



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

By Josh Mandel | Toledo Blade

My duties as Ohio treasurer include managing, protecting, and investing Ohioans' hard-earned dollars. My office also provides financial literacy education in northwest Ohio and across the state, focused on helping students and veterans make smart choices about money.

As a U.S. Marine veteran who served in Iraq and trained deploying Marines at the Perrysburg Reserve Unit, I understand the importance of a strong support system when veterans return home. Unfortunately, many servicemen and women are unaware of the programs and resources that can help ease their transition to civilian life.

A recent study by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs revealed that service members are more likely than civilians to have significant credit card debt. More than 30 percent of veterans struggle with money management.

The study showed that active-duty service members are less likely than civilians to get the opportunity to learn the skills they need to manage money and achieve financial independence. It concluded that more than 20 percent of veterans have spent beyond their credit limits, nearly 17 percent have had contact with collection agencies, and about 14 percent have written a bad check.

Such statistics show how financial struggles adversely affect service members, veterans, and their families. They have made sacrifices to keep us safe and secure. My office and our partners are working to help them in return.

Today, my office will partner with Toledo Mayor D. Michael Collins and the University of Toledo's Military Service Center to present a workshop on smart money choices for veterans. This free workshop, at 2 p.m. in Rocket Hall, is an opportunity for veterans, active-duty members, and their families to hear from financial planning experts and learn about local veterans' resources that are available to them.

I'm proud to work with Toledo area veterans' organizations, university groups, and leaders such as Mayor Collins to promote financial literacy and provide relevant resources. As a Marine Corps veteran, Mr. Collins should be applauded for his willingness to share his experiences along with those of other presenters from across the state.

Mayor Collins and I have a shared passion for ensuring that Ohio veterans get the resources they need and deserve when they return home. We recognize that common-sense coordination is critical to furtherin the goal of increasing financial literacy among Ohio veterans.

My office is working hard to develop strong partnerships and offer similar workshops to help veterans in all corners of Ohio. We welcome the help of local organizations and individuals who share our dedication to spreading the message and achieving this goal. UT's Military Service Center has been a leader in supporting our service members, veterans, and their families.

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The skills that veterans and their families learn in workshops today will lead to better decision-making around the kitchen table tomorrow. Renewing our focus on financial literacy will help families in our state continue to prosper, and improve Ohio's outlook.

Josh Mandel is Ohio treasurer.

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