

**HB 406 - Designate and display Honor and Remember Flag**

**Testimony of David K. Root**

**Immediate Past State Commander, Department of Ohio, Veterans of Foreign Wars**

Before the House Armed Services and Veterans affairs Committee

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Chairman Perales, Vice Chairman Hood, Ranking Member Weinstein, and Members of the House Armed Services and Veterans Affairs Committee, good morning and thank you for allowing me to give testimony today on House Bill 406. My name is David Root and I am a four-year veteran of the U.S. Navy. I served from 1966 to 1970 and made three cruises to the Gulf of Tonkin on aircraft carriers. I am also the immediate past State Commander for the Department of Ohio, Veterans of Foreign Wars.

I am here today on behalf of the 24 Officers of the Department's Council of Administration, or what could be called the board of directors in most non-profit organizations. This past January during our Mid-Winter Conference, I made the motion for the Council to go on record as recognizing the *Honor and Remember Flag* as an official symbol to recognize and honor members of the Armed Forces who died in the line of duty, and for other purposes. I further asked the Council to go on record supporting House Bill 406. I was incredibly happy when the motion overwhelmingly carried with a voice vote.

As most of you know, being veterans yourselves, when a service member dies while serving, they are entitled to full military honors. During the execution of those honors the U.S. flag which was draped upon the hero's coffin is carefully folded into a neat triangle and then presented to the heroes nearest relative. That relative is usually either the mother or father or the spouse. Only one flag can be presented. Only one family member will be allowed to have that coveted keepsake of their loved one's service and sacrifice.

I am in favor of the *Honor and Remember Flag* becoming an official symbol of recognition and a visual emblem of honor. Not to replace, nor even attempt to equal, the beloved emblem of our country, because 'Old Glory' can never be replaced nor equaled by any other flag. The *Honor and Remember Flag* is needed because when a service member is killed it is the whole family who mourns and will spend the rest of their lives remembering the loved one. It is every family member who should have a flag if they desire it.

The *Honor and Remember Flag* should become an official symbol that every family member, if they desire to, can display in their house. Or it can be flown on their flagpole to remind their community to honor and remember all who are lost. It can be presented to the servicemember's family by a church, alma mater, or organization. *The Honor and Remember Flag* could also be used in schools as an educational tool to teach our youngsters that we must never forget those who have died for the rest of us.

To date there are 26 other states who have already adopted legislation like HB 406 in an effort to support the United States Congress in its effort to pass the necessary legislation to make the *Honor and Remember Flag* a nationally recognized emblem.

I stand before you and ask you to join the Council of Administration of the Department of Ohio VFW in our support of the bill and the *Honor and Remember Flag*. We hope the Committee will feel just as we do and pass House Bill 406 because it is the right thing to do for all the family members of those service members who paid the ultimate price while serving their country.

I again want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak this morning. I would be happy to answer any question that the committee may have.

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