*Chairman Green, Vice-Chairman McClain, Ranking Member Sheehy, and members of the Transportation and Public Safety Committee, my name is Jeff Vrabel, Sr.  I am a Past Commander of Sons of The American Legion Detachment of Ohio and a member of Mahoning Valley Squadron 15 in Poland.*

*I come before you today to ask for your co-sponsorship and support of House Bill 411, a bill to amend section 4501.21 and to enact section 4503.581 of the Revised Code to create the “Ohio Sons of The American Legion” license plates.*

*The Sons of The American Legion was created in 1932 as an organization within The American Legion.  The S.A.L. is made up of boys and men of all ages whose parents or grandparents served in the United States military and became eligible for membership in The American Legion. Together, members of The American Legion, The American Legion Auxiliary, and Sons of The American Legion make up what is known as The American Legion Family. All three organizations place high importance on preserving our American traditions and values, improving the quality of life for our nation's children, caring for veterans and their families, and, teaching the fundamentals of good citizenship.  We support The American Legion’s Four Pillars; Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children & Youth.*

*Sons have always assisted with American Legion Family programs. Our Family boasts a combined total membership of nearly 4.2 million members. During the 2018-2019 membership year, Sons attained an all-time high national membership of over 371,000, with the Detachment of Ohio boasting nearly 31,000 members statewide.*

*Sons focus on much more than just membership. At all levels, Sons support The American Legion Family in promoting a wide variety of programs, including Veterans programs, Veterans Administration home and hospital volunteerism, Children Youth projects, and fundraising. Since 1988, The Sons have raised more than $8 million for The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, with the Detachment of Ohio making the donation last May to put the Sons over that $8 million mark.*

*Established in 1954, The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation was developed as a repository of funds from individuals who wished to contribute to the betterment of children in this country. Its foremost philanthropic priority is to contribute to the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual welfare of children and youth by aiding progress in the field of child welfare through dissemination of knowledge about research, studies, surveys, projects, or by supporting programs and activities benefiting the welfare of children and youth.  As an end to the means, the Child Welfare Foundation awards grants to help meet its mission.*

*For many years, the Detachment of Ohio has contributed the most donations in the country or in our region to the Child Welfare Foundation.  Ohio Sons have always stepped up for our children, and we are proud of our accomplishments.  By your co-sponsorship and support of House Bill 411 and creating “Ohio Sons of The American Legion” license plates, the Detachment of Ohio will be able to continue to make its donations with a new avenue for citizens to make donations through purchase of these new license plates.  Not only will we be able to generate funds for this worthwhile charity, we will have built-in marketing for our organization, as motorists travel the state proudly displaying the Sons of The American Legion emblem on their license plates.  I say plates because I personally hope that the Ohio motorists will continue to be required to have two license plates on their vehicles.*

*I want to thank American Legion Mahoning Valley Post 15 member and Ohio House of Representatives member Don Manning for sponsoring this bill, as well as for his, and for your service.*