



# Ohio Legislative Report

Volume Two-Alpha; Number Two

February 2025

## Statehouse Happenings

### HELPFUL LINKS

- OHIO GENERAL ASSEMBLY:  
[www.legislature.ohio.gov](http://www.legislature.ohio.gov)
- OH HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:  
[www.ohiohouse.gov](http://www.ohiohouse.gov)
- OH SENATE:  
[www.ohiosenate.gov](http://www.ohiosenate.gov)
- OHIO GOVERNOR:  
[www.governor.ohio.gov](http://www.governor.ohio.gov)
- OHIO SECRETARY OF STATE:  
[www.ohiosos.gov](http://www.ohiosos.gov)
- OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL:  
[www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov](http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov)
- OHIO CHANNEL:  
[www.ohiochannel.org](http://www.ohiochannel.org)



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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.

To subscribe, send your name and email address to:  
[oh.leg.report@gmail.com](mailto:oh.leg.report@gmail.com)

Editor: David K. Root

The Ohio 136th General Assembly is now underway, but we do not have very many committee hearings to report on but for good reasons. At the start of every General Assembly there is a lot of business to take care of before new bills can be introduced. After the swearing in of the members, each house elects their leaders starting with the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate. Committees must be created and leaders and members appointed for them. The Rules of the Senate and the Rules of the House must be passed. Reimbursements for travel must be authorized. And on and on it goes all the business of a new general assembly must be completed to ensure it is run properly for the next two years.

Once the 'start-up' business is taken care of the legislators can begin doing the work that their constituents elected them to do. They can introduce their bills and resolutions, have them referred to committees, hold hearings and vote on them.

There were five bills that are of interest to the veterans/military of Ohio introduced in January -two in the house and three in the senate (*see page six*). Only two of the bills had their first hearings before the month ended. As is generally the case the first hearings were sponsor testimony.

#### January 27 – 31

Senators **Andrew O. Brenner** (SD-19) and **Bill Reineke** (SD -26) presented their testimony before the Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee Wednesday morning. Their bill was SB 21 which would designate October 4 each year as "Rutherford B. Hayes Day" in Ohio. Testimony was also presented by representatives from the HB Hayes Heritage, Hayes Presidential Library and Museum, and Ohio History Connection all as proponents. Hayes, born in Ohio, was an officer in the 23rd Ohio Infantry Regiment during the Civil War rising in rank from major to brevetted major general. Following the war, he served in Congress, as governor of Ohio, and finally as the 19th president of the United States.

That same day the Armed Services, Veterans Affairs and Public Safety Committee heard testimony for SB 17. This bill

See Happenings on Page Four...

# OPINIONS

## GUEST EDITOR

One of the main accomplishments of our Legislative team has been the increase of our appropriations to our service officers in the state budget over the last few cycles. The current appropriation of \$450,000 for the current biennium, as you can see in the chart below, is significantly higher than just two budget cycles ago and a whopping 12.5% from the previous cycle. However, with inflation being what it is, our “troops in the field” assisting our comrades with their claims need your help. As the upcoming budget for FY 2026-FY 2027 is happening as we speak, we need to work on getting this figure increased. Contact your local Ohio House and Ohio Senate members and ask them to increase this appropriation.

### VFW Veterans of Foreign Wars (ALI 758501)

FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Appropriation	FY 2025 Appropriation
<b>GRF ALI 758501, VFW Veterans of Foreign Wars</b>					
\$314,246	\$251,397	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$450,000	\$450,000
% change	-20.0%	59.1%	0.0%	12.5%	0.0%

Source: Legislative Budget Office (<https://www.lsc.ohio.gov/assets/legislation/135/hb33/en0/files/hb33-vto-greenbook-as-enacted-135th-general-assembly.pdf>).

As one can see from the chart below, there are precious few veterans in the General Assembly. They do not have our experience either while in the military or out of the military. We need to convey to them not only what the needs that some of our deserving comrades and their families may have but also the vast amount of good that our organization does for our community. This can only be done by taking the time to contact your Ohio House and Ohio Senate members.

### Members of the Ohio General Assembly that are Veterans (2023)

State	Number of Military Veterans in the House/Assembly	Number of Military Veterans in the Senate	Total Number of Veteran Legislators	Total Seats in the Legislature	Percentage of Veterans in the Legislature
Ohio	13	4	17	132	12.88%

Source: National Council of State Legislatures (<https://www.ncsl.org/military-and-veterans-affairs/military-veterans-in-state-legislatures-for-2023>).

Think of legislation, both local, state, and federal, that you think is important and take a stand. As this is for the Ohio Legislative Report, if you have an idea for Editor David Root, send it to him. Work with him on it. Don't just sit back and complain, do something about it.

As our numbers dwindle, so may our influence. So, we must be vocal about the needs of our comrades and their families. Just a year out from the Afghanistan withdrawal, the City of Columbus cancelled the Veterans' Day Parade. I am a member of the Board of Directors of a local food pantry and see veterans and their families all the time and try to direct them to facilities to assist them. We cannot let the term “lest we forget” be forgotten.

Ernest C. Massie  
VFW of Ohio  
Past District 11 Commander  
Post 9857

# OHIO CONSTITUTION

## ARTICLE I, *BILL OF RIGHTS*

### SECTION #22 ~ THE RIGHT TO REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM WITH PROTECTIONS FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY

*Effective: 2023*

A. Every individual has a right to make and carry out one's own reproductive decisions, including but not limited to decisions on:

1. contraception;
2. fertility treatment;
3. continuing one's own pregnancy;
4. miscarriage care; and
5. abortion.

B. The State shall not, directly or indirectly, burden, penalize, prohibit, interfere with, or discriminate against either:

1. An individual's voluntary exercise of this right or
2. A person or entity that assists an individual exercising this right, unless the State demonstrates that it is using the least restrictive means to advance the individual's health in accordance with widely accepted and evidence-based standards of care.

However, abortion may be prohibited after fetal viability. But in no case may such an abortion be prohibited if in the professional judgment of the pregnant patient's treating physician it is necessary to protect the pregnant patient's life or health.

C. As used in this Section:

1. "Fetal viability" means "the point in a pregnancy when, in the professional judgment of the pregnant patient's treating physician, the fetus has a significant likelihood of survival outside the uterus with reasonable measures. This is determined on a case-by-case basis."

2. "State" includes any governmental entity and any political subdivision.

D. This Section is self-executing.

# LETTER to the EDITOR

## Ohio Needs To Play Catchup

20 states currently have Full Property Tax Exemptions for 100% Disabled Veterans.

Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia.

Our great state of Ohio is 5th in the nation for Veteran Population -685,000 veterans, yet we only give \$50,000 of the value of a veteran's primary residence IF they are 100 percent disabled. Many other states give a property value exemption based on a veterans VA Disability rating. I strongly feel that Ohio is behind on helping our disabled veterans. Expanding our Homestead Exemption based on VA Disability level would be a huge benefit for our veterans living in Ohio. It could also help attract and entice current veterans to call Ohio home.

As Director of Sandusky County Veterans Service Office, I see the effects that paying property taxes ha on our Disabled Veteran Population. Every January and June I see an influx of veterans asking for financial assistance to help pay their bills. The biggest reason for this is due to the amount they owe for their property tax. The vast majority are veterans who are service connected and have a VA Disability rating under 100%. They receive no break on their property tax. I feel that this is an injustice for those who have served our country and are struggling to make ends meet.

We need to do better for our veterans and it is my sincere hope that our current State Legislators will work together to make this become a reality.

Terry Stanforth, Director  
Sandusky County Veterans Service Office

— O L R —

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**Happenings**, from Page One

would designate March 9th as "6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion Day" each year in Ohio. The bill sponsors, Senators **Michele Reynolds** (SD-3) and **Hearcel F. Craig** (SD-15) provided their testimony. The Six-Triple Eight (as it was called) served overseas during World War II, the only unit made up of women of color within the Women's Army Corps to do so. They were tasked with delivering mail to our soldiers on the front lines.

More bills will be introduced in the months to come. Not all will make it all the governor's desk. But OLR is optimistic that this GA will be more productive than the previous one.



**House  
Veterans and Military Development  
Committee**  
in the  
136th Ohio General Assembly

Tracy M. Richardson, *Chairman*  
Ty D, Mathews, *Vice Chairman*  
Derrick Hall, *Ranking Member*

Meredith Craig	Michael D. Dovilla
Haraz N. Ghanbari	Adam Holmes
Brian Lampton	Meredith R. Lawson-Rowe
Lauren McNally	Nick Santucci
Cecil Thomas	Bernard Willis

**Senate  
Armed Services, Veterans Affairs and  
Public Safety Committee**  
in the  
136th Ohio General Assembly

Terry Johnson, *Chairman*  
Steve Wilson, *Vice Chairman*  
Casey Weinstein, *Ranking Member*

Hearcel F. Craig  
Thomas F. Patton  
Tim Schaffer

**Primary Election 3 Months Away**

Make sure you are ready for the upcoming Ohio Primary Election. 1] Make sure you are registered to vote. You can check online at the Ohio Secretary of State website (see 'Helpful Links' on page one). There you can register, check to verify that you are registered, make changes to your registration – new address or a name change. 2] Know what is acceptable at the polling place so you have the correct ID and don't get turned away. 3] Get to know who is running and be ready to vote intelligently.

Below are the dates you might want to remember between now and the May 6 Primary Election.

Friday March 21: Military and Overseas Absentee Voting begins.

Monday April 7: Deadline for voter registration for May 6 primary/special election.

Tuesday April 8: Absentee Voting by mail begins.

Tuesday April 8: Early In-Person Voting begins.

Tuesday May 6: Primary/Special Election Day. Polls open from 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Go to the Secretary of State website for the answers to any questions you might have about voting in Ohio.



*Reflections*

*"So long as we have enough people in this country willing to fight for their rights, we'll be called a democracy."*

*-Roger Nash Baldwin*

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# OUT IN THE DISTRICTS



## State Rep Meets With Vets Group

January 29, 2025  
 Cuyahoga Falls, OH - Members of Concerned Veterans for America—Ohio had an informal meeting with State Representative Bill Roemer (*center*) at the On Tap Grille & Bar in Cuyahoga Falls to discuss key topics facing Ohio veterans and citizens.

## 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 along with all info about the event and the photo to:  
[oh.leg.report@gmail.com](mailto:oh.leg.report@gmail.com)

## ATTENTION LEGISLATORS

Ohio Legislative Report will publish an announcement of your upcoming Town Hall or District Meeting.

Send your press releases to:  
[oh.leg.report@gmail.com](mailto:oh.leg.report@gmail.com)  
 by the end of each month to be included.



## Constituent Coffee

with  
 State Representative Nick Santucci &  
 State Representative David Thomas

All events run from 9:00 - 10:00 AM

- ~~January 30 at The Mocha House (Warren)~~
- February 27 at The Daily Grind (Girard)
  - March 27 at Raptis (Howland)
  - April 24 at Cadence Coffee (Niles)
  - May 29 at The Station (Austinburg)
  - June 26 at Cortland Main (Cortland)
  - July 31 at Market House (Howland)
  - August 28 at Twisted Peacock (Vienna)
  - September 25 at KT's Coffee (Hubbard)
- October 30 at Wall Street Coffee (Jefferson)
  - November 20 at Scribblers (Geneva)
  - December 11 at Lakeshore (Andover)

Residents of the 64th and 65th districts are invited to join Representative Santucci and Representative Thomas for coffee to discuss their questions and concerns.



**DISTRICT 17 OFFICE HOURS**  
*at your local library*  
**9:00 A.M. - 11:00 A.M.**



- Saturday, February 15th - Berea Branch
- Saturday, March 1st - Olmsted Falls Branch
- Saturday, March 29th - Strongsville Branch
- Saturday, April 26th - Brecksville Branch
- Saturday, May 31st - North Royalton Branch



# LEGISLATION INTRODUCED IN JANUARY

## **SB 17**

Introduced on January 22 by Senators **Michele Reynolds** (SD-3) and **Hearcel F. Craig** (SD-15).  
The bill would enact section 5.212 of the Revised Code to designate March 9th as "6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion Day."  
It was referred to the Senate Armed Services, Veterans Affairs and Public Safety Committee.

## **SB 21**

Introduced on January 22 by Senators **Andrew O. Brenner** (SD-19) and **Bill Reineke** (SD-26).  
The bill would enact section 5.2322 of the Revised Code to designate October 4 as "Rutherford B. Hayes Day."  
It was referred to the Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee.

## **HB 22**

Introduced on January 27 by Representatives **Brian Lorenz** (HD-60) and **David Thomas** (HD-65).  
The bill would amend multiple sections of the Revised Code to authorize a full homestead exemption for surviving spouses of members of the uniformed services killed in the line of duty.  
It was referred to the House Ways and Means Committee.

## **HB 27**

Introduced on January 28 by Representatives **Jamie Callender** (HD-57) and **Daniel P. Troy** (HD-23).  
The bill would enact section 5534.90 of the Revised Code to designate the bridge spanning the Grand River In Lake County as the "Specialist Jacob A. Ashton Memorial Bridge."  
It has not been referred to a committee yet.

## **SB 39**

Introduced on January 28 by Senators **Terry Johnson** (SD-14) and **Hearcel F. Craig** (SD-15).  
The bill would enact section 4113.13 of the Revised Code regarding the creation and display of a poster containing information on benefits and services for veterans.  
It was referred to the Armed Services, Veterans Affairs and Public Safety Committee.

## Legislation In The 136<sup>th</sup> Ohio General Assembly Pertaining to Ohio Veterans, Active Duty, Reserve & National Guard and Their Families

HB 22 Authorize homestead exemption for surviving military spouses

HB 27 Designate Specialist Jacob A. Ashton Memorial Bridge

SB 17 Designate 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion Day

SB 21 Designate Rutherford B. Hayes Day

SB 39 Provide for informational poster on veteran benefits and services