



Ohio Legislative Report

Volume One Bravo; Number Six

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'Ohio Legislative Report'

Ohio Legislative Report

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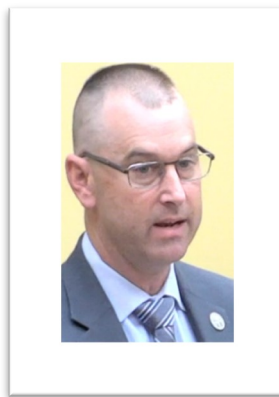
Editor: David K. Root

Statehouse Happenings

With the summer break just a month away the mad dash to get some bills passed continued. Here is the recap of the May hearings, week by week.

May 1-3

The House Homeland Security Committee got the month underway on

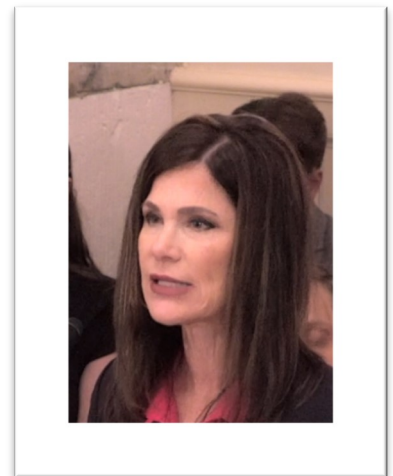


Rep. Miller gives testimony for HB 483

Wednesday morning with the first hearing for HB 483. Representative **Keven D. Miller** (district 69) presented his sponsor testimony. He talked about the mental health crisis that is causing a high suicide rate among first responders and veterans of the armed forces.

HB 483 would create a "Save a Warrior" license plate to spread awareness of the work being done by Save a Warrior Foundation to improve mental

health and reduce the suicide rate, and it would also provide Save a Warrior with additional funding for outreach and programing. Miller had introduced the bill on the 8th of the previous month.



Rep. King gives testimony for HB 493 & HB 494

On Tuesday, the House Transportation Committee was busy hearing sponsor testimony on four bills that would create three memorial highways and one memorial bridge. Representative **Angela N. King** (District 84) gave her sponsor testimony first on HB 493 and then on Hb 494. HB 493 would designate a portion of State Route 185 in Darke County the "Lance Corporal Gerald Subler Memorial Highway" and HB 494 would designate a bridge spanning Indian Creek in Darke County as the "SSgt Gene F. Morrison Memorial Bridge." Next on the agenda was Representative **Roy Klopfenstein** (District 82) testifying for his bill, HB 431 that would designate a portion of U.S. Route 127 in Paulding County as the



Rep. Klopfenstein offers testimony for HB 431

See Happenings on Page Six...

BILLS & RESOLUTIONS INTRODUCED IN MAY

SB 257:

Introduced by Senators **Brian M. Chavez** (District 30) and **Terry Johnson** (District 24) on May 1st. It was referred to the Senate Community Revitalization Committee.

The bill would amend section 135.71 of the Revised Code to make active duty members of the uniformed services eligible to participate in the homeownership savings linked deposit program.

HB 517:

Introduced by Representatives **Nick Santucci** (District 64) and **Brian E. Lampton** (District 70) on May 6th. It was referred to the House Economic and Workforce Development Committee.

The bill would amend section 135.71 of the Revised Code to make active duty members of the uniformed services eligible to participate in the homeownership savings linked deposit program.

SB 260:

Introduced by Senator **Kent Smith** (District 21) on May 7th. It was referred to the Senate Transportation Committee.

This bill would enact section 5534.162 of the Revised Code to designate a portion of State Route 283 in Cuyahoga County as the "SPC Connor Wilson-Reichert" Memorial Highway.

HB 523:

Introduced by Representatives **Lauren McNally** (District 59) and **Adam Holmes** (District 97) on May 9th. The bill was referred to the House Commerce and Labor Committee.

The bill would enact section 4113.13 of the Revised Code regarding the creation and display of a poster containing information on benefits and services for veterans.

HB 611:

Introduced by Representative **Haraz N. Ghanbari** (District 75) on May 28th. The bill has not been referred to a committee yet.

The bill would enact section 5534.131 of the Revised Code to designate a portion of State Route 199 in Wood County as the "U.S. Army Private First Class Jerry Bockbrader Memorial Highway."

SB 281:

Introduced by Senators **Hearcel F. Craig** (District 15) and **Terry Johnson** (District 14) on May 29th. The bill has not been referred to a committee yet.

The bill would enact section 4113.13 of the Revised Code regarding the creation and display of a poster containing information on benefits and services for veterans.

A bill is a document by which a member of the General Assembly proposes to enact a new law or amend or repeal an existing law. The term "bill" is used to refer to the document from the time it is drafted and delivered to the member until it is considered and approved by both the House and the Senate. After passing both houses, a bill becomes an "act" and must be presented to the Governor for acceptance or rejection. If accepted, or if the Governor does not take any action for ten days, it becomes a "law."

You can watch live every session of both chambers, all the committee hearings, Governor DeWine's press conferences, and much more on the Ohio Channel.

They are also archived for viewing at a later date.

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They Are Good Bills But They Have No Strength

Two bills -one in the House and one in the Senate. The bills are identical. We call them companion bills.

On May 9th Representatives **Lauren McNally** (District 59) and **Adam Holmes** (District 97) introduced House Bill 523. On the 29th Senators **Hearcel F. Craig** (District 15) and **Terry Johnson** (District 14) introduced Senate Bill 281. Both bills would enact section 4113.13 of the Revised Code regarding the creation and display of a poster containing information on benefits and services for veterans.

The bills have two parts –

(A) The director of commerce, in consultation with the director of veterans services, shall create a veterans' benefits and services poster and (B) An employer in Ohio may display a copy of the poster on the their premises in a conspicuous place (the posters are free).

Part (A) has nine topics that require information.

- (1) Programs provided by the department of veterans services, including the department's contact and web site information;
- (2) The United States department of veterans affairs veterans crisis line, including contact information for the crisis line;
- (3) Substance abuse and mental health treatment programs available to veterans;
- (4) Educational, workforce, and training resources

available to veterans;

(5) Tax benefits and exemptions available to veterans;

(6) The availability of an armed forces designation on an Ohio driver's license or identification card;

(7) Eligibility for unemployment benefits under Chapter 4141. of the Revised Code and federal unemployment compensation law;

(8) Legal services available to veterans;

(9) The availability of any other benefit or service relevant to veterans that the directors determine should be included on the poster.

This poster we believe will have much needed information that Ohio veterans aren't always aware of and that is a good thing. All too often a veteran will

find themselves in a situation and not know where to turn. This poster could be a life saver for many veterans.

OLR thinks the poster will be an effective tool to get information to veterans, but we have to ask, "Will veterans ever see the poster?" One little three letter word in the bills language could render the whole thing ineffective and the program a failure.

Part (A) is full of requirements for creating the posters. If passed the new section of the Ohio Revised Code will require by law that the directors create the poster and include all the listed information. They will have to do it.

But that is where the requirements end. Part (B) does not require anyone to ask for the poster and display it. The bill states "An employer employing employees in this state may display a copy of the poster created under division (A) ..." An employer must ask for the poster and there is no requirement to do so or to display it. We wonder just how many employers will request and display the poster. We also wonder if they will even know about the posters as there is nothing in the bills requiring the directors to promote the posters in any way.

Informational posters for veterans is a good idea but only if the posters do not get printed and sit on a shelf in Columbus collection dust. OLR supports the bill but we think there needs to be some work done to it before it gets to the governor's desk.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Ohio Legislative Report welcomes letters to the editor.

- Letters are limited to 200 words.
- Letters with over 200 words may be edited.
- Letters will be subject to editing for accuracy, clarity, length, and taste.
- Letters must include writer's name, address, and phone number for the purpose of verification.

EMAIL LETTERS TO: oh.leg.report@gmail.com

Legislation In The 135th Ohio General Assembly

Pertaining to Ohio Veterans, Active Duty, Reserve & National Guard, and Their Families

- HB 2 Direct state funds for economic growth and community development
- HB 18 Allow military license plate applicant present county veterans ID
- HB 33 Establishes operating appropriations for fiscal years 2024-2025
- HB 53 Authorize refundable tax credits for hiring certain veterans
- HB 57 Index the homestead exemption to inflation
- HB 60 Increase amount of and expand the homestead exemption
- HB 69 Revise membership of county veterans service commissions
- HB 90 Authorize property tax exemption for disabled veterans, spouses
- HB 123 Designate Honor and Remember flag to honor fallen service members
- HB 126 Expand municipal income tax exemption for military pay
- HB 131 Designate Army SSgt. Charles V. Kettler Memorial Highway
- HB 132 Designate Army Sgt. Herbert C. Linville Memorial Highway
- HB 133 Designate Army Sgt. Ronnie Blair Memorial Highway
- HB 150 Prohibit rental discrimination based on lawful source of income
- HB 202 Designate Specialist Dennis Alan Combs Memorial Highway
- HB 212 Enact the Ohio Property Protection Act
- HB 231 Establish 9-8-8 suicide prevention, mental health telephone line
- HB 232 Create Historical and Patriotic Education license plate
- HB 242 Establish the Armed Forces Reserve Component Scholarship Program and related funds
- HB 250 Revise the Military Enlistment diploma seal
- HB 252 Designate SM1 Cornelius Anthony McCafferty, Jr. Memorial Highway
- HB 253 Designate Brigadier General Charles Young Memorial Historical Corridor
- HB 254 Expand and enhance the homestead property tax exemption for disabled veterans
- HB 269 Designate Sgt Bradley J. Harper USMC Memorial Highway
- HB 286 Designate Vienna Township Veterans Bridge
- HB 294 Designate Delaware County Veteran's Memorial Highway
- HB 299 Designate Specialist Five Frederick Wayne Taylor Memorial Highway
- HB 310 Regards STRS member purchase of military service credit
- HB 317 Designate Sgt. Cory M. Endlich Corridor
- HB 335 Designate Ottawa County Veterans Memorial Highway
- HB 350 Designate Lance Corporal Austin B. Schwenk Memorial Highway
- HB 355 Designate Licking County Veterans Memorial Highway
- HB 365 Designate multiple memorial highways
- HB 378 Permit homestead exemption-surviving spouses of service members
- HB 409 Create the Ohio Cold War Victory Medal
- HB 423 Create "Blue Star Banner" license plate
- HB 431 Designate Staff Sgt. Zachary Wobler Memorial Highway
- HB 447 Regards property tax exemptions, restrictions and land value
- HB 453 Designate Staff Sergeant George P. Mizik (USMC) Memorial Highway
- HB 458 To designate "Gold and Blue Star Family Memorial Bridge" and "POW/MIA Memorial Viaduct."
- HB 483 Create "Save a Warrior" license plate
- HB 487 Designate TSgt. Grover Lee Swearingen Memorial Highway
- HB 493 Designate Lance Corporal Gerald Subler Memorial Highway
- HB 494 Designate SSgt Gene F. Morrison Memorial Bridge
- HB 510 Designate Army Lt. Col. Robert R. Melnick Memorial Highway

More Legislation on the NEXT PAGE...

- HB 517 Allow military to participate in homeownership savings program
 HB 523 Regards info poster on benefits and services for veterans
 HB 611 Designate U.S. Army Private First Class Jerry Bockbrader Mem Hwy
- HR 95 Urge Congress to extend GI Bill benefits
 HR 189 Honoring Thomas Mihalís Memorial Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1079 on its Centennial
 HR 221 Honoring Dan Shroyer as a 2023 National Veterans Golden Age Games Champion
 HR 222 Honoring Dr. John Eichelberger as a 2023 National Veterans Golden Age Games Champion
 HR 258 Honoring American Legion DeWitt McConnell Post 235 on its Centennial
 HR 302 Honoring Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1090 on its Centennial
 HR 316 Honoring Jay Wilson American Legion Post 112 on its Centennial
 HR 431 Observing April 2024 as the Month of the Military Child in Ohio
 HR 434 Honoring American Legion Toledo Post 335 on its Centennial
- HCR 8 To urge the federal government to select Ohio for the permanent headquarters of the U.S. Space Command
 HCR 9 Adopt Restoration of America's Readiness (ROAR) Resolution
- SB 12 Regards veteran-owned business enterprise certification program
 SB 14 Expand veteran eligibility to teach without license
 SB 15 Authorize Military License Plate Program permanent registration
 SB 43 Modify homestead exemption-surviving spouse of a disabled veteran
 SB 45 Designate Veterans Memorial Bridge in Trumbull County
 SB 63 Require plaintiff in asbestos claim to file specified disclosures
 SB 64 Expand Ohio National Guard Scholarship Program
 SB 110 Designate Sgt. Anthony Kress Vinnedge Memorial Highway
 SB 113 Regards failure to comply with Military Selective Service System
 SB 114 Designate Lance Corporal James F. Kimple Memorial Highway
 SB 134 Modifies homestead property tax exemption for disabled veterans
 SB 140 Designate Sgt. Todd M. Bates Memorial Highway
 SB 141 Designate American Gold Star Mothers, Inc. Memorial Highway
 SB 145 Designate Cpl. David A. Johnston Memorial Highway
 SB 152 Designate Cpl. Jack O. McClure Memorial Highway
 SB 154 Include Space Force in armed forces, armed and uniformed service
 SB 167 Designate Marine Corporal Tim W. Russell Highway
 SB 169 Designate Cortland Veterans Memorial Bridge
 SB 183 Designate Lance Corporal James Patrick Rizzo Memorial Highway
 SB 191 Designate PFC Richard 'Rick' Wesley McFarland Memorial Highway
 SB 208 To require a military exception in an open enrollment policy
 SB 225 To designate September 22 as Veterans Suicide Awareness and Prevention Day
 SB 226 Enact the Ohio Property Protection Act
 SB 257 Allow military to participate in homeownership savings program
 SB 260 Designate SPC Connor Wilson-Reichert Memorial Highway
 SB 281 Regards info poster on benefits and services for veterans
- SR 171 Honoring Thomas Mihalís Memorial VFW Post 1079 as it commemorates its One Hundredth Anniversary
 SR 262 In memory of Senior Airman Brian "Kody" Johnson
 SR 315 Recognizing the Month of the Military Child in Ohio, April 2024
- SCR 8 Urge federal govt reduce processing time- veteran disability claim
 SCR 9 Urge Congress support military, veteran mental health treatment

Happenings, from Page One

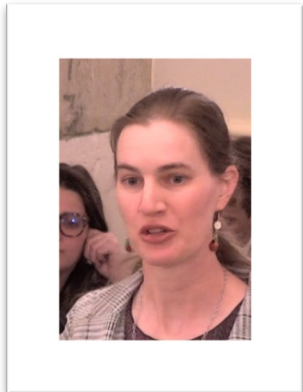
"Staff Sgt. Zachary Wobler Memorial Highway."

Testimony for HB 383 was then given by Representative **Sarah Fowler Arthur** (District 99). HB 383 would designate a portion of U.S. Route 20 in Ashtabula County as the "Corporal John E. Ruch Memorial Highway." Following each testimony a vote was taken and all four bills were favorably passed out of committee with a 12 to 0 vote.

The House Ways and Means Committee meet in the afternoon and on the agenda was HB 378 but there were no witnesses. HB 378 would authorize a full homestead exemption for surviving spouses of members of the uniformed services killed in the line of duty and that exemption would continue until the spouse dies. Committee Chair **Bill Roemer** (District 31) told the committee members that the bill sponsors were working on an amendment and would be introducing it in a future committee hearing. It was introduced in January by Representatives **Brian E. Lorenz** (District 60) and **Nick Santucci** (District 64).

At the same time that afternoon the Senate Education Committee was meeting to hear testimony on SB 208. Senator **Kristina D. Roegner** (District 27) introduced the bill just prior to the winter break. The bill would require a city, exempted village, or local school district to include in its open enrollment policy an exception for military children. Although there was no testimony, an amendment was agreed to by the committee. It was a technical amendment that would bring the language in line with that of HB 33 which was passed last year.

The next day the Senate Transportation Committee met in the morning to hear sponsor testimony on House Bills 253 and 202. Both bills passed in the house 88 to 0 and had been sitting in committee since December 13th. HB 253 would designate portions of United States Routes 42, 68, and 62 as the "Brigadier General Charles Young Memorial



Rep. Fowler Arthur testifies on HB 383



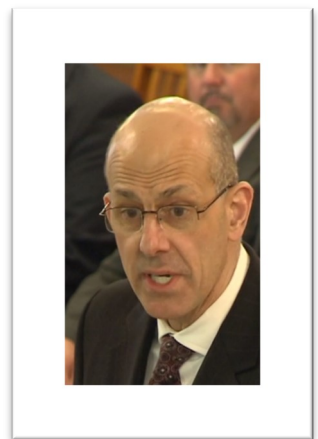
Rep. Holmes gave testimony on HB 253

Historical Corridor." Representative **Terrence Upchurch** (District 20) informed the committee in written testimony the significance of highways chosen and how it ties to Young's African American history, and extensive military presence and background. Representative **Adam Holmes** (District 92) listed highlights of General Young's life beginning with his birth in 1864 until his burial at Arlington National Cemetery in 1923.

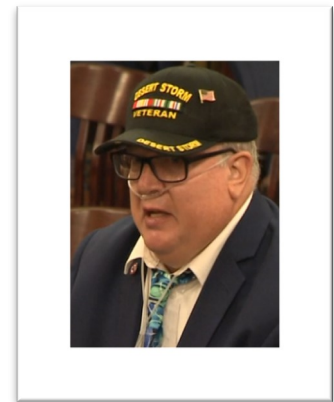
HB 202 would designate a portion of United States Route 62 in Canton as the "Specialist Dennis Alan Combs Memorial Highway." Representative **Jim Thomas** (District 49) testified that Combs left behind a wife and a two year old son when at the age of 23 he was killed in the line of duty on June 16, 1967 while serving in the US Army with the 128th Medical Detachment, 1st Log Command.

Later in the day, in the Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee had SB 225 and SB 226 were on the agenda. Senate Bill 225 was introduced by Senate **Kristina D. Roegner** (District 27) in February. It would amend the Ohio Revised Code to designate September 22 as Veterans Suicide Awareness and Prevention Day in Ohio. Testimony was heard from Tim Hauser of Veterans Assurance Network for the second time. He stated that the special day would help educate, veterans, their families, and the public about mental health and help eradicate the current stigma surrounding mental health. Following his testimony the committee favorably passed SB 225 out of committee. Two weeks later the bill was passed by the full Senate 31 to 0 and was sent to the House.

Senate Bill 226, introduced in February by Senator **Terry Johnson** (District 14) would extend the law that prohibits certain governments, businesses, and individuals from acquiring agricultural land to



Rep. Thomas testifies on HB 253



Tim Hauser testifies on HB 225

Continued on next Page...

certain other property. It will be known as the Ohio Property Protection Act. This was the third hearing for SB 226 and there was no opponent testimony.

May 13-17

The House Ways and Means Committee met on Tuesday to hear testimony on House Bill 378. For the second time there were no witnesses to testify and again Chair **Bill Roemer** (District 31) stated that the bill sponsors were working on amendments to the bill and would be presenting them at a later hearing.

May 20-24

There were plenty of hearings this week. Tuesday started out with the House Transportation Committee meeting to hear testimony on House Bill 453. Introduced by Representative **Don Jones** (District 95) on March 20th, HB 453 would designate a portion of I-77 in Noble County as the "Staff Sergeant George P. Mizik (USMC) Memorial Highway." Representative Jones testified that SSgt. Mizik served during WWII including in the battle of Iwo Jima where he was awarded the Purple Heart. Following the war, Mizik served his community, a member of numerous veterans organization, and active in his church. He passed away in 2005 at the age of 84. With a vote of



Rep. Jones testifies on HB 453

Reflections

"I am only one; but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; I will not refuse to do the something I can do."

- Helen Keller, 1950

10 to 0, HB 453 was favorably passed out of committee.

There were no witnesses for the 3rd hearing for House Bill 212 in the House Civil Justice Committee. There were however two amendments brought to the committee by the bill sponsors, Representatives **Angela N. King** (District 84) and **Roy Klopfenstein** (District 82) that would add safeguards to prevent the wrong people from being targeted and they were agreed to. The bill would prohibit foreign adversaries and certain businesses from owning real property in Ohio and would name this act the Ohio Property Protection Act.

Senate Bill 257 had its first hearing before the Senate Community Revitalization Committee. Sponsor testimony was heard from Senators **Brian M. Chavez** (District 30) and **Terry Johnson** (District 14). SB 257 would make active duty members of the uniformed services eligible to participate in the homeownership savings linked deposit program. According to the Senators

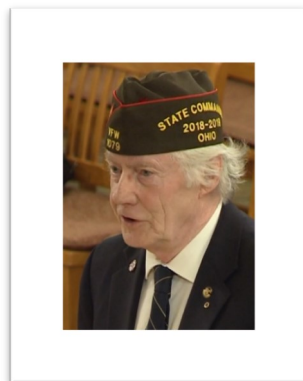


Sen. Johnson (l.) and Sen. Chavez (r.) give sponsor testimony for SB 257

testimony, the "legislation will offer a more accessible opportunity for active-duty military members to become residents of Ohio if they wish to do so. Senate Bill 257 will ease the home buying process so that military personnel and their families can flourish through this successful program."

On the agenda in the Senate Education Committee was Senator Roegner's bill SB 208 for its fifth hearing. There were no witnesses and with a 6 to 0 vote it was favorably passed out of committee. It later passed on the senate floor with a 31 to 0 vote.

The next day Senate Bill 63 was scheduled for its seventh hearing in the Senate Insurance Committee. Opponent testimony was heard from David K. Root of Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Ohio and there was written testimony

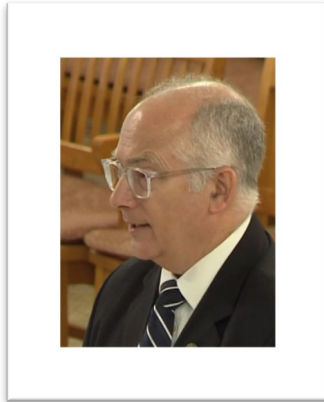


David K. Root gives testimony for SB 63

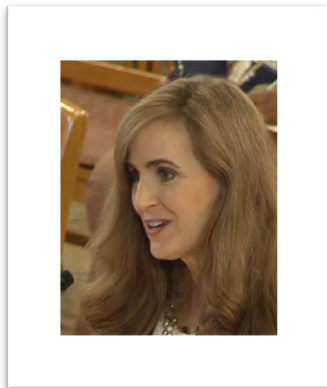
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presented by Shawn M. Acton of the Ohio Association for Justice. Both had testified previously. SB 63, Introduced in February of 2023 by Senator **George F. Lang** (District 4) would require a plaintiff in a tort action alleging an asbestos claim to file specified disclosures. Following testimony Senator Lang moved to amend his bill with three points that he felt would improve the bill. The committee passed the amendment but the amended bill still faced some opposition. It passed favorably out of committee with a vote of 7 to 5. In the afternoon the bill passed on the senate floor with a vote of 21 to 10.

In the Senate Transportation Committee five bill were on the agenda. Senate Bill 260 had sponsor testimony from Senator **Kent Smith** (District 21). The bill would designate a portion of State Route 283 in Cuyahoga County as the "SPC Connor Wilson-Reichert" Memorial Highway. Senate Bill 167 sponsored by Senators **Theresa Gavarone** (District 2) and **Nathan H. Manning** (District 13) would designate a portion of State Route 60 in Erie County as the "Marine Corporal Tim W. Russell Highway." Senator Gavarone was the witness. Senate Bill 141, sponsored by Senator **Vernon Sykes** (District 21) would designate a portion of I-77 in Akron as the "American Gold Star Mothers, Inc. Memorial Highway." It was the third hearing for his bill and there were no witnesses. There were also no witnesses for SB 183. It was the second hearing for the



Sen. Smith gives testimony for SB 260



Sen. Gavarone testifies on SB 167

bill. As amended it would designate a portion of I-90 in Cuyahoga County as the "Lance Corporal Jimmy Rizzo Memorial Highway." The bill is sponsored by Senator **Nickie J. Antonio** (District 23). Senate Bill 114 sponsored by Senator **Tim Schaffer** (District 21) had a second hearing and the committee was presented with written testimony from the family of LCPL James F. Kimple. The bill as amended would designate a portion of United States Route 33 in Fairfield County as the "Lance Corporal James F. Kimple Memorial Highway."

Senate Bills 141, 183, and 114 were all passed unanimously out of committee and then all passed 31-0 on the senate floor the same day.

In the Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee, SB 226 was scheduled for it's fourth hearing. There was written testimony submitted by Scott Williams of Ohio Realtors as an interested party but no action was taken by the committee.

May 27-31

The final week of the month had the House Government Oversight Committee holding hearings for House Bill 2 on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, however none of the testimony directly involved Ohio veterans or our active duty military.

House Bill 2 would create local jail facility funding programs and make certain capital appropriations for the biennium ending June 30, 2026. Part of the appropriations in the bill are for one time community projects and it lists the various projects and the amount designated for each project. Of the \$350 million in the One Time Strategic Community Investments Fund, about \$2 million would be used for projects throughout the state that pertain to veterans.

Look for the month of June to be another busy month of hearings as the general assemble prepares for their summer break.

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Ohio Legislative Report

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