



Sponsor Testimony: House Bill 359
State Representative Tracy Richardson, District 86
House Transportation and Public Safety Committee
October 29th, 2019

Good morning Chairman Green, Vice Chair McClain, Ranking Member Sheehy, and members of the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee. As most of you know, my name is Representative Richardson, but what you may not know is that I am also Major Richardson of the U.S. Army Reserves. My service began at the age of 18 when I enlisted in the U.S. Army. A few years later, after graduating from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, I spent more than six years on active duty including a deployment for Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm. Currently, my duty assignment is to serve as a liaison officer to the U.S. Military Academy Admissions Office. My lifetime of experience as a member of the Army Team has allowed me the opportunity to understand and appreciate the many sacrifices our veterans and their families have made on behalf of our great nation. It is my honor to have served so many years in our U.S. Armed Forces and it is with **tremendous respect for the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines who have come before me** that I stand before you today.

No one should ever forget the enormous contribution by the American soldiers of the “Greatest Generation” during World War II. Ohioans, who in many cases had never left the country, found themselves fighting and dying all over the world to defend freedom and our way of life. It is important that we honor that legacy of service and sacrifice. One method we have to do this are specialty World War II license plates available only to those who served in that war.

Unfortunately, there currently is a cost associated with registering these veteran plates. That cost can often be a burden for veterans. Our World War II veterans are now in their advanced age and most are living on a fixed income.

My constituent Don Wilson is a 95 year old World War II Navy hero who flew hundreds of missions off of aircraft carriers as a tail gunner and radio operator from 1943 to 1946. Don drives his car to and from the Marion Senior Center weekly and can often be seen driving around town. When I first spoke to him about why he didn't have a World War II license plate, he said, "I would like one of those, but I don't want to pay that fee every year."

This bi-partisan bill eliminates all fees and taxes for registering World War II license plates, which would lighten the financial burden for the "Greatest Generation." This is the right thing to do not only for our incredible veterans, but for our entire community. The presence of World War II license plates reminds us of the proud service and legacy of World War II veterans, and these outstanding heroes deserve our support!

Chairman Green and members of the committee, thank you for your time and consideration today. I ask for your support of House Bill 359, which will ensure that we honor the service of our World War II veterans. Representative Wiggam and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.