign Wars, Ohio Association of Professional Firefighters, and The Ohio Association for Justice. The substitute bill was accepted by the committee without objection.

Also, that morning the House Homestead Security Committee met. Four veteran related bills were scheduled for hearings. They would create special license plates. First was HB 209 and proponent testimony was given by two members of the Ohio Society Daughters of the American Revolution. The bill was introduced in June 2023 by Representative **Rodney Creech** (District 40) and had three previous hearings. The bill will create the "Ohio Society Daughters of the American Revolution" license plate. Following the testimony the bill was favorably passed out of committee with a 11 to 1 vote.

House bill 625 was next and testimony was given by Representative **Tex Fischer** (bill sponsor **Al Cutrona** had been appointed to the Ohio senate to fill the seat vacated by then Senator **Michael A. Rulli** when he was appointed to fill the congressional seat vacated by then Congressman Bill Johnson). The bill will create the "American Legion Auxiliary" license plate and revise the requirements for the issuance of the "American Legion" license plate. This was the bill's first hearing.

There was no testimony for the second hearing for HB 423. The bill introduced in February 2024 by

Representative **Joseph A. Miller III** (District 53) will create the "Blue Star Banner" license plate. It received a unanimous vote to favorably pass the bill out of committee.

The committee heard testimony from two representatives of Save A Warrior, Inc. It was the second hearing for HB 483, a bill introduced by Representative **Kevin D. Miller** (District 69) in April 2024. The bill will create the "Save a Warrior" license plate. Committee members voted unanimously to favorably pass the bill out of committee.

In the Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee two bills received their second hearing. First was SB 281, a bill that will create a poster containing information on benefits and services for veterans that Ohio employers may request and display on their premises. It was introduced in May 2024 by Senators **Hearcel F. Craig** (District 15) and **Terry Johnson** (District 14). Testimony was provided by three members of the United Steel Workers Union - who were also veterans.

Proponent testimony for House Concurrent Resolution 8 was next. Only written testimony was provided from representatives of Central Ohio Defense Group and Ohio Chamber of Commerce. HCR 8 was introduced by Representative **Brian E. Lampton** (District 70) in June 2023. It will urge the federal government to select Ohio for the permanent headquarters of the United States Space Command.

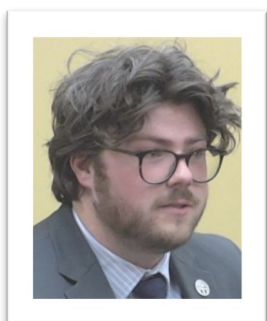
December 9 – 13

In the House Insurance Committee Tuesday morning a fourth hearing for Sub SB 63 was held. There was no testimony, and a unanimous vote was cast to favorably pass the bill out of committee.

SB 62 had its third hearing in the House State and Local Government Committee. An amendment was agreed to that added to the bill the designations of 10 more special days, weeks, or months including making September 11 "9/11 Remembrance Day". The amended bill also makes the Walleye Ohio's official state fish and deals with Alzheimer's disease and dementia awareness and sudden unexpected death in epilepsy. The amended bill was then favorably passed out of committee with a 15 to 0 vote.

A fourth hearing was held for HB 274. The bill will authorize an enhanced property tax homestead exemption for certain long-term homeowners. Written testimony was supplied on behalf of the County Commissioners Association of Ohio but there was no in person testimony. HB 274 would add an

Continued on next Page...



Rep. Fischer provides testimony for HB 625

additional enhanced homestead tax exemption for those who have lived in their homes for twenty years or more and who qualify under the current law. It was introduced by Representatives **Adam Mathews** (District 56) and **Richard Dell'Aquila** (District 15) in September 2023. Following one accepted amendment and one failed amendment the bill was favorably passed with a unanimous vote.

There was no in person testimony on SB 257 during the House Economic and Workforce Committee, but there was written testimony submitted on behalf of Ohio REALTORS and Ohio Credit Union League in support of the bill. SB 257 will make active-duty members of the uniformed services eligible to participate in the homeownership savings linked deposit program and regarding Ohio National Guard Scholarship Program repayment interest. It was introduced by Senators **Brian M. Chavez** (District 30) and Johnson (District 14) in May 2024. After the committee accepted an amendment, they voted unanimously to favorably pass the bill out of committee.

Senator Roegner's bill to require a military exception in an open enrollment policy had its fourth hearing before the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee on Wednesday. An amendment to Sub SB 208 was accepted by the committee. The amendment contained numerous items that did not pertain to the veteran related portion except for one item. It was added that military children to continue to attend that district and receive transportation services for the remainder of the school year if the student's parent is discharged or released from active duty and that after the conclusion of that school year, that student is not eligible to attend that district under the bill, as long as the student does not have a parent on active duty. The bill was then favorably passed out of committee with a unanimous vote of the committee.

In the Senate Veteran and Safety Committee, SB 281 and HCR 8 both had their third hearing. Neither had any testimony and both were favorably passed out of committee with unanimous votes.

December 16 – 20

On Tuesday the House Transportation Committee had written testimony from Senator **Sandra O'Brien** (District 32) for her bill, SB 45. As introduced in February 2023 it would designate the bridge spanning the Mahoning River (part of State Route 534) in Newton Falls as "Veterans Memorial Bridge". However, when the committee favorably passed the bill, the language had been removed and

put into House Bill 81 along with many other bills making it an omnibus bill. They were bills that the committee had previously passed and incorporating them all into one bill would save valuable time in sessions. After removing the memorial bridge language from Sub SB 45, the following bills were put into it -HB 28, HB 652, HB 664, HB 673, HB 674, HB 679, and HB 691 all of which would designate portions of highways as memorial highways in honor of Ohio veterans. Also added was HB 698 which will create the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library license plate and five other bills naming memorial highways in honor of notable Ohio citizens.

The Final Days of the 135th General Assembly

During a lame duck session, it becomes very hard to track bills and determine if they were signed into law or if they died. Several bills might be consolidated into a single bill or amended into other bills. Here are a few examples of what OLR was able to track down.

House Bill 231 the bill to establish the 9-8-8 suicide prevention, mental health telephone line was amended into HB 211, known as the Free to Speak Act. The governor signed that bill on January 8.

House Bill 365 was introduced, designating three different memorial highways. It was amended into House Bill 380 which originally designated one memorial highway. House Bill 380 was then amended into House Bill 81. House Bill 458 designating a memorial bridge and a memorial viaduct was also amended into House Bill 81. House bill 81 started as a bill to designate a memorial highway in honor of a Carroll County Sheriff finished but finished designating 57 memorial highways or bridges. Governor DeWine signed it into law on December 19.

House Bill 45 was introduced to designate a bridge in Trumble County the "Veteran's Memorial Bridge." That language was removed and amended into House Bill 81. In its place were 12 other bills. Unfortunately, OLR has been unable to track HB 45 after it was passed out of the House Transportation Committee.

OLR followed 65 bills in the House and 33 bills in the Senate during the 135th General Assembly. Not all of them made it across the finish line. Those that made it and were signed by the governor will become part of the Ohio Revised Code. Those that did not have died. They will need to be introduced again during the 136th General Assembly as a new bill if they are to successfully become law.

Legislation In The 135th Ohio General Assembly

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

- HB 2 Direct state funds for economic growth and community development
- 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 the Army SSgt. Charles V. Kettler Memorial Highway
- HB 132 Designate yhe Army Sgt. Herbert C. Linville Memorial Highway
- HB 133 Designate the Army Sgt. Ronnie Blair Memorial Highway
- HB 150 Prohibit rental discrimination based on lawful source of income
- HB 202 Designate the Specialist Dennis Alan Combs Memorial Highway
- HB 209 Create Ohio Society Daughters of American Revolution plate
- HB 212 Enact the Ohio Property Protection Act
- HB 231 Establish 9-8-8 suicide prevention, mental health telephone line
- HB 232 Create Historical and Patriotic Education license plate
- HB 242 Establish the Armed Forces Reserve Component Scholarship Program and related funds
- HB 250 Revise the Military Enlistment diploma seal
- HB 252 Designate the SM1 Cornelius Anthony McCafferty, Jr. Memorial Highway
- HB 253 Designate the Brigadier General Charles Young Memorial Historical Corridor
- HB 254 Expand and enhance the homestead property tax exemption for disabled veterans
- HB 269 Designate the Sgt Bradley J. Harper USMC Memorial Highway
- HB 274 Authorize enhanced homestead exemption for certain homeowners
- HB 286 Designate the Vienna Township Veterans Bridge
- HB 294 Designate the Delaware County Veteran's Memorial Highway
- HB 299 Designate the Specialist Five Frederick Wayne Taylor Memorial Highway
- HB 310 Regards STRS member purchase of military service credit
- HB 317 Designate the Sgt. Cory M. Endlich Corridor
- HB 335 Designate the Ottawa Cuntly Veterans Memorial Highway
- HB 350 Designate the Lance Corporal Austin B. Schwenk Memorial Highway
- HB 355 Designate the Licking County Veterans Memorial Highway
- HB 365 Designate multiple memorial highways
- HB 378 Permit homestead exemption-surviving spouses of service members
- HB 380 To make multiple highway and bridge designations
- HB 383 Designate the Corporal John E. Ruch Memorial Highway
- HB 409 Create the Ohio Cold War Victory Medal
- HB 423 Create "Blue Star Banner" license plate
- HB 431 Designate the Staff Sgt. Zachary Wobler Memorial Highway
- HB 447 Regards property tax exemptions, restrictions and land value
- HB 453 Designate the Staff Sergeant George P. Mizik (USMC) Memorial Highway
- HB 458 To designate "Gold and Blue Star Family Memorial Bridge" and "POW/MIA Memorial Viaduct."
- HB 483 Create "Save a Warrior" license plate

More Legislation on next page...

- HB 487 Designate the TSgt. Grover Lee Swearingen Memorial Highway
 HB 493 Designate the Lance Corporal Gerald Subler Memorial Highway
 HB 494 Designate the SSgt Gene F. Morrison Memorial Bridge
 HB 510 Designate the Army Lt. Col. Robert R. Melnick Memorial Highway
 HB 517 Allow military to participate in homeownership savings program
 HB 523 Regards info poster on benefits and services for veterans
 HB 611 Designate the U.S. Army Private First Class Jerry Bockbrader Mem Hwy
 HB 620 Designate the Paulding County Purple Heart Memorial Highway
 HB 621 Designate the Van Wert County Veteran's Memorial Highway
 HB 625 Regards American Legion Auxiliary, American Legion license plates
 HB 628 Designate the SSG Jack W. Coy Memorial Highway
 HB 629 Make capital appropriations and reappropriations
 HB 631 Designate the Major David McGue Memorial Highway
 HB 641 Designate the SSG Jack W. Coy Memorial Highway
 HB 652 Designate the Cpl. Robert Dockstader Memorial Highway
 HB 664 Designate the CPL David James Amheiser Memorial Highway
 HB 673 Designate the CPT Louis John Speidel Memorial Highway
 HB 674 Designate the Sgt. Anthony Kress Vinnedge Memorial Highway
 HB 679 Designate the PFC John Wayne Richard Memorial Highway
 HB 691 Designate the Marshal Teddy Ray Holcomb 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
 HR 431 Observing April 2024 as the Month of the Military Child in Ohio
 HR 434 Honoring American Legion Toledo Post 335 on its Centennial
- HCR 8 To urge the federal government to select Ohio for the permanent headquarters of the U.S. 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 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 134 Modifies homestead property tax exemption for disabled veterans
 SB 140 Designate Sgt. Todd M. Bates Memorial Highway
 SB 141 Designate American Gold Star Mothers, Inc. Memorial Highway
 SB 145 Designate Cpl. David A. Johnston 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

More Legislation on next page...

- 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
- SB 226 Enact the Ohio Property Protection Act
- SB 257 Allow military to participate in homeownership savings program
- SB 260 Designate SPC Connor Wilson-Reichert Memorial Highway
- SB 281 Regards info poster on benefits and services for veterans
- SB 282 Designate PFC Henry 'Rick' Hausman, Jr. Memorial Highway
- SB 285 Designate Pharmacist's Mate Third Class Willard L. Shupe Mem Hwy
- SB 288 Make supplemental operating appropriations
- SB 292 Make capital appropriations and reappropriations
- SB 310 Designate U.S.S. Shenandoah Memorial Highway
- SB 315 Designate CPL Willard Boston Wallace Memorial Highway

- SR 171 Honoring Thomas Mihalys Memorial VFW Post 1079 as it commemorates its One Hundredth Anniversary
- SR 262 In memory of Senior Airman Brian "Kody" Johnson
- SR 315 Recognizing the Month of the Military Child in Ohio, April 2024
- SR 334 Honoring Beaver Creek HS AFJROTC B-1 Bombers drill team on winning two Nationals championships

- SCR 8 Urge federal govt reduce processing time- veteran disability claim
- SCR 9 Urge Congress support military, veteran mental health treatment

OUT IN THE **DISTRICTS**



Several Ohio Legislators took part in the annual Wreaths Across America to help communities honor and remember our past service men and women.

Three are pictured here.

Left. Representative Rachel D. Baker (District 27)
 Top. Representative Thomas Hall (District 46)
 Bottom. Representative Brian Lorenz (District 60)

Reflections

"If I do not believe as you believe, it proves that you do not believe as I believe, and that is all that it proves."

- Thomas Paine

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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