

3rd House District

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Chairman Green, Vice Chair McClain, Ranking Member Sheehy, and colleagues of the Transportation and Public Safety Committee — thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 483 which was introduced on January 28, 2020. House Bill 483 will name a portion of State Route 795 the “Lake Township Veterans Memorial Highway.”

This request was brought to me by Lake Township Trustee Ken Gilsdorf who also serves as the Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Walbridge Post 9963. Lake Township has a rich history of service to our nation and this road naming will honor those residents who have served in our armed services and those who gave their final sacrifice in defense of the United States and the freedoms that we hold dear. Lake Township has done a lot over the last few years to honor these veterans and a memorial highway will only add to the community’s efforts to consecrate the sacrifice of their neighbors, family members, and friends.

In 2019 Lake Local Schools unveiled and dedicated their Veterans Wall Memorial at the high school. This memorial was built in memory of all the military veterans who served and attended either Lake, Walbridge or Millbury Schools. There are approximately six hundred names on the wall, including six who paid the ultimate sacrifice and one former Prisoner of War 97-year-old Irwin Welling who was a farmer in Millbury that served in the Army Air Corp and was a POW for 11 months during WWII. Mr. Welling was killed in the 2010 tornado that destroyed the school and took six lives. This Veterans Wall Memorial project took over a year to design and implement and was a combined effort of school officials and VFW Walbridge Post 9963 veterans.

Additionally, Lake Township Cemetery is a short distance away where there are approximately 2,300 veterans buried. Each year Lake Township and VFW Walbridge Post 9963 and Lake Local Schools combine efforts and hold a parade and ceremony at Lake Township Cemetery. Approximately four hundred people attend annually. The Post also performs approximately thirty military burial funeral honors each year at the cemetery.

Thank you for your consideration of House Bill 483. The naming of the Lake Township Veterans Memorial Highway will serve as a generational reminder of the service and sacrifice local residents gave to their community and will inform visitors of the heritage of Lake Township.

I am pleased to answer any questions from the committee.