

47th House District

Portions of Butler County, including
Hamilton and Fairfield, Ross
Township and portions of Fairfield,
Hanover and St. Clair townships

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Sara P. Carruthers Ohio State Representative

Committees

- Finance-
- Finance Subcommittee on Health & Human Services-
- Transportation-
- Behavioral Health- Homeland Security-

Commissions/Councils/Boards

- Early Childhood Advisory Council-
- Ohio Children's Trust Fund-
- Ohio Arts Council-
- Ohio Holocaust & Genocide Memorial & Education Commission-

Chair McClain, Vice Chair Dobos, Ranking Member Grim, and members of the Transportation Committee, today, I stand before you to speak about a young man whose service to our country left an indelible mark on his community, his family, and all who knew him—Sgt. Anthony M. K. Vinnedge.

Through House Bill 674, we will dedicate a part of our highway system to this distinguished gentleman, ensuring that his sacrifice will be remembered by everyone who passes through this area. This small gesture is but a fraction of the legacy he has left behind—a legacy that will continue to inspire and serve as a reminder of the selflessness of those who answer the call to serve.

Tony Vinnedge's story is one of tradition, service, and sacrifice. Born in Okeana, Ohio, he was the son of Deborah Kress Vinnedge and Michael Vinnedge. But Tony's connection to this community goes even deeper. His family has called this area home since the 1930s, and it's where Tony grew up, creating memories on the family's 90+ acre farm. It is in this very community that he learned the values of hard work, dedication, and commitment that would later define his military service.

Tony's story of service began long before he joined the Army in 2002. His grandfather, a proud Army veteran of the Korean War, set a remarkable example for Tony. In 1952, his grandfather joined the Army, and fifty years later, Tony followed in his footsteps. It was a fitting tribute to the family's long-standing tradition of military service.

Tony enlisted in the Army in 2002, and for three years, he served with distinction on active duty. But his sense of duty did not end there. After completing his active duty service, Tony joined the Ohio National Guard as a Patriot Missile battery operator, where he served for an additional two years. During his time with the Guard, he was deployed twice to Iraq, the last of which was with the 2nd Squadron, 107th Cavalry, based out of the Armory on Symmes Road in Fairfield and Greenville, Ohio. It was here, in these communities, that Tony spent much of his life and where he created some of his fondest memories.

On July 5th, 2006, Tony made the ultimate sacrifice while serving in the Radwanayah Palace Complex in Iraq. Though his passing was not the result of enemy action, his commitment to his country was unquestionable, and the cost of his service is something we can never take for granted. Tony gave his life so that others might have the freedom to live theirs, and for that, we

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are eternally grateful.

As we dedicate this highway in his honor, we are reminded of the deep connection Tony had to this community and the significant role it played in shaping who he became. For Debbie, Tony's mother, passing by his memorial sign on a daily basis will forever be a bittersweet reminder of a son who gave everything for the country he loved, but also a quiet moment of pride she can experience every day as she drives past his name.

The naming of this section of highway is a testament not only to Tony's sacrifice but to the strength of a family, the pride of a community, and the enduring power of tradition. Tony followed in his grandfather's footsteps, and now, his name will live on as part of the very fabric of this place he called home.

Sgt. Anthony M. K. Vinnedge will never be forgotten. His service, his bravery, and his sacrifice will continue to inspire us all. As we drive past his memorial, let us remember the life of a young man who answered the call to duty and made the ultimate sacrifice for us all. His legacy will live on in every mile, every turn, and every moment of remembrance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sara Carruthers".

Sara P. Carruthers
State Representative
47th Ohio House District