

STATE REP. JACK CERA
HB 308 – SPONSOR TESTIMONY

Thank you.

Chairman Green, Vice Chair Greenspan, and Ranking Member Sheehy, and members of the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee ---- I stand before you today to ask for your support of HB 308. This bill names a portion of Route 7 in Belmont County in memory of those who served their country during the Vietnam War.

Most of us know the history and political circumstances surrounding the Vietnam War. We must remember how our military personnel were treated on their return from service in Southeast Asia. For me, it will always bring back the memories of my cousins and other young men I knew in my hometown going off to war. I also think about my aunts hoping for letters from their sons or dreading that they would get a knock on the door. Historians often speak of the lessons our country should have learned from Vietnam. The most important lesson that I hope we learned is that we should never send our young people off to war and treat them the way Vietnam veterans were treated upon their return. With that in mind, I was pleased to introduce this bill at the request of veterans in my area --- many of who are Vietnam vets.

In researching the number of Ohio veterans that served in Vietnam, I came across information that stated there were 3,095 Ohioans who lost their lives during that war. HB 308 calls for naming a portion of Route 7 from the southern boundary of the Martins Ferry to the northern boundary of Bellaire as the Ohio Valley Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway. It is my understanding that there are thirteen Vietnam Veterans who lived along the designated stretch of Route 7 who lost their lives. I am not sure of the number of Vietnam veterans who served from my district, but knowing the commitment of East Ohio to military service, I am sure it is an impressive number. I believe there are a total of 63 individuals from the three counties I represent that lost their lives in this war.

This bill will help to honor those who died as well as all other Vietnam veterans from the upper Ohio Valley.

Many people travel Route 7 from one part of the state to the other. Our communities are very proud of all those individuals who have served their country. In closing, I wish to remind you of some words from President Abraham Lincoln: "A Nation that does not honor its Heroes will not long endure." I ask for your support in paying homage to those who fought at that time.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I will be happy to answer any questions.