

Chairman Green, Vice Chair Greenspan, and Ranking Member Sheehy, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on HB 294, which would designate memorial highways for two fallen police officers from my department, Patrolman Charles K. Yates and Patrolman Richard E. Becker.

As a member of the law enforcement community I can only express to you that a loss of a fellow police officer affects us all. While grieving a loss of a brother or sister in blue, we must also continue to carry out our daily duties in serving and protecting our beloved communities. As years go by, faces and names change. New officers may not know of the heroism and ultimate sacrifice of past shield bearers. Sometimes, the stories of these officers are lost over time.

People in the communities that we selfishly serve also may not know of the struggles law enforcement face, both past and present. Police officers and civilians often think that in small towns, like Poland, Ohio, nothing ever happens. The loss of Patrolman Yates and Patrolman Becker prove that theory wrong. I believe that the proposed memorial highways signs for these two heroes would be an eternal tribute for the sacrifice they made for the community they served.

Patrolman Becker served our department for four and a half years. He was thirty-six years old when he was shot and killed, while investigating a report of a suspicious person, at a local bar. Patrolman Becker was survived by his wife, son, and daughter.

Patrolman Yates served our department for six years. He was fifty-nine years old when he died in the line of duty, from a heart attack, resulting from fighting with a combative female suspect, arrested for drunk driving. Patrolman Yates was survived by his wife and five children.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on HB 294 and I welcome any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Ptl. J.R. Jackson