



Mike DeWine, Governor  
Deborah Ashenhurst, Director

## Testimony on behalf of the Ohio War Orphans and Severely Disabled Veterans' Children Scholarship Board before the Ohio Sunset Review Committee

Chair Roegner and members of the Ohio Sunset Review Committee, thank you for providing me the opportunity to testify on behalf of the continuation of the Ohio War Orphans and Severely Disabled Veterans' Children Scholarship Board. My name is Lucas Denney and I am the Chief Legislative Officer for the Department of Veteran Services (ODVS).

I appreciate the opportunity to be before you today to discuss the many reasons why the Ohio War Orphans and Severely Disabled Veterans' Children Scholarship Board is well worth continuation.

The Ohio War Orphans and Severely Disabled Veterans' Children Scholarship Board awards tuition assistance to the children of deceased, or severely disabled, Ohio veterans who served in the armed forces during a period of declared war or conflict. To receive War Orphans Scholarship benefits, a student must be an Ohio resident and enrolled for full-time undergraduate study and pursuing an associate or bachelor's degree at an eligible Ohio college or university.

Once a student submits their application, it is then entered into the system. The student will receive a notification of receipt, which is either eligible, ineligible or incomplete, via email or mail. If the student is or becomes eligible, they are presented to the WOSDV Board at the annual meeting. Once approved, an award notification is sent to the student by email or mail.

Scholarship applications are reviewed and approved by a board which is comprised of eight members. A designee from both the Director of Veteran Services and the Chancellor, as well as a member from both the House of Representatives and the Senate, appointed by the leader of each chamber respectively. The final four members are appointed by the governor, one each from the American Legion, VFW, Disabled American Veterans and AMVETS.

The board meets once a year in July to determine the award amounts. Scholarship benefits cover a portion of instructional and general fee charges at two and four-year public institutions and a portion of these charges at eligible private colleges and universities.

The Ohio War Orphans Scholarship Board met on July 31, 2019, to approve new applicants as well as funding levels for academic year 2019-2020. It was decided that students attending Ohio public institutions will be funded 100% of tuition and general fees, and students attending private institutions will receive an annual award amount of \$7,044 for the year.

*"The Trusted Voice for Veterans"*

High Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

4 0898  
7 7317 F  
odvets.gov

The scholarship is funded by GRF line item 235504 which falls under the Department of Higher Education. 100% of the GRF funding goes straight towards scholarships for those who apply. The board does not draw a salary and although they are able to request travel funds, so far, no members have to date.

The Department of Higher Education does have a staff member that is compensated from their State Grants and Scholarships line item dedicated to the War Orphans and Severely Disabled Veterans' Children Scholarship Board. That staff is equivalent to a  $\frac{2}{3}$  FTE with their work solely for the scholarship as she has other roles and responsibilities at the Department of Higher Education.

With no overhead cost other than the  $\frac{2}{3}$  FTE staff time and no budget for any other activities, the scholarship board is a fantastic value for the taxpayers of Ohio. The scholarship has helped thousands of our State's heroes children earn an education in Ohio after putting themselves in harms way for our safety and freedom.

I'd like to take a moment to thank all of you for the generous and necessary increase in the line item under the budget passed in July. As we enter into the 19th year of armed conflict in Afghanistan, the board anticipates a continued uptick in applications as the children of servicemen and women who deployed and did not return, or returned severely disabled, enter their late teens and head off to college.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.