



Testimony on behalf of the Department of Veteran Services Director's Advisory Committee before the Ohio Sunset Review Committee

Chairman Wilkin, Vice Chair Hillyer and members of the Ohio Sunset Review Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the continuation of the Ohio Department of Veteran Services Director's Advisory Committee. My name is Dominic Ciano, and I am the 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 Director's advisory committee is well worth continuation as it provides fantastic value for not only the Director and the Department of Veteran Services, but for veterans across Ohio as well as their civilian neighbors.

In 2008, Ohio established the Department of Veterans Services as a cabinet-level agency following the passage of Senate Bill 289 in the 127th Ohio General Assembly. The Director's Advisory Committee, found in O.R.C. 5902.02 (J) was included as part of this original formation.

The committee is comprised of nineteen members from across the state representing a wide range of veteran and non-veteran organizations. These include: congressional chartered service organization such as the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign War (VFW), county service officers and commissioners, county commissioners' association and the Ohio Woman's Veterans Committee. Members gather regularly to discuss issues in the veteran community and advise the director on how the state can best support, advocate and connect with our veterans and their families.

The work of this committee comes at no cost to the state. The committee itself does not employ any staff, but instead is staffed by ODVS employees. The department provides a secretary, myself for a legislative update and legal counsel as well as the Director who attends as often as her schedule allows. The meetings occur quarterly, and meeting space is provided by either the Franklin County Veteran Service Office just over on East Broad Street downtown, or at American Legion Post 171 in Westerville free of charge. These meetings are always open to the public, and we are always happy to have members of the General Assembly attend.

With no overhead cost other than limited staff time and no budget for any other activities, the committee is a fantastic value for the taxpayers of Ohio.

The information sharing and advising that occurs at the committee meetings has been invaluable to our Director and our department. The committee members' dedication to their fellow veterans

and their families is awe-inspiring and we are fortunate to have such a dedicated group of public servants advising our department and helping us live up to our departmental mission.

Thank you for the time and consideration. I would be happy to take any questions at this time.