

# **Don Wilson**

## **Proponent Testimony: House Bill 359**

### **House Transportation and Public Safety Committee**

**November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

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Good morning Chairman Green, Vice Chair McClain, Ranking Member Sheehy, and members of the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee. Thank you for allowing me to speak to you today about the bill to remove all taxes and fees from WWII veteran license plates. My name is Don Wilson, and I am a WWII Veteran. My time in the Navy was very rewarding. I learned to respect my fellow man and to love our country. I went into the Navy as an eighteen year old boy, and within six months I was a man. I was an aviation radioman and tail gunner on a TBM Avenger flying off an aircraft carrier in the Pacific. I was blessed because I made it back safely from every flight.

During one mission, though, our plane caught fire in the bomb bay. The other gunner and I were preparing to jump out with our parachutes, and we were arguing about who would push the other one out. Our pilot said "Hold on, I'm going to try to put the flames out." He dove up and down and got the fires down a bit. He told us "I'm going to try to land it. As soon as we stop, get out and run!" He was able to find a spot to land, not on our carrier, but on land. We all got out and ran, and as soon as we were all safely out, the plane exploded behind us. My many friends over the years who were also WWII veterans have similar stories. The war was an experience like none other, and WWII veterans have carried memories like these their whole lives.

I like the idea that every WWII veterans who wants a WWII license plate would be able to have one at no cost to them. It would mean an awful lot to every WWII vet to know that he was able to show people what he did. To have the special WWII plate on my automobile would make me feel proud and humble at the same time, and I know other WWII vets feel the same.

Like most WWII vets, I have to be careful with how I spend my money now, and any way I can save on my yearly fees and taxes has a big impact. Veterans might use the money they will save to buy their grandchildren presents, treat themselves to a nice meal, or put it towards medical costs and other necessities. The money we would save each year on our registration would mean a lot to WWII vets like myself.

Chairman Green and members of the committee, I appreciate getting the opportunity to speak here today and hope that we can make it possible for all WWII vets to have a WWII auto license tag. I would be happy to answer any questions.