

Chairman Green, Vice Chairman McClain, Ranking Member Sheehy, and members of the Transportation and Public Safety Committee, please see the below testimonials and support for HB 780 from former staff and friends to Representative Andy Thompson.

**Stephanie Kromer- Former Legislative Aide**

Chairman Green, Vice Chair McClain, and Ranking Member Sheehy, my name is Stephanie Kromer and I am a former Ohio House staffer. Thank you for allowing me to submit written proponent testimony on House Bill 780 to establish the “Andy Thompson Memorial Bridge” along State Route 7 in Marietta, Ohio.

From 2015-2017, I had the great privilege of serving the 95th House District as a legislative aide for the late State Representative Andy Thompson. Andy had a deep love and great pride for not only Marietta, but for his entire district. His zeal for liberty, truth, and education was inspiring to all those who knew him and motivated his staff to help him serve his district the best way we could. Andy’s infectious passion and dedication to the 95th District ignited the same passion within myself and made me feel that I would always have a special place in my heart for Southeastern Ohio. Whether it was advocating for local control in our educational system, promoting Appalachia’s economic and energy opportunities, defending landowners’ rights, bringing awareness to veterans’ mental health, or fighting against antisemitism, Andy always worked tirelessly for not only those he represented but for all Ohioans. His integrity, commitment to public service, and display of statesmanship was simply unmatched.

But what was most remarkable about Andy was his steadfast admiration for his family and his trust in the Lord. Andy’s unwavering faith and the love he had for his family, especially his wife Jade, was nothing short of amazing and inspired all who knew him. I am eternally grateful for the memories that I shared with Andy’s family and constituents and I will carry those special moments with me the rest of my life.

By passing this legislation, Andy’s spirit and memory will dwell in a place that meant the most to him and his family. Chairman Green, Vice Chair McClain, and Ranking Member Sheehy, thank you for your consideration of HB 780.

**Cory Fleming- Former Campaign Manager**

Chairman Green, Vice Chair McClain and Ranking Member Sheehy, my name is Cory Fleming and I am writing in support of House Bill 780, which would designate a bridge along Route 7 in Marietta as the “Andy Thompson Memorial Bridge.” I can’t think of anyone who is more deserving of this honor than my friend Andy who tragically passed away earlier this year due to heart complications.

As many of you know, Andy Thompson served in the Ohio House of Representatives from 2011-2018. He represented the 95th House District, which included half of the city of Marietta, his hometown. As a side note, after the last round of re-districting, Andy’s mother, Elsa, who lived a few blocks away from Andy, would question why she could not vote for her son. As it happened, her precinct was given to Representative Edwards, which led her to question Andy’s talents as a

legislator. All jokes aside, Andy was a passionate and dedicated legislator who served the best interests of his constituents.

I first met Andy in 2010 as a Senior at The Ohio State University. I was graduating in the Spring and looking to break into politics. Through my father, Terry, who also grew up in Marietta, I was introduced to Andy and was offered a chance to work on his campaign for State Representative. I had very little campaign experience, nor did I know much about the district, so you could say I was somewhat nervous. My nerves were soon put to ease, due to Andy's compassion and genuine kindness. We immediately became close friends and I miss him very much.

During my time working for Andy, I learned that he was born in Pella, Iowa but spent most of his youth in Marietta, as his father, Bill, was a Vice President at Marietta College. After attending college at Central College in Pella, Andy moved to Washington, D.C. to work at Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI), a conservative think-tank. Despite the opportunities he had in Washington, Andy and his wife, Jade, decided to move back to Marietta to help run the family-owned small business, Bird Watchers Digest. This type of loyalty and sacrifice exemplified the life of Andy Thompson.

When he returned to Marietta, Andy gave back to his community by being an active member in the Marietta Rotary Club, taking leadership roles in his church and serving on the Marietta City Council before being elected to the state legislature. His commitment to service and community earned him the upmost respect and is the reason why he never lost a race for public office. Due to his life-long service to the city of Marietta, I believe now is the appropriate time to honor Andy Thompson.

I commend Representative Romanchuk and Representative Jones for introducing the legislation and I encourage expedite action. Thank you for the consideration.

#### **Melina Tornero- Former Legislative Aide**

Representative Andy Thompson was truly one of the kindest, most dedicated and genuine people you would ever meet. As one of his last aides at The Ohio House of Representatives, the consistency in his character was admirable and an example for all.

Andy would always take time to talk about ideas or call a concerned constituent. He was passionate about many things like removing common core, birds and puns. It was clear that he was most committed to his family and doing the right thing for the State of Ohio.

I will always be grateful for the opportunity to work for him and am blessed with many memories of my time working in his office.

#### **Jenna Beadle- Former Campaign Manager**

This genuinely wonderful man has left us too soon, but his legacy remains. There are others like me that he trusted with great responsibility and gave them a chance to succeed based purely on his extraordinary belief in people. The summer he trusted me to manage his campaign was the hardest summer of my life—until 2020, but it was one of great personal growth, forged our

forever friendship, gave me an unforgettable gift of time with my family, and led to my career. He was my caring mentor and devoted friend, and I miss him dearly.

Andy was a statesman. He never wavered in his principles and contributed greatly to the integrity of this institution. Andy served his constituents with passion and conviction, which came from a deep love of the Lord, his family, his community, and his country. There was no rhyme or reason to the people he befriended. He could eloquently disagree with you in committee or on the House floor and then fire off a text to invite you to a rousing night of karaoke.

Andy's family was his pride and joy. His eyes lit up when he talked about Jade, his children, his parents, and their family business. Marietta housed all these treasures, and he loved her for it. It is right that a bridge in his beloved town will bear his name to remind everyone of all the work he did on behalf of the community and how fortunate we were to know him.

### **James Coyne- Former Campaign Manager & LSC Fellow**

Andy Thompson was a great man. Andy was my first boss out of college and took a chance on me after only a short phone interview; he was everything you wanted in a boss (and a friend) – he was thoughtful, sought input, and valued those who worked for him (although with Andy you always got the sense that you were actually working WITH him). Anybody who ever had the privilege of calling Andy a friend knew what it meant to have a tireless advocate in your corner always pushing you to be better and working to help you get here you wanted to be not only professionally, but personally and spiritually as well. He taught me more than I ever thought I needed to know about birds and puns. He loved his country and he saw public service as an important responsibility entrusted to him by his constituents, we had many discussions about what a representative republic required of its elected officials. He loved God, throughout some of the darkest times of his life he was always quick to remember the many blessings God gave him, most important of all, his family, who he loved more than anything. I miss our long talks about his Pirates and my Mets, the current state of affairs, and life. I miss my friend. I completely support enshrining this great man's legacy so all who knew him can remember him, and those who did not may get to know him.

### **AJ Thomas- Former Legislative Aide**

Andy Thompson was a great man, mentor, boss, and friend and earned memorialization through kindness and good works.

I first met Andy on the campaign trail, and he quickly became a friend. We'd speak not too often, but when I told him I was interviewing for a job with a group he took it upon himself to reach out to them and give me a positive recommendation, which I didn't learn about until my interview. I'm actually glad I didn't get that job because if I had I would not have the opportunity to work for Andy himself.

Andy was a kind boss, and although relatively lax had his peculiar way of being demanding, which made you a better staffer because you wanted to do well- not because of high pressure stakes from an overbearing boss. All the while, Andy truly stayed a friend. We would talk on the phone every day because I felt that was the best way to do my job. Our conversations were not quick! We would be on the phone for well over an hour sometimes discussing sports, family, and

other current affairs. Only after hanging up would we realize we forgot to talk about what we needed to and would be on the phone again minutes later. When Andy left office our phone calls became less frequent, but still seemed to amount to multiple per week because we genuinely enjoyed each other's company.

The day Andy passed, I was pretty devastated, but I know our Lord had better plans for him. I know he earned his wings because he was a kind man who was not mean-spirited towards practically anyone. He was a man who represented his community out of a sense of duty, and while he was certainly partisan he was always open-minded and did not shy away from an argument because he wanted everyone to seek truth. He was a man who cared deeply about his family (practically all of our conversations involving some anecdote about them) and above all he simply cared about people.

I fully support forever memorializing Andy Thompson by naming this bridge in his honor.

Chairman Green, Vice-Chairman McClain, Ranking Member Sheehy, and members of the Transportation and Public Safety Committee, thank you for your consideration and we all support passage of HB 780.