

May 18, 2021

The Honorable Matt Cherry
President
Toledo City Council
One Government Center, 21st Floor
Toledo, Ohio 43604

Dear Council President Cherry:

I am writing in support of the ordinance introduced by Councilwoman Katie Moline to establish the Veteran Friendly Business Enterprise Program in the City of Toledo.

This program would help to recognize the many contributions of our veteran businesses in Toledo. The most recent U.S. Census data available indicates that there are more than 13,000 veterans residing in the City of Toledo and more than 1,400 veteran-owned businesses located in the City. More broadly, it is estimated that there are more than 35,000 veterans living in the region and nearly half of them contribute to the region's workforce. More than 4,000 veteran-owned businesses in the region provide more than 15,000 jobs, more than \$400 million in annual payroll, and produce nearly \$2 billion in annual sales and receipts.

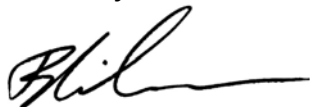
By establishing the Veteran Friendly Business Enterprise Program, Toledo will be a leader in Ohio by formally recognizing their status. In addition to the State of Ohio program, Toledo would be one of the first cities in the state to create such a program.

It is fitting that this legislation is being introduced during the month of May as it is Military Appreciation Month. The Toledo Region is home to nearly one dozen military units, representing every branch of the military including guard and reserve units of the Navy, Air Force, Army, and Marine Corps, as well as the Coast Guard and Department of Veterans Affairs. These units provide more than 2,500 jobs and contribute nearly \$250 million annually to our local economy. Many of these service members also are employed by companies in the region, making their contributions even greater.

The Chamber recently launched the Minority, Women and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Directory. The purpose of the directory is to help promote to the community businesses that are owned by minorities, women, and veterans. We know that there is an increased desire to support these businesses and this is one way that we are helping to assist them.

This program would complement and not compete with the existing Minority Business Enterprise and Women Business Enterprise programs. I would strongly encourage you to pass this ordinance in support of the many veterans who are now serving our community with their business.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Brian Dicken, IOM
Vice President, Advocacy & Strategic Initiatives

cc: Members, Toledo City Council
Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz