

February 13, 2017

I would first like to give my gratitude to State Representative Steven Hambley, Brandon Sagraves, Chairman Green, Vice Chairman Greenspan, Ranking Member Sheehy, and members of the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee for considering House Bill 22 which would designate a portion of State Route 261 as the Sergeant James F. Allen III Memorial Highway.

Sergeant Allen was a decorated and honorable soldier. After joining the military in November 2001, Sergeant Allen deployed three times; twice to Iraq and once to Afghanistan in support of the War on Terrorism. During these deployments, he received numerous awards and decorations for his outstanding service.

In 2011, after his last tour of duty, James was diagnosed with severe PTSD. Having lived together since 2006, I could tell that his demeanor had severely changed. He had a difficult time acclimating himself back to the civilian lifestyle. Unfortunately on February 10, 2016, he succumbed to his mental illness.

General George S. Patton said *“It is foolish and wrong to mourn the men who died. Rather we should thank God that such men lived.”* That is what I hope to accomplish by having House Bill 22 passed. Not only would having this highway named in memoriam of Sergeant James F. Allen III serve as a proof of his exceptional service but it would provide a sentiment that although he may be gone he will never be forgotten.

The significance of having a memorial highway designated in his name would mean so much to me personally, his daughter Natalie, son Tristan, as well as friends, family, and military comrades. It will also stand as a daily encouragement to continue his legacy through goodwill and advocacy. If House Bill 22 is passed it will not only stand as a memorial to Sergeant Allen, but also to me, his family, friends, and fellow soldiers.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for your time and consideration in this matter.

Respectfully,

Ashley Rae Yeager