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Kevin D. Miller State Representative

Good Afternoon

Chairman Rulli, Vice-Chair Schuring, Ranking Member DeMora and members of the Senate General Government Committee, thank you for allowing me to present sponsor testimony for House Bill 100 titled the Chief Steven "Eric" DiSario Act.

This legislation will prohibit manufactured home park operators, condominium associations, neighborhood associations, and landlords from restricting the display of the "Thin Blue Line Flag." In essence, the bill adds this flag to a list of other protected flags including the American Flag, State of Ohio Flag, the POW/MIA flag and other military flags.

The "Thin Blue Line Flag" is used by law enforcement to commemorate fallen law enforcement officers, to show support for living law enforcement officers, and to symbolize the relationship of law enforcement with the community as protectors of the citizenry. For police officers, it represents they are a part of something bigger than themselves, a special call to duty. For many civilians, it says they are willing to stand with those who sacrifice daily to maintain law and order and whose vocation is dedicated to protecting others and upholding the law.

This issue was brought to me by a constituent of mine by the name of Thomas DiSario. His heartbreaking story exemplifies just why this piece of legislation is needed. Tragically, in 2017, Mr. DiSario lost his son, Chief Steven "Eric" DiSario who was the Chief of Police for the Village of Kirkersville located in Licking County. Chief DiSario was tragically shot and killed in the line of duty responding to an incident involving an armed suspect in Kirkersville. Like far too many law enforcement officers, Chief DiSario lost his life responding to a call of service, and he will forever be remembered as a hero to his community and to those he served.

Chief DiSario's father was given a Thin Blue Line Flag at his son's funeral which he faithfully flew in his yard for over 4 years. That is until he received a letter from his homeowner's association demanding the flag be taken down. The association deemed the display of the flag as a "political statement" which was prohibited by the by-laws and was therefore required to be removed. You will hear directly from Mr. DiSario who will be providing proponent testimony regarding what the flag means to him. He will tell you it represents the legacy of his son, and the ultimate sacrifice that he made while serving his community.

This legislation is not a new idea. In fact, it was introduced in the 132nd General Assembly as House Bill 712. The bill passed out of the House with overwhelming bipartisan support by a vote of 90-2.

Unfortunately, due to the late introduction in the session, it did not make it through the entire legislative process.

I urge you to join me in support of the brave men and women of law enforcement who answer the call of duty each and every day and also for those like Chief DiSario who have made the ultimate sacrifice for their communities. Supporting those who protect and serve each and every one of us is a bipartisan issue and I hope you will join me by voting yes on House Bill 100.

Chair Rulli, Vice-chair Schuring, Ranking Member DeMora, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to present sponsor testimony on House Bill 100 and I would be more than happy to answer any questions you may have.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin D. Miller". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Kevin D. Miller
State Representative
Ohio's 69th House District