



Representative Lauren McNally
59th House District

Good morning, Chair McClain, Vice Chair Dobos, Ranking Member Grim, and members of the Ohio House Transportation Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill (HB) 456, legislation designating the only mile portion of State Route 170 within the village limits of New Middletown in Ohio's 59th district as the Police Chief Ronnie Ricketts, Sr. Memorial Highway.

The Police Chief Ronnie Ricketts, Sr. Memorial Highway designation will be in the southeast Mahoning County village, New Middletown, near the Pennsylvania border where Chief Ricketts was a 25-year police force veteran with the New Middletown Police Department, a department that at the time consisted of a Chief and three officers, all of whom were part-time workers. [Chief Ricketts](#) died on Wednesday, April 2, 1997, in a vehicular accident while on duty delivering court paper to Struthers Municipal Court. He was 55 years old and had been serving as the Interim Police Chief for five months. New Middletown Mayor Leland Walker said at the time, "He served the village very well. You enjoy having officers of this caliber."

A lifelong resident of the area, Chief Ricketts loss was felt throughout the region, with neighboring Poland Township observing a moment of silence during a Township Trustees meeting shortly following the accident. In addition to his service as Police Chief, Ronnie Ricketts was a Navy veteran and member of the VFW Post 2799 in New Springfield as well as a supervisor at Metal Carbides Inc. in Boardman. He was a member of the Zion Lutheran Church council in New Middletown and head of its Fellowship Committee, a consummate public servant who believed in community and the betterment of all.

HB 456 and the subsequent road naming proposal was brought to our office by Chief Ricketts' surviving brother, Larry. He has been advocating for years to honor his brother's service. His advocacy includes seeking a resolution of support from the Village of New Middletown, ensuring their agreement with the placement and any potential ongoing maintenance costs following the installation of the sign as this is the only mile of state highway within their territory. Their resolution of support is included with this sponsor testimony for your review. Like Larry, they are looking forward to seeing this designation become law and are following this legislation's movement closely.

Chair McClain, Vice Chair Dobos, Ranking Member Grim, and members of the Ohio House Transportation Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on the Chief Ricketts Memorial Highway designation legislation. I would be happy to answer any of your questions.