



Wes Retherford State Representative

Sponsor Testimony of Representative Wes Retherford Regarding House Bill 534 Before the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee Wednesday, March 14, 2018

Chairman Green, Vice Chairman Patton, Ranking Member Sheehy and members of the House Transportation and Public Safety committee, thank you for allowing me to offer testimony on House Bill 534. This is truly an honor to be able to sponsor this legislation. House Bill 534 will name a portion of Ohio State Route 4 in the city of Hamilton, Ohio after Firefighter/Paramedic Patrick Wolterman.

On the morning of Dec 28, 2015, Patrick and his colleagues answered a call for a residential fire in Hamilton. Being a little after 1 am and believing that the residents were inside, Patrick, with complete disregard for his own safety, entered the house. Shortly after entering, the floor collapsed and he fell to the basement. By the time the other firefighters reached Patrick, he had already passed away from smoke inhalation.

Shortly after this, fire investigators ruled this fire an arson. In November of 2017, after months of intense investigations, the owner of the home and his nephew were found guilty of arson and of the death of Firefighter Wolterman. In an effort to collect insurance money, the owner had paid his nephew to set the fire. While the owner and his wife were celebrating their anniversary in Las Vegas, the nephew drove up from Kentucky and set the house on fire.

After the conviction, I reached out to members of the firefighter's union that represent my hometown and spoke with the family coordinator. We have received the blessing of Patrick's family to pursue this bill. The fire station he worked out of is located on the section of highway to be named in his honor. A few of his colleagues and family members are here today. Patrick Wolterman is a true hero in our community whose life was cut short by the greed of the homeowner.

The NIV version of John Chapter 15 verse 13 says, "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends." I strongly encourage you to support this legislation so that our community, his family and his brother and sisters on the Hamilton Fire Department will have a constant reminder of his sacrifice and love that he had for this community.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wes Retherford", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Wes Retherford
State Representative
Ohio House District 51