



Representative Jeff LaRe
77th House District

House Bill 689 Sponsor Testimony

Chairman Green, Vice-Chair McClain, Ranking Member Sheehy, and members of the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on House Bill 689. The bill would designate a portion of State Route 158 in Fairfield County as the “SGT Joseph P. Collette Memorial Highway”.

Sgt. Collette had graduated from Lancaster High School in my district in 2007, and enlisted in the U.S. Army in 2010 as an Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Technician assigned to the 242nd Ordnance Battalion, 62nd Ordnance Company, 71st Ordnance Group. In December of 2018, he was deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Freedom’s Sentinel. On March 21st, 2019, Sgt. Collette paid the ultimate sacrifice as a result of wounds he sustained while trying to save a fellow soldier in Afghanistan.

Over the course of Sgt. Collette’s career in the U.S. Army, he received numerous decorations and awards to include the Purple Heart, Bronze Star, Army

Achievement medal with four oak leaf clusters, National Defense Service medal, the Global War on Terrorism medal, Afghanistan Campaign medal with one star, Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development ribbon, Combat Action Badge, Senior EOD badge, and the Excellence in Competition Rifleman badge.

Joey, as he's known, is survived by his wife he had just married prior to his deployment, children, family, and friends who loved and adored him. His character attributes and selfless actions should be commended. Both the Ohio House and Senate have adopted resolutions (H.R. 94 and S.R. 103, 133rd General Assembly) in memory of Sgt. Collette's life. By designating the "SGT Joseph P. Collette Memorial Highway", his valor and sacrifice would be immortalized and be a physical reminder of an individual who expressed characteristics of what it means to not only be an Ohioan, but an American.

Ending remarks

I stand here today proud of knowing someone like Joey was born and raised in my community. I respectfully ask members for their support and favorable passage of the bill out of the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee. I am happy to answer any questions the Committee has at this time.