



Ohio Legislative Service Commission

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Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

Bill: H.B. 125 of the 131st G.A.

Date: June 24, 2015

Status: As Introduced

Sponsor: Reps. Brenner and Retherford

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: No

Contents: Veterans Fee Waiver Program

State Fiscal Highlights

- The Department of Veterans Services, the Secretary of State, and close to 40 state occupational licensing and regulatory boards and commissions will all experience a workload increase related to the duties prescribed by the bill. These state agencies should be able to absorb the additional work with existing resources and not require additional staff or appropriated funds.
- The amount of fee revenue that may be foregone by certain state funds in any given year is likely to be no more than minimal.

Local Fiscal Highlights

- No direct fiscal effect on political subdivisions.

Detailed Fiscal Analysis

Background information

Amended Substitute House Bill 488, enacted by the 130th General Assembly, contained various provisions that track very closely with the provisions of the proposed Veterans Fee Waiver Program. Most notably, that bill:

- Requires the Director of Veterans Services, not later than December 31, 2014, to: (1) develop and maintain a website that provides links to websites of licensing agencies, (2) encourage state agencies to perform outreach efforts through which veterans and their dependents learn about available job and education benefits, (3) inform state agencies about changes in statutes or rules affecting veterans and their dependents, and (4) assist licensing agencies in adopting rules determining which military training and experience satisfies licensing requirements.
- Requires each licensing agency (as defined in R.C. 5903.01), not later than December 31, 2014, to adopt rules to: (1) establish and implement a process to obtain from each applicant documentation and additional information to determine if the applicant is a member or veteran of the Armed Forces, or the spouse or surviving spouse of a member or veteran, (2) record, track, and monitor these applications, and (3) prioritize or expedite certification and licensing for each such applicant.
- Requires the State Board of Pharmacy to waive the fees with the issuance and renewal of a license to practice pharmacy for veterans and active members of the Armed Forces.

The enactment of these provisions suggests that, to some degree, the work required for the Veterans Fee Waiver Program is already being performed. If so, then the program's requirements should be absorbed into any affected state agency's workload with no discernible effect on its annual operating costs.

Department of Veterans Services

The bill requires the Department of Veterans Services to establish and maintain the Veterans Fee Waiver Program. The program will allow veterans to have the fee waived when filing a business document with the Secretary of State or when applying for an initial license with a state licensing agency.

Under the bill, the Department is charged with providing verification of whether an individual is eligible to receive a fee waiver within 30 days of getting the request for verification. The Department's role in certifying a veteran's eligibility for the program may cause an initial workload increase, but the ongoing costs are likely to be absorbed utilizing existing resources. Based on current data, it is estimated that there are

approximately 877,894 veterans in Ohio. Data is not readily available to estimate the number of veterans that may be fee-waiver eligible.

The Department is also required to provide information on its website about the program. Since the Department updates its website internally, an individual within the agency will be able to provide this information on the Department's website at no cost.

Secretary of State

The bill requires the Secretary of State to waive fees associated with the filing of a document with the Secretary of State by an eligible veteran. The amount waived cannot exceed \$125. This may result in a loss of revenue collected by the Secretary of State, an amount not expected to exceed minimal in any given year.

To comply with the bill, the Secretary of State will prescribe a form to gather information on whether applicants have veterans' status. In addition, the Secretary of State will need to implement a process to verify veterans' status with the Department of Veterans Services. The cost to the Secretary of State to perform this duty is expected to be absorbed utilizing existing resources.

Occupational licensing and regulatory boards and commissions

Ohio's occupational licensing and regulatory boards and commissions generally collect fees from all persons, including veterans. Under the bill, these agencies are required to waive the initial fee for any individual whom the Department of Veterans Services verifies is eligible. There are close to 40 boards and commissions that may experience a loss of fee revenues (for a list of the affected boards and commissions, see Table 1, below). The amount of revenue loss to certain state funds annually is expected to be no more than minimal.

The bill also requires licensing agencies to provide the opportunity for an individual to claim eligibility to receive a fee waiver under the program on its license application. This option is to be available on a new form created by each agency. To manage the fee waiver program at each agency, additional administrative time will be needed to obtain eligibility verification from the Department of Veterans Services for each individual requesting the waiver. The amount of time and effort required to perform this work is not likely to result in any additional cost to the agencies.

Table 1. State Occupational Licensing and Regulatory Boards and Commissions	
Agency Name	Agency Name
Accountancy Board	Ohio Manufactured Homes Commission
Architects Board and the State Board of Landscape Architect Examiners	State Medical Board
Ohio Athletic Commission	Motor Vehicle Repair Board
Auctioneers Program (Department of Agriculture)	Motor Vehicle Dealers Licensing Board (Department of Public Safety)
Ohio State Barber Board	Motor Vehicles Salvage Dealers Licensing Board (Department of Public Safety)
Board of Building Standards (Department of Commerce)	Board of Nursing
Chemical Dependency Professionals Board	Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Athletic Trainers Board
State Chiropractic Board	Ohio Optical Dispensers Board
Ohio Construction Industry Licensing Board (Department of Commerce)	State Board of Optometry
State Board of Cosmetology	State Board of Orthotics, Prosthetics, and Pedorthics
Counselor, Social Worker, and Marriage and Family Therapist Board	State Board of Pharmacy
Ohio State Dental Board	Private Investigators and Security Guard Section (Department of Public Safety)
Board of Dietetics	State Board of Psychology
State Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors	Division of Real Estate and Professional Licensing (Department of Commerce)
Board of Emergency Medical, Fire, and Transportation Services (Department of Public Safety)	Respiratory Care Board
State Board of Registration for Professional Engineers and Surveyors	State Board of Sanitation Registration
Board of Executives of Long-Term Services and Supports (Department of Aging)	Division of Securities (Department of Commerce)
Division of Financial Institutions (Department of Commerce)	Board of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology
Hearing Aid Dealers and Fitters Licensing Board (Department of Health)	Veterinary Medical Licensing Board
Division of Industrial Compliance (Department of Commerce)	