



Senator Shannon Jones
7th Ohio Senate District

GUEST COLUMN

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PAYING TRIBUTE TO OHIO'S VETERANS ON MEMORIAL DAY

This weekend, families and communities across Ohio will gather to pay tribute to the millions of men and women who have answered the call of duty in defense of our country. Memorial Day was first observed in the 1860s, when flowers were placed on the graves of Civil War soldiers. Over the years, this practice was expanded to honor veterans of all wars.

Ohio's military personnel, whether serving overseas or as part of the National Guard, play an important role in keeping our state and nation safe. Their service comes with great sacrifice however, both for them and their loved ones. Members of the Ohio Legislature have long recognized the valuable contributions of our veterans and have passed numerous pieces of legislation in recent years that seek to improve their lives and that of their families while honoring their service.

These include bills exempting military retirement pay from Ohio's personal income tax and the creation of several specialty license plates for both military members and those who wish to show their support for our troops. In addition, we passed legislation last year modifying the state's next-of-kin laws to help ensure that all veterans receive an honorable burial. Senate Bill 147 allows the U.S Secretary of Veterans Affairs to inspect unidentified remains in funeral homes and hospitals and take disposition of the body in cases where a set of remains is successfully identified as a veteran.

Memorial Day is also an opportunity to remind veterans to make sure that they are receiving all the benefits they are eligible for due to their time in the armed forces. Military veterans are eligible for a host of possible benefits, including help paying for higher education or a new home or help getting treatment for a medical condition. Veterans can call 1-877-OHIO-VET to get connected to their local county Veterans Service Office and find out the programs for which they are eligible.

Our nation's veterans have made tremendous sacrifices over the years as they work to protect us and our freedoms. Although we will never be able to fully repay them for their service, we can show our appreciation through measures such as those listed above. As we celebrate Memorial Day this year, I hope you will take a moment to remember and honor the hard work and valor of all the veterans in our state.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact my office if you have questions or concerns about any state-related matter. You can reach my office by phone at (614) 466-9737, by e-mail at SD07@senate.state.oh.us or by writing State Senator Shannon Jones, Ohio Statehouse, 1 Capitol Square, Columbus, OH 43215. I look forward to hearing from you.