



**Representative Joe Miller, Ohio House District 56
House Armed Services and Veterans Affairs Committee - HB 406 Testimony
January 22, 2020**

Chairman Perales, Vice Chair Hood, Ranking Member Weinstein, and members of the House Armed Services and Veterans Affairs Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on House Bill 406. This legislation recognizes the Honor and Remember Flag, opening up a new pathway for Ohio to pay tribute to the brave men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country.

Through HB 406, the Honor and Remember Flag is established as Ohio's symbol of commitment to honoring all members of the US Armed Forces who lost their lives while serving or as a result of service, as well as their families. Much in the same way the POW / MIA flag was established specifically to recognize "Americans still prisoner, missing and unaccounted for in Southeast Asia," the Honor and Remember Flag is a direct symbol of support for our fallen soldiers. For many families who have been presented with an Honor and Remember Flag, it helps complete the circle of tribute to their loved one.

The bill also calls for the flag to be flown at the Statehouse one day each year-- Memorial Day. Permissive language is included to allow government buildings across the state to fly the Honor and Remember Flag at their discretion. When flying the Honor and Remember Flag alongside the American Flag, the bill stipulates that it always be flown below, and be no larger than, the American Flag.

The Honor and Remember Flag has been recognized in 26 states around the country. Each component of the flag was designed to contribute to its overall meaning. The red background signifies the blood spilled by the brave men and women of America's military, and tops a white border acknowledging the purity of their sacrifice. The gold star, representing the fallen service member and their family, is inlaid on the blue active duty star. Below them, you'll find the folded flag of final tribute, and inside, you see the flame of unyielding remembrance carried on by those who knew and loved the fallen soldier.

The idea for HB 406 came from members of my community, who have recognized the Honor and Remember Flag for years. That includes the Lorain AMVETS Post #47, who

have submitted written support for HB 406 to our office. It also includes constituents who partnered with the Honor and Remember 501(c)3 organization to recognize fallen military alumni and Gold Star Families at Elyria Catholic High School. The families were presented with personalized Honor and Remember flags, inscribed with the name of their loved one.

The intention of HB 406 is to complete the circle of tribute to fallen soldiers and their families. It is thoughtfully constructed to avoid the suggestion of overshadowing the American flag, the Gold Star Service Banner, and others. In short, HB 406 supplements, rather than supplants, existing symbols of tribute.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on House Bill 406. My co-sponsor and I would be happy to answer any questions the committee may have.