Ohio Legislative Report

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HELPFUL LINKS

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'Ohio Legislative Report'

Ohio Legislative Report

Is published electronically at the beginning 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, their families, and Veteran Organizations 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:
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Editor: David K. Root

Statehouse Happenings

The members of the 136th General Assembly returned to work after a lengthy holiday break. January marks the beginning of the second half of the term. Any legislation they plan to pass into law must be passed by both chambers this year or they are dead.

There are no hearings we can report on because there were no hearings held. The House did not have any hearings scheduled and the Senate did not have any hearings scheduled until the last week of the month. Those were all cancelled due to the first big snowstorm that hit Columbus, and most of Ohio, this winter.

Meetings, discussions, and caucuses were held no doubt, to draw up the biennial capital appropriations bill. According to *A Guidebook for Ohio Legislators*, capital appropriations are slightly different from operating appropriations. Among the most obvious difference is that appropriations are made for the entire biennium, rather than each fiscal year of the biennium.

It also states the process of enacting a biennial capital appropriations bill is simpler and shorter than the one for enacting the operating appropriations bills. It also occurs within the context of another activity – the preparation of the state's six-year Capital Improvements Plan. This plan is updated biennially by OBM on the basis of recommendations it receives from affected state agencies. The process usually begins in the late summer of each odd-numbered year. At that time, OBM distributes guidelines to the agencies for the preparation of both the Capital Budget and the six-year Capital Improvements Plan. As with the operating appropriations bills, OBM reviews the agencies' submissions and sends its preliminary recommendations to the Governor. When final decisions have been made, the Governor's recommendations are drafted as a bill by LSC staff.

Our legislators will be busy with the Capital Appropriations bill – first by the House and then the Senate for a few months. But will at the same time be pushing to get new bills introduced and current bills passed. Expect to see more action during the second half than you did during the first half.

Presidents' Day

President's Day, also known as Washington's Birthday, is on the third Monday of February each year and is a federal holiday in the United States. The day not only honors George Washington (born February 22), the first President of the United States, and Abraham Lincoln (born February 12) whose birthdays are both in February, but honors all the presidents who have served in the United States.

The majority of our nation's presidents hold the distinction of once being called a Veteran before they ever held the title of Commander-in-Chief. Thirty-one of the 45 U.S. presidents have served in the U.S. armed forces, and 12 of them were generals.

A look at what the bills say... In a Nut Shell

Summaries from the Office of Research and Drafting

For the third time, Senator **Thomas F. Patton** (SD-24) introduced a bill that would authorize total property tax exemption for totally disabled veterans. He originally introduced this bill while serving in the House. House Bill 694 during the 134th General Assembly and House Bill 90 in the 135th.

He introduced Senate Bill 92 at the start of the 136th General Assembly and it was referred to the Senate Ways and Means Committee where it had its first hearing. It was then put on a shelf where it has remained for nearly a year.

The bill will replace the partial homestead exemption for disabled veterans with an enhanced homestead exemption for all disabled veterans equal to all taxes imposed on the homestead. The state will reimburse local taxing units for the resulting reduction in taxes in the same manner as other homestead exemptions.

Senate Bill 92-

The Detailed Analysis

As Introduced

Homestead exemption: disabled veterans

Continuing law provides a property tax credit for the residence, or "homestead," of certain qualifying individuals. The standard "homestead exemption" equals the taxes that would be charged on up to $28,000, for tax year 2025, of the true value of a home owned by a homeowner who is 65 years of age or older, permanently and totally disabled, or at least 59 years old and the surviving spouse of an individual who previously received the exemption. ("True value" is the appraised fair market value.) The credit essentially exempts $28,000 of the value of a homestead from taxation. The amount of the tax savings for a qualifying homestead depends on the local tax rate: the higher the tax rate, the greater the tax reduction. This standard exemption is means-tested, so only homeowners with household income below a certain threshold ($40,000 for tax year 2025) may qualify for the exemption.

Under current law, a special "enhanced" exemption of $56,000, for tax year 2025, is available for homes of honorably discharged military veterans with a total disability and surviving spouses of emergency responders who died in the line of duty. The bill expands the enhanced exemption for disabled veterans by increasing the exemption to equal the full value of the veteran's homestead. In essence, the enhanced exemption completely exempts a disabled veteran's home from taxes.

As under the current homestead exemption for disabled veterans, the bill's enhanced exemption extends to the surviving spouse of a disabled veteran, until the spouse dies or remarries. Also like the current disabled veteran exemption, the bill's enhanced exemption does not require the disabled veteran to make below a certain income.

Similar to other homestead exemptions, the bill's enhanced disabled veteran exemption applies to manufactured and mobile homes regardless of whether they are taxed as real property or subject to the manufactured home tax. Also similar to other homestead exemptions, the enhanced exemption does not exempt the disabled veteran's homestead from special assessments.

Application requirements

As with all current homestead exemptions, a disabled veteran must apply to the county auditor to qualify for the exemption. The veteran must include with this initial application a copy of the veteran's discharge record showing the veteran received a total disability rating. After this initial application, no further application is needed to maintain the exemption, but the auditor must be notified if the homestead no longer qualifies for the bill's enhanced veteran exemption. (This notification is required under continuing law to report ineligibility for all current homestead exemptions.)

Reimbursement of local taxing units

See *Nut Shell* on Page Four...

Reflections

"The care of human life and happiness, and not their destruction, is the first and only object of good government."

-Thomas Jefferson

WHAT OTHER STATES ARE DOING

There are many bills that will help veterans, military, or families of veteran or service member in just about, if not all the fifty states. Some of them are similar to bills we have in the Ohio General Assembly and some of them are unique to the states they are in.
There are the 'Hey, why didn't I think of that' variety and some that might make you shake your head in bewilderment.

OLR takes a look at some of the Vet/Military bills in other states. They are bills introduced within the past year or so. They may still be in committees, have passed out of committee, or have been signed into law. You can look at the progress of each by going to the websites of each of the state's legislature.
Maybe some of them will spark some interest and begin to grow in Ohio.

In this issue of OL Report are a few such bills from California, Alabama, and our western neighbor, Indiana.

IN THE INDIANA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SB 166: This bill changes references relating to military discharges to require discharges under honorable conditions. (Current law provides that a veteran is eligible for benefits except under certain conditions designated by the Indiana Department of Veterans' Affairs (IDVA).) The bill excludes references used to determine eligibility for grants from the Military Family Relief Fund.

HB 1109: Establishes the Hoosier homeless veteran initiative for the purpose of providing a means for homeless veterans to have access to temporary shelter during the veteran's rehabilitation. Provides that the initiative shall be coordinated and administered by the Indiana department of veterans' affairs (department) in consultation with the Indiana department of health. Requires each homeless shelter with at least 25 beds to reserve at least one bed out of every 25 beds for a homeless veteran. Provides that a homeless shelter or other entity may apply to the department to become a participating shelter. Provides that a participating shelter shall receive.

HB 1216: Requires the Indiana department of veterans' affairs to establish and administer a hyperbaric oxygen treatment program (program) to make grants to certain providers to provide diagnostic testing and hyperbaric oxygen treatment to qualified service members. Establishes program requirements. Requires the Indiana department of health to: (1) issue a request for proposals to offer treatment under the program; and (2) adopt rules to implement these provisions, including rules concerning program eligibility, treatment plan requirements, criteria for approving payments for treatment, and confidentiality. Provides that funding for the program is paid from the military family relief fund. Makes conforming amendments related to the sunset of the hyperbaric oxygen treatment pilot program.

IN THE CALIFORNIA STATE LEGISLATURE

SB 56: According to the author, this bill seeks to remove the counterproductive inclusion of disability compensation from the calculation of the Low Income Exclusion of the Disabled Veterans' Property Tax Exemption, as veterans must receive that compensation to qualify for the tax exemption in the first place. Families surviving on only social security and disability pay should qualify for the low income exclusion.

AJR 15: This resolution urges the United States Congress to pass the Major Richard Star Act to ensure veterans with disabilities receive their full United States Department of Defense retirement pay and United States Department of Veterans Affairs disability compensation without offset.

SB 694: This bill provides additional protections for veterans in California in connection with fees charged for assistance applying for veterans' benefits and the privacy of their information. This bill requires persons to be federally accredited before preparing, presenting, or prosecuting a veteran's claim for benefits under federal law.

Continued on next Page...

States, from Page Three

IN THE ALABAMA STATE LEGISLATURE

HB 30: Under existing law, households whose sole source of income is Social Security benefits are exempt from paying solid waste collection fees. This bill would exempt households whose sole source of income is veterans' benefits from paying these fees.

HB 102: Under existing law, certain distinctive license plates may be retained by the surviving spouse of the original plate recipient. This bill would authorize the surviving spouse of a disabled veteran who has been issued a disabled veteran license plate to retain the plate upon the veteran's death.

HB 233: Under existing law, certain members of the National Guard may receive tuition reimbursement through the National Guard Educational Assistance Program when seeking a college degree or certain other certifications. This bill would authorize tuition assistance for workforce development programs, in addition to tuition assistance, through the National Guard Educational Assistance Program. This bill would authorize the use of tuition assistance for additional educational expenses, such as on-campus living expenses and meal plans.

Under existing law, guard members who achieve a certain grade point average requirement are authorized to receive academic excellence benefits in addition to educational reimbursement through the program. This bill would remove any reference to academic excellence benefits and revises the requirements to qualify for tuition assistance. This bill would repeal a section that provides certain qualifications for the National Guard Educational Assistance Program.

SB 191: This bill would create the Home Schooling Opportunities for Military Education (HOME) Act. This bill would apply to parents who are active duty members of the Armed Forces of the United States or members of the National Guard or reserve components of the Armed Forces of the United States, and are on active duty orders that require a temporary or permanent change of station. This bill would require those military parents to inform their local superintendent of education of any intention to home school their dependent children and to comply with state law relating to home schooling. This bill would allow dependents of those military parents who are receiving home school instruction to use public school facilities and equipment on the same basis as regularly enrolled students under certain circumstances. This bill would require local school systems to provide home school students with disabilities who are dependents of those military parents and are residing within the system access to special education services. This bill would also require local school systems to allow participation in interscholastic activities by home school students and other dependents of those military parents residing within the system.

SB 216: Under existing law, members of the National Guard may be presented awards for certain accomplishments and service by order of the Governor. This bill would revise the requirements for Alabama National Guard members to receive these awards. This bill would create new awards for Alabama National Guard Members for certain accomplishments and service. This bill would also prescribe that certain awards may be presented by the Governor and that certain awards may be presented by the Adjutant General.

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Nut Shell, from Page Two

As with all current homestead exemptions, local taxing units are reimbursed by the state for the reduction in property tax revenue that results from the bill's enhanced disabled veterans homestead exemption. The reimbursement is paid from the GRF semiannually or annually.

Application date

The enhanced homestead exemption for disabled veterans begins to apply for tax year 2025 or, in the case of homes that are subject to the manufactured home tax, tax year 2026. The difference in application is accounted for by the fact that manufactured home tax is payable on a current-year basis, whereas property tax is payable in arrears.

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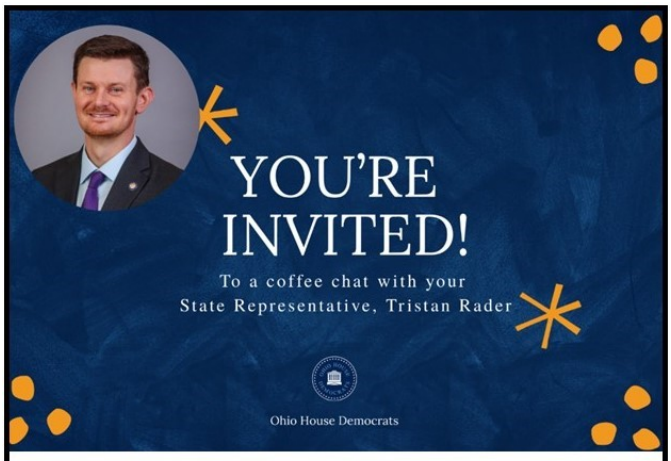
Meet With Your Legislators

District 4 Office Hours

Have a question, concern, or just want an opportunity to speak with your state representative? You are invited to join me for my next District 4 Office Hours:

Friday, February 20
3:30 -4:30
New Albany Library, Meeting Room 2
200 Market St, New Albany, OH 43054

Please contact my office if you would like to schedule a one-on-one meeting, or if you would like to meet at a different time or location that is more convenient for you.



State Representative Tristan Rader is doing a series of informal coffee chats to meet with residents across the district in their neighborhood. These coffee chats are a great place to meet your State Rep, talk about issues in the district, and hear about how you're being represented in the Ohio Statehouse.

- Want to join? Check for an opportunity to connect in your neighborhood:
- **Lakewood:** Friday, February 20th from 10 AM – 12 PM at Root Café (15118 Detroit Ave, Lakewood, OH 44107)
- **Clark-Fulton:** Friday, March 27th from 10 AM – 12 PM at Las Villas Deli and Pastries (3216 W 41st St., Cleveland, OH 44109)
- **Tremont:** Friday, April 24th from 10 AM – 12 PM at Civilization Coffee (2366 W 11th St., Cleveland, OH 44113)

Statehouse Announcements

The Statehouse will be closed on Monday, February 16 in honor of Presidents' Day.

The Ohio Statehouse Museum is closed for maintenance in 2026 from January 17 through March. The Ohio Statehouse Museum is located on the ground floor of the Ohio Statehouse.

Visitors are welcome to tour the Ohio Statehouse using the self-guided tour brochure and the cell phone tour available in the Map Room. At this time, guided tours are available weekdays on the hour, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., and on weekends on the hour, 12 to 3 p.m. Tours start in the Map Room.

Exhibits

~Flags of Honor Nov. 10, 2025 - July 31
South Light Court

In partnership with the Motts Military Museum in Groveport, Ohio, the exhibit shines a light on Ohio's service members, showcasing their uniforms and equipment. Also featured prominently are American and Ohio flags that belonged to veterans during their service.

~Mapping the American Revolution Jan. 15 - July 28
Map Room

Tony Holbrook, longtime member of the Brigade of the American Revolution and collector of American Revolution artifacts share with the Statehouse his 18th century surveying equipment. This exhibit includes maps from the time period of the Revolution, as well as maps made in the 18th century manner by Tony himself.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

***OL Report* welcomes letters to the editor**

- Letters should be 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

LEGISLATION INTRODUCED IN JANUARY

HB 660 was introduced on January 27 by Representative **C. Allison Russo** (HD-7).

The bill would amend section 5919.34 of the Revised Code regarding the Ohio National Guard Scholarship Program.

It has not been referred to a committee.

Legislation In The 136th Ohio General Assembly

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

HB 1 Enact Ohio Property Protection Act
HB 22 Authorize homestead exemption for surviving military spouses
HB 27 Designate Specialist Jacob A. Ashton Memorial Bridge
HB 40 Increase disabled veteran enhanced homestead exemption
HB 50 To designate a portion of SR 47 the "PFC John Wayne Richard Memorial Highway."
HB 56 To designate a portion of SR 421 the "CPL David James Amheiser Memorial Highway."
HB 61 Modify homestead exemption, owner-occupancy tax credit amount
HB 95 Support members of Ohio Veterans Education Council
HB 96 Make state operating appropriations for FY 2026-27
HB 135 Prohibit source of income discrimination in rental housing
HB 171 Designate a portion of State Route 28 the “CPT Louis John Speidel Memorial Highway.”
HB 198 Regulate manufacture, sale of inhalable, ingestible hemp products
HB 204 Designate 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion Day
HB 228 To designate a portion of I 280 the "SSG Jack W. Coy Veterans Memorial Highway."
HB 234 Designate Cpl. Robert Dockstader Memorial Highway
HB 259 Designate Captain Joshua Michael McClimans Memorial Highway
HB 267 Regards creation, display of veterans benefit and services poster
HB 292 Establish the Ohio Defense Commission
HB 297 Regards funds provided by county for Memorial Day expenses
HB 316 Designate MSGT Norman Michael Kilbarger Memorial Highway
HB 335 Regards county budget commissions, property and sales tax, funds
HB 339 Allow surviving spouse to retain Purple Heart license plate
HB 344 Regards electronic instant bingo, lottery terminals; levy a tax
HB 360 Designate SPC Louis P. Shuster Memorial Interchange
HB 383 Designate Litten Brothers Memorial Highway
HB 384 Designate Staff Sergeant Melvin Trushel, Sr. Memorial Highway
HB 385 Designate PFC Thomas "Tommy" Pizzino Memorial Highway
HB 414 Designate Navy Seaman Jadwisiak Memorial Highway
HB 419 Create the Save22 license plate
HB 434 Exempt military driver's license applicants from driver's ed
HB 451 Designate CPL Lindsey William Mitchell Memorial Highway
HB 452 Designate 761st Tank Battalion Day
HB 464 Exempt military-certified child care providers from licensure
HB 476 Authorize online raffles under the Charitable Gaming Law
HB 497 Designate PFC James Vincent PottKotter Memorial Highway
HB 500 Designate a school JROTC program as a career-technical ed program

More on next Page...

HB 516 Designate 83rd Ohio Division Memorial Highway
HB 529 Authorize tax credit if hiring veterans, service members, spouse
HB 576 Designate November as Veterans' month
HB 580 Designate PFC Francis Guillozet Memorial Highway
HB 632 Allow driver's license or ID card to show Gold Star Family status
HB 660 Regards the Ohio National Guard Scholarship Program

HCR 7 To support the work of the Am. Leg. Buckeye Boys State and the Am. Leg. Aux. Buckeye Girls State
HCR 18 Urge Congress to recognize US troops who served in Honduras
HCR 20 Honor the United States Navy; commemorate its 250th anniversary
HCR 21 Recognize the 250th anniversary of the United States Marine Corps
HCR 23 Recognize 250th anniversary of United States Army, Chaplain Corps
HCR 27 Support use of state land for a new VA National cemetery

HR 133 Honoring Battery B, 1st Battalion, 134th Field Artillery Regiment on its One Hundred Fiftieth Anniversary
HR 243 Urge selection of Rickenbacker as KC-46 Pegasus operating base

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
SB 56 Revise medical and adult-use marijuana laws; levy marijuana taxes
SB 88 Enact the Ohio Property Protection Act
SB 92 Authorize total property tax exemption-totally disabled veterans
SB 148 Designate a portion of State Route 2 the “Specialist Lloyd Andrew Sellers Memorial Highway.”
SB 179 Verify veteran status of imprisoned individuals
SB 193 Designate Captain Joshua Michael McClimans Memorial Highway
SB 197 Legalize, tax internet gambling; make other Gambling Law changes
SB 218 Exempt armed forces-certified child care provider from licensure
SB 223 Require ODNR discount program for veterans, service members
SB 244 Designate Abbey Gate Remembrance Day
SB 253 Designate Black Ohioan Civil War Medal of Honor Recipient Day
SB 293 Revise deadline to return absent voter ballots
SB 302 Create the Land of U.S. Grant license plate

SCR 7 Urge Congress reissue DoD Civilian Retiree Identification Cards

SR 21 Urge Congress support military, veteran mental health treatment
SR 22 Urge federal govt reduce processing time-veteran disability claim
SR 52 Honoring the DAR Elizabeth Sherman Reese Chapter on its 150th Anniversary
SR 97 Observing April 2025 as the Month of the Military Child in Ohio
SR 123 Honoring Deborah A. Ashenhurst on her retirement from the OVDS
SR 192 Recognizing Rutherford B. Hayes Day in Ohio October 4, 2025

The details of every bill can be found on the Ohio Legislature website. You can also check the status of bills as they travel thorough committees and sessions, find out how the voting went, and read the testimony of every witness.

To find a bill type the bill number (example: SB 712 or HB 943) into the search bar.

You will find the Ohio Legislature’s website here:

www.legislature.ohio.gov