



January 6, 2021

Editor,

Veterans from across Ohio are extremely disappointed with out-going Senate President Larry Obhof! Despite initial assurances that he was supportive of efforts to modernize our non-profit charitable bingo activities, in the end he refused to bring Senate Bill 194 to a Senate floor vote in the closing days of the general assembly. As President of the Senate, he alone has the authority to bring a bill to the Senate floor for a vote, or not. His decision not to bring the bill to a floor vote is doubly painful for Veterans as we fought and died to preserve this basic Democratic right. The ramifications are very real: potential closing of posts/lodges and a downturn in charitable efforts and support for veteran heroes, their families and communities.

While this is extremely disappointing, we did see many positives. We're very thankful for the massively bipartisan votes in the House 90-2 on House Bill 282 and later 78-6 on SB 194. Veteran Service Organizations (VFW, American Legion, and AMVETS) want to extend our sincere appreciation to Representatives Jeff LaRe and Adam Holmes as sponsors of HB 282; Representative Rick Perales who introduced SB 194 on the floor of the House, Senator Michael Rulli who allowed amendments to SB 194, Representative Scott Wiggam and his Committee members for voting our bill out of Committee for a floor vote, Speaker of the House Bob Cupp for allowing a floor vote in the House, Members of the House and Senate Veterans Caucuses, Senators Frank Hoagland and Hearcel Craig whose staunch support of Veterans was crucial, Secretary of State Frank LaRose for supporting our attaching HB 282 language to his SB 194, and Attorney General Dave Yost and his Charitable Gaming Division who helped write Bill language along with their continuous advice and support to Veterans!

Given our overwhelming bipartisan support in the House, Veterans believed such overwhelming support also existed in the Senate. Unfortunately Senate President Obhof never gave the Senate an opportunity to vote!! It's important, now, to focus on what's ahead. Ohio's veterans have been through much, but like their time in the military, they see through every mission – including this one. On this vote we were flanked, but we will regroup and look forward to working with legislators in 2021 comprising the 134<sup>th</sup> General Assembly on finally getting this vitally important legislation across the finish line. We never gave up on defending America when we were called to duty, and we will not be giving up on supporting our Veterans, their families and our communities!

On behalf of Ohio's Veterans:

*Fred*

Fred Lavery  
State Commander  
Veterans of Foreign Wars  
Department of Ohio

*Roger*

Roger Friend  
Department Commander  
American Legion Department  
of Ohio

*Andy*

Andy McElrath  
Department Commander  
AMVETS Department of Ohio