

**3rd House District**

Wood County

**Columbus Office**

Vern Riffe Center  
77 South High Street, 13th Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215-6111

614.466.8104 | Rep03@ohiohouse.gov



**Committees**

Armed Services and Veterans Affairs

Energy and Natural Resources

Higher Education

Insurance

**HARAZ N. GHANBARI**

State Representative | Ohio House District 3

September 17, 2019

Chairman McColley, Ranking Minority Member Antonio, and distinguished members of the Ohio Senate's Transportation, Commerce, and Workforce Committee — it is indeed an honor to join you today and provide testimony in support of Substitute House Bill 276.

Though the bill is titled to designate the Master Chief Special Warfare Operator (SEAL) Edward C. Byers, Jr. Medal of Honor Recipient Highway, it will also designate multiple memorial highways and bridges across our great State of Ohio. These highways and bridges will serve as a constant reminder of the service, life, and legacy of many great Ohioans.

One of those Ohioans, Navy Master Chief Byers, was awarded the nation's highest military honor, the Medal of Honor, by President Barack Obama on February 29, 2016, and became the sixth Navy SEAL in U.S. history, and the first living Navy SEAL since the Vietnam War to receive the Medal of Honor. A Chief Petty Officer at the time of the mission on December 8, 2012 to rescue Dr. Dilip Joseph, an American citizen being detained by the Taliban in a mountainous region in the Qarghah'i District of Laghman Province, Byers was serving as a Hostage Rescue Force Team Member in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Master Chief Byers' SEAL teammate, Petty Officer 1st Class Nicolas D. Checque, 28, of Monroeville, Pennsylvania, was killed in action during the rescue mission and was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross.

Each Ohioan has a unique story. Byers was born in Toledo in 1979, and grew up in Grand Rapids. In 1997, he graduated from Otsego High School in Tontogany where he played varsity soccer. Byers joined the Navy in September 1998 and subsequently attended Boot Camp and Corpsman "A" School in Great Lakes, Illinois. In 2002 he attended Basic Underwater Demolition SEAL (BUD/S) training and graduated with Class 242. After graduation, he attended the Special Operations Combat Medic (SOCM) course and was then assigned to an East Coast SEAL Team. Byers has 11 overseas deployments with nine combat tours. This Thursday, September 19, Master Chief Byers will retire from The United States Navy following 21 years of honorable service.

Master Chief Byers is an example of the best Ohio, and our country, has to offer. The passage of this bill is a small, yet lasting gesture, of gratitude to Byers and others being honored through the naming of memorial highways and bridges. As Ohioans we shall never forget the service and the sacrifice of our living and our dead; I respectfully urge unanimous passage.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Haraz N. Ghanbari", written in a cursive style.

Haraz N. Ghanbari  
Member of the Ohio House of Representatives