



State Representative Rick Carfagna
Joint-Sponsor Testimony - House Bill 623
June 6, 2018

Chairman Green, Vice Chairman Patton, Ranking Member Sheehy, and members of the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to provide joint-sponsor testimony on House Bill 623, designating the Westerville portion of I-270 in Franklin County as the "Officers Anthony Morelli and Eric Joering Memorial Highway".

Scripture tells us we go through life knowing neither the day nor the hour. There is no one who understands that more than a first responder and his or her family. It takes a special individual to don that uniform, to make yourself a target for bullets both real and figurative. But as overwhelming as the grief has been in our communities, it has been more than offset by the outpouring of love and support – from strangers - for the families, for the Westerville Police Department, and for law enforcement overall.

As we look to pull any meaning from this tragedy, it is my hope that the signage this bill creates prompts greater awareness of these heroes, and brings perspective to those driving through Westerville. That when people are dwelling on their own life situations as they drive along I-270 and see the names Anthony Morelli and Eric Joering, they will remember the ultimate sacrifice that they and their families made. That, years from now, children and people removed from this situation will see the signs, wonder who they were, research their significance, and learn not just how they died, but how they lived and how they united a community during divisive times.

I also hope the signs serve as a reminder not just of the physical threats faced by our officers, but also of the everyday stresses in this line of work. Because we need to keep in mind that a police officer's typical day, more often than not, consists of a series of our very bad days. They have to endure sights, sounds, and images that would otherwise haunt us for a lifetime – and it's all in a day's work.

No parent wants to get that dreaded knock at the door about a loved one, but our officers are the ones burdened with delivering heartbreaking news. Our officers confront conflict, so we don't have to. Our officers enforce the very laws we create in this room, so we don't have to. They intervene and deal with difficult, combative, and sometimes violent people so we don't have to. They respond to the scenes of terrible tragedies, sometimes involving children, keeping order and professionalism so that we don't have to.

So, I say to all of you, thank you for your sympathies, your support to those affected, and for honoring these officers through this remembrance. May God bless Officers Morelli and Joering, and grant their families the strength and comfort they need moving forward. May God bless our men and women in blue everywhere, our guardian angels who keep vigilance over our communities, our properties, and our families. Thank you for your consideration of House Bill 623.