

Good Morning members of the Transportation and Public Safety Committee.

My name is Scott Sparks, from Monroeville, Ohio, and I am here to present testimony in support of House Bill 634, which will facilitate the naming of a portion of State Route ninety-nine "Lance Corporal James Sprowl Memorial Highway.

In September of 2011, US Route 20 was renamed "Army Private Jason L. Sparks Memorial Highway" as a result of house bill 65.

The naming of route 20 after our son Jason, who was killed in Iraq, was significant for our small community of Monroeville, Ohio. The last time that Monroeville experienced the loss of a local hero was on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 1968. On that day, Lance Corporal James Sprowl, was killed in action at Quang Tri, Vietnam.

It has been 50 years since Lance Corporal Sprowl paid the ultimate price for this great country, however, 50 years ago was a different time when the Vietnam conflict as it was officially called was not as popular for lack of another appropriate word. There were no welcome home parades for our returning veterans, there were very few service members that dared return home in their uniforms, and most of all, there were no naming of highways for those local heroes that paid the ultimate sacrifice in the service of this great country, and the Great State of Ohio.

Lance Corporal James E. Sprowl was on the Monroeville Eagles track team, basketball team and was a wide receiver for the Monroeville Eagles football team, which he had received a scholarship to play at Wilmington College, however, he chose a different path, and chose to enlist in the United States Marine Corps in June of 1967.

Lance Corporal Sprowl was posthumously awarded the bronze star, in which he was cited for exposing himself to hostile fire and single handedly assaulting the enemy by throwing hand grenades and firing his rifle until he was killed. Part of his citation read: "Corporal Sprowl's resolute initiative and unwavering devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country."

Lance Corporal Sprowl was also awarded the Purple Heart, the Battle Star Medal, the Vietnam Campaign Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, and the American Defense Medal. These awards were presented to his parents, Leroy and Florence Sprowl. Leroy Sprowl was also a World War II veteran.

The importance of the naming of state route 99 after Lance Corporal Sprowl is very important to a community that prides itself in the service of this great country, and recognizing the ultimate sacrifices paid by those heroes in our community. It is also time that we correct the errors of the past and recognize all Vietnam Era Veterans for their service and sacrifice again, for this great country.

I would also like to offer a suggestion to this committee to place additional signage on all present and future renamed highways to designate their campaign, war, conflict, or employer so that each honored individual can be identified for their service and sacrifice. This is especially important, as it would be a great leap forward to finally start recognizing Vietnam Veterans for their service and sacrifices. This additional signage his would also recognize those individuals who have served and paid the ultimate price in support of Iraq, Afghanistan, the Ohio State Highway Patrol, and the many other final service missions for our Ohio Heroes.

I offer this testimony today to this committee for their heartfelt consideration in passing house bill 634 to honor yet another Ohio hero by naming a portion of State Route 99 "Lance Corporal James Sprowl Memorial Highway".

On behalf of the Sprowl family, the American Legion post 547 in Monroeville, and the great community of Monroeville Ohio, I want to thank this committee for allowing me to provide testimony for this long overdue recognition of this great Ohio hero, Lance Corporal James E. Sprowl.