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OHIO GENERAL ASSEMBLY:
www.legislature.ohio.gov

OH HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:
www.ohiohouse.gov

OH SENATE:
www.ohiosenate.gov

OHIO GOVERNOR:
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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.

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Editor: David K. Root

Statehouse Happenings

On the 16th of last month, Representative Tracy Richardson (District 86) and Adam Holmes (District 97) introduced legislation that will help disabled veterans cut the amount of property tax they pay. This is what is known as a 'homestead property tax exemption' bill.

Their bill, House Bill 254 is the sixth property tax exemption bill introduced since the start of the 135th general assembly back in January. Each one is different from the others. Is one better than the others? Which one will win out over the others? Will any of them become part of the Ohio Revised Code?

Let's look at each one and see if we can shed some light on them.

Senate Bill 43 was the first and was introduced by Senator Andrew Brenner (District 19) in January. The law at that time allowed totally disabled veterans to be eligible for a property tax credit on their residence. It also allowed the surviving spouse of a totally disabled veterans to retain the eligibility for the exemption as long as they continued to own and occupy the property and did not remarry.

Senator Brenner learned from a constituent of a flaw that denied some surviving spouses of the benefits. If a veteran began the process of applying for the homestead exemption but died before a determination of total disability was made by the VA, the spouse would not be eligible for the exemption. HB 43 corrected that flaw by expanding the legal definition of surviving spouse of a veteran so that it includes the spouse of a veteran that began the process of applying for a homestead exemption but died before the VA issued their determination of total disability.

SB 43 worked its way through both chambers receiving unanimous approval at every step of the way. Governor Mike DeWine signed the act into law and it will take effect at the end of October.

Before discussing the next five bills, let's first see what the current law says about homestead exemptions that pertain to Ohio's veteran property owners.

A veteran 65 years of age or older can qualify for a property tax credit. That 'homestead exemption' equal to the taxes that would be charged on up to \$25,000 of the true value of a home. It should be noted under current law, homeowners who first receive the \$25,000 homestead exemption for tax year 2014 or later (or tax year 2015 for homeowners who pay the manufactured home tax) must have a modified Ohio adjusted gross income of below a certain income threshold, as computed for state income tax purposes (including all business income and excluding Social Security and disability benefits). The threshold was originally \$30,000, but it is indexed to inflation and increases annually – the 2023 threshold is \$36,100. Homeowners who received the homestead exemption before 2014 are not subject to this income limit.

A veteran who is totally disabled or the surviving spouse of a totally

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BILLS & RESOLUTIONS INTRODUCED IN AUGUST

HB 250:

Introduced by Representatives Jessica E. Miranda (District 28) and Tracy M. Richardson (District 86) on August 1st. It will be referred to a committee later this month.

The bill will amend section 3313.6114 of the Revised Code to revise the Military Enlistment diploma seal.

HB 252:

Introduced by Representative Marilyn S. John (District 76) on August 7th.

It will be referred to a committee later this month.

The bill will enact section 5534.963 of the Revised Code to designate a portion of State Route 39 in Richland County as the "SM1 Cornelius Anthony McCafferty, Jr. Memorial Highway."

HB 253:

Introduced by Representatives Terrence Upchurch (District 20) and Adam Holmes (District 96) on August 10th.

It will be referred to a committee later this month.

The bill will enact section 5534.646 of the Revised Code to designate portions of United States Routes 42, 68, and 62 as the "Brigadier General Charles Young Memorial Historical Corridor."

HB 254:

Introduced by Representative Tracy M. Richardson (District 86) and Adam Holmes (District 96) on August 16th.

It will be referred to a committee later this month.

The bill amend sections 323.151, 323.152, 323.153, 4503.065, and 4503.066 of the Revised Code to expand and enhance the homestead property tax exemption for disabled veterans.

HR 258:

Introduced by Representative Nick Santucci (District 64) on August 16th.

It was adopted the same day.

The resolution congratulates American Legion DeWitt McConnell Post 235 on its Centennial and salute its members as outstanding citizens

SB 145:

Introduced on August 31st by Senator Tim Schaffer (District 20).

It will be referred to a committee later this month.

The bill will enact section 5534.761 of the Revised Code to designate a portion of Refugee Road in Fairfield County as the "Cpl. David A. Johnston Memorial Highway."

Details on every bill can be found on the Ohio Legislature website. You can also check the status of bills as they travel through committees and sessions, check to see how the voting went, and read the testimonies of witnesses.

To find a bill put the bill number (i.e. SB 712 or HB 943) into the search bar and go from there.

You will find the Ohio Legislature's website here:

www.legislature.ohio.gov

OUT IN THE DISTRICTS

REPRESENTATIVE GROSS IS LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AT THE NEXT TOWN HALL MEETING IN SEPTEMBER!



Future Town Hall Meetings

Where: Fairfield City Council Chambers - 5350 Pleasant Ave. Fairfield, OH 45014

When: Monday, 09/18/2023, from 5:00 - 6:00 PM

Abrams speaks at Thank A Vet Day

July 22, 2023

Harrison, OH ~Representative Cindy Abrams attended the celebration at VFW Post 7570 to help salute veterans during the post's third annual Thank A Vet Day. She offered remarks to the members and their guests as they honored and celebrated their Veterans.



Representatives participate in Hwy dedication

August 23, 2023

Montpelier, OH -A Portion of State Route 107 was named to remember and honor Veterans. On hand for the ceremonies was State Representative James M. Hoops. "This is something that is so important, especially in today's world to remember the veterans, their families, and what they did," Hoops said in his short speech. Also on hand for the ceremonies was US Representative Marcy Kaptur.



United States Navy Veteran, John Collver was recognized for his service with the dedication of an oak tree in front of the Cuyahoga Falls YMCA on July 25th. Representative Bill Roemer (District 31) and Senator Kristina D. Roegner (District 27) thanked Collver for his service. The 97 year old former sailor served as a gunners mate on the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Copahoe (CVE-12) in the South Pacific during World War II.



State Senator Al Landis (District 31) was on the stage at the "Legacy Gala—Saluting Those Who Served!" held at MAPS Air Museum in North Canton August 19th. He had the honor of announcing the Legacy of Honor award recipients.

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 and all info to:

oh.leg.report@gmail.com

IN OTHER STATES

New Jersey Says “Don’t Cheat Veterans”

There is a bill before Congress. It is the “Governing Unaccredited Representatives Defrauding VA Benefits Act.” It is called “GUARD VA Benefits Act”, and many simply call it the “Guard Act.” In the House of Representatives it is H.R. 1139 and in the Senate it is S. 740. The text is the same on both bills. They were introduced in February and March of this year and have been in committees ever since.

It is on the radar of all VSOs and a high priority for the American Legion and the VFW. The National Association of Attorneys General issued a letter on behalf of a bipartisan coalition of 44 attorneys general expressing support for the passage of the legislation. Ohio’s A.G., Dave Yost was among them.

The GUARD VA Benefits Act would if passed reinstate into the already existing law, criminal penalties for persons charging veterans unauthorized fees relating to claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

Not willing to wait for congress to act on this legislation, the law makers in New Jersey took the pro active approach and came up with their own piece of legislation to fight the ‘claim sharks’ and protect their veterans. It is S.3292.

Their legislation, signed into law by New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy August 25th, will establish standard requirements that must be followed if an individual is seeking compensation for providing assistance or advice to veterans and their families regarding veterans’ benefits.

“Our veterans put their lives on the line in service to our country and have more than earned the benefits for which they and their loved ones are eligible,” said Governor Murphy. “We must protect veterans and their families from unscrupulous individuals who would take advantage of them by overcharging for assistance with those benefits. This legislation will help ensure these bad actors either follow all applicable federal standards or face the consequences.”

“The VFW thanks the New Jersey Legislature for their bipartisan support of S.3292 which led to today’s action by the Governor on this law making it a violation of the consumer fraud act for persons to receive compensation for advising or assisting, or referring any individual to another person to advise or assist, with any veterans benefits mater, except as is permitted under federal law,” stated Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of New Jersey.

OUR OPINION

More Ways To Earn a Diploma Seal Is A Good Idea.

In addition to fulfilling Ohio’s graduation requirements for curriculum and competency, students also must show they are prepared for their next steps after high school. To demonstrate readiness, students must earn at least two seals, one of which must be a state-defined seal. State law created 12 diploma seals for students to demonstrate academic, technical and professional readiness for careers, college, the military or self-sustaining professions. Each seal allows students to demonstrate knowledge and skills essential for future success in their chosen post-high school paths.

A bill to amend section 3313.6114 of the Revised Code was introduced in the House at the start of last month. House Bill 250 seeks to revise the ways to earn the Military Enlistment diploma seal. The Revised Code now requires a student to do either of the following: (a) Providing evidence that the student has enlisted in a branch of the armed services of the United States as defined in section 5910.01 of the Revised Code; or (b) Participating in a junior reserve officer training program approved by the congress of the United States under title 10 of the United States Code.

HB 250 would add two more options. The student could earn the seal by: (c) Providing evidence that the student has accepted a scholarship to enter the reserve officer training corps; or (d) Providing evidence that the student has been appointed to a United States military service academy.

The Primary Sponsors of the bill are Representatives Jessica E. Miranda (District 28) and Tracy Richardson (District 86).

Ohio Legislative Report supports House Bill 250 as Veteran Friendly and good for Ohio.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Ohio Legislative Report welcomes letters to the editor.

- Letters are limited to 200 words.
- Letters with over 200 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 In The 135th Ohio General Assembly

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

- ◇ HB 18 Allow military license plate applicant present county veterans ID
- ◇ HB 33 Establishes operating appropriations for fiscal years 2024-2025
- ◇ HB53 Authorize refundable tax credits for hiring certain veterans
- ◇ HB 57 Index the homestead exemption to inflation
- ◇ HB 60 Increase amount of and expand the homestead exemption
- ◇ HB 69 Revise membership of county veterans service commissions
- ◇ HB 90 Authorize property tax exemption for disabled veterans, spouses
- ◇ HB 123 Designate Honor and Remember flag to honor fallen service members
- ◇ HB 126 Expand municipal income tax exemption for military pay
- ◇ HB 131 Designate Army SSgt. Charles V. Kettler Memorial Highway
- ◇ HB 132 Designate Army Sgt. Herbert C. Linville Memorial Highway
- ◇ HB 133 Designate Army Sgt. Ronnie Blair Memorial Highway
- ◇ HB 150 Prohibit rental discrimination based on lawful source of income
- ◇ HB 202 Designate Specialist Dennis Alan Combs Memorial Highway
- ◇ HB 231 Establish 9-8-8 suicide prevention, mental health telephone line
- ◇ HB 242 Establish the Armed Forces Reserve Component Scholarship Program and related funds
- ◇ HB 250 Revise the Military Enlistment diploma seal
- ◇ HB 252 Designate "SM1 Cornelius Anthony McCafferty, Jr. Memorial Highway."
- ◇ HB 253 Designate "Brigadier General Charles Young Memorial Historical Corridor."
- ◇ HB 254 Expand and enhance the homestead property tax exemption for disabled veterans
- ◇ HR 95 Urge Congress to extend GI Bill benefits
- ◇ HR 189 Honoring Thomas Mihalis Memorial Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1079 on its Centennial
- ◇ HR 221 Honoring Dan Shroyer as a 2023 National Veterans Golden Age Games Champion
- ◇ HR 222 Honoring Dr. John Eichelberger as a 2023 National Veterans Golden Age Games Champion
- ◇ HR 258 Honoring American Legion DeWitt McConnell Post 235 on its Centennial
- ◇ HCR 8 To urge the federal government to select Ohio for the permanent headquarters of the United States Space Command
- ◇ SB 12 Regards veteran-owned business enterprise certification program
- ◇ SB 14 Expand veteran eligibility to teach without license
- ◇ SB 15 Authorize Military License Plate Program permanent registration
- ◇ SB 43 Modify homestead exemption-surviving spouse of a disabled veteran
- ◇ SB 45 Designate Veterans Memorial Bridge in Trumbull County
- ◇ SB 63 Require plaintiff in asbestos claim to file specified disclosures
- ◇ SB 64 Expand Ohio National Guard Scholarship Program
- ◇ SB 110 Designate Sgt. Anthony Kress Vinnedge Memorial Highway
- ◇ SB 113 Regards failure to comply with Military Selective Service System
- ◇ SB 114 Designate Lance Corporal James F. Kimple Memorial Highway
- ◇ SR 171 Honoring Thomas Mihalis Memorial Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1079 as it commemorates its One Hundredth Anniversary

OHIO CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I, BILL OF RIGHTS

SECTION #4 TRIAL BY JURY

Effective: 1912

The right of trial by jury shall be inviolate, except that, in civil cases, laws may be passed to authorize the rendering of a verdict by the concurrence of not less than three-fourths of the jury.

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disabled veteran can qualify for an 'enhanced exemption' that exempts \$50,000 of the homes value. No income limit applies to the enhanced exemptions.

Now lets go over the five bills and see what each one does.

•House Bill 57: Introduced on February 15th by Representatives Thomas Hall (District 46) and Steve Demetriou (District 35), HB 57 would adjust for inflation the exemption by multiplying the current year's exemption amount by the percentage increase in the GDP deflator over the preceding year and adding that result to the current exemption amount. No adjustment would be made for any year the GDP deflator does not increase.



Representatives Hall (l.) and Demetriou at an August 16th press conference about HB 57

•HB 60: Introduced by Representative Daniel P. Troy (District 23) on February 21st, HB 60 increases the \$25,000 homestead exemption to up to \$40,000 of the true value of a home veteran 65 or older. The bill also indexes the amount of this homestead exemption in the same manner that HB 57 does based on the GDP deflator. It does not index the amount of the special \$50,000 enhanced exemptions for totally disabled veterans. Lastly, the bill raises the income eligibility requirement to \$40,000 or less beginning in tax year 2023, or 2024 for manufactured homes.

•HB 90: Introduced March 7th by Representative Thomas F. Patton (District 17), HB 90 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 and the bill's enhanced exemption does not require the disabled veteran to make below a certain income.

House Bill 57 passed on the house floor in May (89 to 0) and is currently in the Senate Ways and Means Committee. HB 60 and HB 90 are both in the House Ways and Means Committee.

The two newest homestead bills are SB 134 and HB 254 and because both were introduced during the summer break, they have not been referred to any committees yet.

•Senate Bill 134: Introduced July 18th by Frank Hoagland (District 30) will reduce property taxes for a disabled veteran who is totally disabled on \$50,000 of the true value of the property or if a disabled veteran has reached the age of 59 or served 20 or more years in the armed forces of the United States, including reserve components thereof, or in the national guard can qualify for a reduction in taxes equal to the percentage of the veteran's disability rating assigned by the VA. This bill would also require applications be accompanied by a letter verifying the veterans VA disability rating or number of years of service from either the VA or a County Veteran Service Officer. Current law requires the accompanying letter to come from the VA.

•House Bill 254: Introduced by Representatives Tracy M. Richardson (District 86) and Adam Holmes (District 97) on the 16th of August this bill would increase the current exemption on \$50,000 to the full value of the home for aqualifying 100% disabled veteran. It would also add an exemption on \$10,000 of the home value for a veteran with a 70% or more disability rating and exemption on \$5,000 of the home value for a veteran with a disability rating of 50% to 70%.

That is the abridged vention of each of the six bills. Veterans must keep in mind there are other qualifying requirements for the bills that pertains to all things veteran such as proof of honorable service. We gave you only the info that will change the current laws should any of these bills pass as introduced. O.L. Report encourages our readers to study each bill and talk to your representative or senator and let them know how you feel about the bills.

You can find information about every bill in the Ohio General Assembly on the websites listed on the front page of every issue.

**OHIO LEGISLATIVE REPORT
IS ON FACEBOOK**

Joins us and follow all the actions of the Ohio General Assembly.

Oct 10 Deadline for Voter Registration for November 7 General Election

November 7 General Election day