

Chairwoman Anielski, Vice Chair Hambley, Ranking Member Holmes, and members of the House State and Local Government Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present bill House Bill 359. My name is Brandon Tolle. I am a sophomore at Columbia High School, in Lorain County. I am also a part of Boy Scout Troop 176 and a Life Scout pursuing the rank of Eagle. I have earned many merit badges through Boy Scouts, but public speaking is not one of them.

The bill I am giving testimony for today is important, not only to me but for the State of Ohio as well. This bill is important because it gives ceremonial guidelines for retiring our state flag. Through this bill, the Ohio State flag will be able to be properly and officially retired. This bill will give Ohio something that many other states already have, and it allows the average person to respectfully retire the flag that represents not only them, but the great state we live in. A bill like this allows us to pay our respects to a tattered flag that has represented our state, and our ideals. The Ohio flag may be different from any other flag in the United States but, I feel it still deserves to be respected like any other flag out there.

Over the past several years, the lack of a way to retire the State flag was shown to me in subtle ways. The first of which was at my home town VFW. I was participating in a flag retirement ceremony for the US flag and our State flag, after the speech and separation of the parts of the flag the US flag was placed into the fire. When it came to our State flag, a few words were said before the flag was dropped into the fire. A couple of years later I attended a small informative program for flags, during this time we learned that the official way to fold our own state flag had been an Eagle Project from 2005. After the class was over I made it a point to ask whether or not there was a way to retire the Ohio flag. I was simply told that there were several ways, but none were official. After that moment I knew what I could accomplish, not only for

myself but, for the state as well. That brings us to today, I have pursued my idea to this point in time. I appreciate your attention to my testimony today. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have at this time. Thank you, Mrs. Chairwoman