

House Bill 623

Sponsor Testimony

Chairman Green, Ranking Member Sheehy, and members of the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak to House Bill 623, which will designate a portion of Interstate Route 270 in Franklin County as the "Officers Anthony Morelli and Eric Joering Memorial Highway."

On Saturday, February 10, 2018 two Westerville Police officers responding to a 911 hang-up call about a potential domestic situation. When officers Anthony Morelli and Eric Joering arrived at the scene, they were met with gunfire. Officer Joering was killed at the scene, and Officer Morelli died in surgery. These two heroes were two of the best officers at the Westerville Police Department and set the standard that their colleagues still follow.

Officer Morelli grew up on the West side of Massillon and graduated from Washington High School in 1982. In high school, Officer Morelli became interested in a career in law enforcement, and later would go on to have a 29-year long career with the Westerville Police Department. Officer Morelli was recognized in 2012 as the Westerville Division of Police Officer of the Year. In the Westerville Police Department's record, this was written about him: "Officer Morelli ranks number one on the shift for the following categories: case reports, incident reports, accidents, and OVIs. He is substantially above the shift average in all other categories of the activity report including citations and arrests. His assigned cases are thorough and completed in a timely manner. Throughout his tenure, he has remained motivated, dedicated, and professional in the performance of his duties." Officer Morelli worked as a school resource officer and could often be seen providing security at school athletic events. Officer Morelli leaves behind his wife Linda, his daughter Elizabeth, and son Christopher.

Officer Eric Joering was a 1997 graduate of Westerville South High School. Officer Joering was a 16-year veteran of the Westerville Division of Police. Officer Joering was recognized with the Exceptional Duty Award three times. Back in

2013, Officer Joering was recognized for his work in an investigation that led to the arrest of dealers with links to high-level drug traffickers in Mexico. Officer Joering was also a K-9 officer working with his K-9 partner Sam. Outside of their regular duties, Officer Joering and Sam would visit schools to help with police community outreach. Officer Joering left behind his wife Jamie and daughters Eva, Elena, and Ella.

Officers Anthony Morelli and Eric Joering remind us that police are here to protect and serve our communities. When officers put on their badge, they do so not know what is going to happen to them that day, but do so regardless because it is their duty. When Officers Anthony Morelli and Eric Joering got the call about a potential domestic situation, these officers rushed to the scene, because they thought someone was in danger and it was their duty to protect. Officers Anthony Morelli and Eric Joering were real American Heroes and will be remembered as such.

Chairman Green and members of the committee, we ask for your favorable consideration of this. We thank you for your time and would be happy to address any questions you may have at this time.