

Testimony before the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs and the Military
Given by Amy Carter, Legislative Assistant, Indiana Institute for Working Families
January 31, 2017

Good morning Chairman and committee members. Thank you Chairman Delph for hearing this important bill and Senator Hershman for authoring it. My name is Amy Carter and I'm representing the Indiana Institute for Working Families, whose mission is to conduct research and promote data-driven public policy so that every Hoosier and their family has the chance to be economically self-sufficient. I also come to speak as a military spouse. My husband has been a flight engineer in the Navy for 7 years.

The Institute and I am pleased to speak in support of SB 307 because while veterans may not be as likely to be among the 1 in 3 Hoosiers who don't earn enough to meet basic needs, they do face several specific barriers to self-sufficiency and policies like these that target those barriers are so welcome and often necessary for veterans and working families to thrive.

I am proud of my husband's work and appreciate all I have learned from our military life, but I can tell you that as he prepares to separate from the service this summer, he is finding it difficult to translate his skills into traits employers want. It has brought him no small amount of stress. This bill helps address the fact that many veterans, like my husband, come home from the service with skills that can be valuable in the workforce, but sometimes without the credit or credentials that transfer to what employers are looking for.

This can also be the case for veteran's spouses who have gained experience, sometimes for years or decades, but don't have a transcript or resume to reflect that knowledge. My own resume shows that I have been unemployed or underemployed during the last 5 years in spite of having a master's degree. It is not easy to develop a career on the move or in a new city where you have no connections and the effects of a, let's say lackluster, resume last long after military service is over. The preference offered in this bill may be all it takes for the spouse of a veteran to get back onto a career path after their own form of military service.

SB 307 will help veterans and their spouses enter training programs that can capitalize on the unique military life experiences they have and award credit for prior learning as well as programs to connect veterans and spouses to in-demand middle-skill credentials. We want veterans and their spouses to enter the workforce, bringing with them the leadership skills and adaptability they have picked up on their journeys.

This bill will also help boost educational attainment rates for Hoosier veterans, which tend to lag the non-veteran population as 81.6% of the veteran population has less than a bachelor's degree (including 46.4% with no more than a high-school diploma, and another 35.3% with an associates or some college

credit but no degree) compared to 74.5% of Indiana’s non-veteran population. My husband is one of those veterans. He has one year of college and a lot of experience, but no degree. We want veterans to finish their degrees and credentials as it helps them weave back into the fabric of the civilian workforce! Each of the veterans and spouses who are able to utilize this bill will help fill the estimated 550,000 middle-skill job openings in Indiana this decade.

Thank you for allowing me to speak and support this bill, both professionally and personally. I’d be happy to answer any questions.

Total:	4,361,088			
Veteran:	384,186		Nonveteran:	3,976,902
Less than high school graduate	30,355	7.9%	483,687	12.2%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	147,604	38.4%	1,348,692	33.9%
Some college or associate's degree	135,490	35.3%	1,127,786	28.4%
Bachelor's degree or higher	70,737	18.4%	1,016,737	25.6%