

Address to the Ohio Senate Local Government, Public Safety
and Veterans Affairs Committee
Concerning HB#254

Joe Uecker, Chair
Steve Wilson, Vice-Chair
Cecil Thomas, Ranking Member

Chairman Uecker, Vice Chair Wilson, Ranking Member Thomas and members of the Senate Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs Committee, Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 254, the POW/MIA Remembrance Act.

My name is Jim Smith, President of Rolling Thunder, Inc.. Ohio Chapter 2 in Akron. The mission of Rolling Thunder is to publicize the Prisoner of War/Missing in Action issue and to lobby the U.S. Government to account for and repatriate all American service personnel left behind in our Nation's past and present conflicts.

According to the Defense Personnel Accounting Agency there are 82,406 American citizens, who stepped forward to defend our Nation and our way of life, still missing. The POW/MIA Flag is a reminder to all that these Americans will not be forgotten. The great State of Ohio recognizes the POW/MIA flag but, at present, has no written standards to when and where to display the flag. House Bill 254 will address this issue.

As a veteran of the Vietnam conflict and a concerned citizen of Ohio, I support this Bill and hope to see it passed without delay. I spoke to the Bill's author, Rep. Scott Wiggam, first on April 8, 2017 and we discussed my concerns and I was pleased that he followed up on my request. I appreciate the fast response.

Now it is time to take action and see this through. The families of our Missing are still waiting. When the public is aware that so many have been lost without a trace, they are surprised and saddened. The POW/MIA flag will remind and inspire us all to keep the memory of the missing alive and keep pressure on the Federal government to account for them all. Our motto "No Man Left Behind" is not a catch phrase but has real meaning.

The State of Ohio has 3,694 military personnel still unaccounted for. Including:

WWII: 3,189

Korean War: 424

Vietnam War: 75

Cold War, '46-'91: 6

Desert Storm: 1

We must not forget them.

I would like to thank you all again for this opportunity to speak on behalf of Rolling Thunder Ohio Chapter 2 and the concerned citizens and veterans of the great State of Ohio, and would be happy to answer any questions the committee may have at this time.