

Dear Chairman Green, Vice Chairman Greenspan, Ranking Member Sheehy, and all members of the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee...

On behalf of The City of Beachwood Fire Department, I would like to thank you for allowing me to speak today about what our Captain Michael Palumbo meant to us. I fear there is no way to accurately narrate the impact he had on our department, and us as individuals in a few solemn minutes, but I will do my best to try.

On Mike Palumbo's last shift, he was my shift captain – and he was without a doubt, one of the finest officers and men I have been exposed to in my career. Michael was hired onto Beachwood FD in 1992, and was immediately recognized for his dedication to our craft, and the traditions that surround it. Nobody I have served with was as competent and engaged as a boss, while always maintaining his sense of humor and easy going attitude with his shift brothers. Mike was very quickly and deservedly promoted to Lieutenant, and then Captain, constantly learning and growing, and yet never forgetting where he came from. Our Captain was honest, and he was fair, and he was most importantly, always performing his job – to supervise the safety and security of the residents and property of our city - with the best interest and safety of his shift and brothers in mind. And nobody did it better than Michael Palumbo.

And then in August of 2015, all the shared dreams for our friend and leader continuing up the ladder of our department were broken by the worst news we would ever imagine in his Glioblastoma diagnosis. To hear such a strong and cherished, and loyal man would have to face this battle was devastating to us. But as usual, he lead us as only he could. Our Captain met this obstacle head on, and he would spend the next 21 months in the two most important ways he could: first and foremost by being with his cherished family as much as possible. And secondly, by using his illness in the most lasting way possible, by doing all he could to ensure fellow firefighters would be covered under comprehensive care for the same work-related illness which had cost him his own career and dreams.

This is the work a hero does: they give of their own volition to something bigger and other than themselves. Michael spent his career – and life – doing God's work in ensuring that the people around him were safe and taken care of. And it is our job to ensure that everyone who drives down this stretch of highway, and reads his name, is aware of the sacrifices that this man made for us all. This dedication is a perfect first step to ensuring that our brother's career is remembered for what it was – a constant education in how to create new heroes and inspire men to do great and selfless things.

Thank you for your time, and God bless.