



For Immediate Release  
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## House Bill 488 Helps Veterans Get Jobs and Higher Education

COLUMBUS – A bill sent today from the Ohio General Assembly to Governor John Kasich for signature includes a number of provisions that help veterans find employment as well as accelerate their education.

House Bill 488 eases veterans' transition to employment and improves their access to higher education and employment. The bill is based on proposals that the Governor introduced in March as part of the Mid-Biennium Review (MBR). The MBR built on successes already achieved in state government fiscal, employment and related policies to keep state government moving forward and bring additional jobs to Ohio.

"We certainly appreciate Governor Kasich's leadership in bringing these proposals forward, and the enthusiasm of everyone in both the Ohio House and Senate to work together to make them the law of the state," Director of the Ohio Department of Veterans Services Tim Gorrell said. "This elevates Ohio's status as a veteran-friendly state and as a place all veterans can be proud to call home."

The major provisions of House Bill 488 are:

**Helping Veterans Get Jobs:** Veterans often have advanced training in many of the skills that Ohio job creators are seeking. The bill makes it easier for veterans to transfer their skills to receive credit toward a professional license so they can quickly begin applying their skills in good-paying jobs that support their families, job creators and their communities.

- **Fast Track to State Licenses:** The bill contains a number of provisions that strengthen opportunities for veterans who work with a professional license board, including making sure they can use their GI Bill dollars to pay for national or state occupational license and certificate testing fees, a prioritized process to expedite licensing and certification for veterans and their spouses, a consistent and broad definition of *veteran* to allow the State of Ohio to treat all veterans equally and creation of a centralized website that provides state occupational licensing information to veterans and their spouses.
- **Link to Private Employers with Veterans' Preference:** The bill permits private sector employers to voluntarily register with the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

if they provide a preference in hiring for veterans and spouses, and requires the Ohio Department of Veterans Services to provide, on its website, a link to a list of these employers.

**Giving Veterans College Credit for Their Military Training and Experience:** Veterans who work toward a college degree deserve credit for the military training, experience and coursework they've received in the service – credit that can allow them to earn their degrees faster and reach their goal of obtaining a good-paying civilian job. The bill requires Ohio's higher education system to develop the means to make this happen. It creates the Military Transfer Assurance Guide to provide a baseline of standards, procedures and tools for granting college credit for military experience for any public college and university, providing more consistent services across the state system.

- **Academic Credit for Military Training and Experience:** Veterans who are working toward a college degree deserve credit for their prior military training and experience. The bill requires that Ohio's higher education institutions grant free college credit for military experience.
- **Better Academic Counseling For Veterans:** The bill requires that all public higher education institutions provide high-quality academic and career counseling for veterans to help them ease back into civilian life and navigate the unique programs designed to support them. Veterans would also receive priority course registration.

**Helping Ohio Veterans Make the Transition to College:** When reentering civilian life as a college student, veterans often struggle to learn their options and the many opportunities available on a college campus. There are colleges and universities in Ohio with first-rate veteran offices or specifically assigned counselors to support transitioning veterans. The bill encourages every public campus in Ohio to implement these "best practices." The bill also requires that veterans and active military service members will be provided priority course registration at Ohio public institutions, ensuring that they have access to the classes they need to succeed and thrive in civilian life. These programs are strengthened by a provision in the bill requiring the Chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents to report on their implementation and to recommend improvements for integrating student veterans into campus life.

**Protecting Ohioans Called to Active Duty:** The bill also includes a provision to increase the penalties for identity theft against an active duty military service member and their spouse, and members of the National Guard and Reserves who are called to active duty.

The assistance to veterans enacted in House Bill 488 had its origins in the Governor's Executive Order (EO) of June 2013. This EO directed Ohio's boards and commissions to identify ways to

quickly grant veterans professional licenses based on their training and experience, and the Ohio Board of Regents to simplify the process of obtaining academic credit based on military service.

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