

44th House District

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State Representative Joshua E. Williams
Ohio House of Representatives

Chairman Willis, Vice-Chair Daniels, Ranking Member Grim, and members of the House Transportation Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak in favor of HB 228 today. I would also like to thank my joint sponsor, Representative Rogers, and Shawnelle Johns, SSG Coy's great-niece, for sharing his story with us.

HB 228 would designate a portion of Interstate 280 in Lucas County as the SSG Jack W. Coy Veterans Memorial Highway. Mr. Coy, just 20 years old at the time of his death, was born and raised in the Toledo area. With the onset of the US' involvement in WWII in 1941, Coy was eager to defend his country. Rising to the rank of staff sergeant in the U.S. Army Air Force, he was assigned to the 703rd Bombardment Squadron in Europe, under the command of actor Jimmy Stewart.

Acting as a tail gunner when his aircraft was shot down over Gotha, Germany, Coy was one of six crewmembers who tragically passed away. Their remains were said to be buried in a local cemetery by German troops. In 1952, the American Graves Restoration Command retrieved SSG Coy's remains and moved them to the Ardennes America Cemetery in Belgium. In 2021, historians with the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) exhumed his remains and they were subsequently identified positively as those of Jack Coy.

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After positive identification, his remains were returned to his family, and they were able to give him a proper burial in his hometown of Oregon. This bill would designate the north and southbound lanes of I-280 between Navarre Avenue and Front Street in Lucas County as SSG Jack W. Coy Veterans Memorial Highway. This memorial would be of great significance to his surviving family and a way to honor a young American hero we lost too soon.

Chairman Willis, Vice-Chair Daniels, Ranking Member Grim, and members of the House Transportation Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 228. I welcome any questions you may have.