

Good afternoon Chair Peterson, Vice Chair Thomas, Ranking Member Forhan, and the entirety of the House Oversight Committee.

My Name is Thomas DiSario, a little bit about me. I am a 100% disabled combat Veteran from the Gulf War, and I am the father of Chief Steven Eric DiSario.

On Friday, May 12, 2017 my son, Chief Eric DiSario, was called to a nursing home in Kirkersville, Ohio. Upon arrival and while exiting his vehicle, he was ambushed and shot in the back of his head and killed in the front of the nursing home. The murderer then shot and killed his ex-girlfriend and an employee of the nursing home, before killing himself.

Eric at the time was 38 years old and married to his amazing wife, Aryn, who he had 5 children with. Aryn was also pregnant with a child who was born 10 days after he was killed. He will never see her and she will never meet him. Eric always wanted to serve in any capacity available to him. It is what he was born to do. He could not serve his country in the military, so he joined the police force in 2011.

At the funeral I was presented with the American flag and the Thin Blue Line Flag, or the "Police Flag" as I like to call it. I have since been flying the Thin Blue Line Flag outside of my home. After 5 years of no concerns from my HOA, and on the 5<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of my son's death, I received a letter from my HOA that stated the flag that I displayed to honor my son, and the ultimate sacrifice that he made, was a political statement.

**Let me be abundantly clear. I display the thin blue line flag for the sole purpose of remembrance to my son.**

I at first refused to take down the Thin Blue Line Flag. However, after a lengthy battle I took it down in October of 2022. I was forced to take it down. I contacted State Representative Kevin D. Miller and asked him to help me add the Thin Blue Line Flag to the list of protected flags in the State of Ohio, and that is why I stand before you today.

Our officers put their lives on the line for us every single day, much like the members of our military. When they sacrifice their lives for the better of their community, the families, friends, and fellow members of that community should be allowed to fly the Thin Blue Line Flag in their honor. I urge you to please add this flag to the list of flags that can be flown in the Great State of Ohio, and thank you in advance for letting first responders know that you support them.

Thank you for allowing me to come and testify, I am more than happy to take any questions.

Thomas DiSario

