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Chair Baldrige, Vice-Chair McClain, Ranking Member Sheehy and members of the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to address House Bill 543 to designate

"PFC Melvin E. Newlin, Medal of Honor Recipient, Memorial Highway"

Melvin E. Newlin and I attended the Wellsville High School during the sixties. Melvin was a grade ahead of me. He graduated in 1966; I in 1967. We often walked home from school together. He was a polite, kind hearted, impressive young man with a bright future. In 1966, Melvin Newlin enlisted in the Marines. He was 17 years old. Undoubtedly, he intended to serve his country during the Vietnam War and he was sent to Vietnam in November 1967.

When news of Melvin Newlin's death spread throughout our hometown of Wellsville, Ohio, heartbreak and a sense of loss overwhelmed the community. When details of his death became available, the community responded with a sense of both pride and overwhelming gratitude for a very unselfish, courageous, young man who gave his life for his country. He lost his life on July 4, 1967. The details of his action saved many American lives and those details are expressed in Rep. Tim Ginter's testimony.

Melvin E. Newlin was awarded the Medal of Honor on March 18, 1969. At that time, the Memorial Highway signage did not acknowledge him as a Medal of Honor Recipient. While Melvin's hometown of Wellsville honors his sacrifice, we would like to share that honor by identifying it on a highway sign, so that anyone passing through our community will be aware and remember that Melvin E. Newlin distinguished himself by his outstanding courage and duty to our country earning him a prestigious Medal of Honor.

Respectfully,

Tonda Bratt