



REPRESENTATIVE JASON STEPHENS
OHIO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

77 S. HIGH STREET, 13TH FLOOR
COLUMBUS, OH 43215
REP93@OHIOHOUSE.GOV

House Bill 310 Sponsor Testimony

June 10, 2025

Chair Willis, Vice Chair Daniels, Ranking Member Grim, and members of the House Transportation Committee, thank you for me to present sponsor testimony on House Bill 310, to create the Ironton Fighting Tigers license plate.

It's no secret, especially in Southeastern Ohio, that the Ironton community and its schools have a long tradition of excellence. Ironton City Schools and their Fighting Tigers have been a symbol of athletic prowess for well over 100 years. The high standards of excellence and community pride set by the Fighting Tigers make the Ironton community a great place to call home.

One cannot bring up the Fighting Tigers without mentioning their football team. The Ironton Fighting Tigers are extremely well-respected throughout Ohio and the Midwest as the Division 5 state champions, having won 28-17 over Liberty Center this past December 7th in Canton. The Fighting Tigers also won state titles in 1979 and 1989, in addition to being state runners-up 9 other times. The program also has the most postseason playoff appearances of any Division Five football team with 40 total postseason games.

The Fighting Tigers play their home games on the Ironton Tanks field. The Tanks began in 1919 as a semi-professional football team was formed by combining two cross-town rival clubs. The Tanks, named for both Ironton's ties to the iron industry and the determination of returning World War I soldiers, boasted an impressive record including 85 wins, 19 losses, 14 ties, and an undefeated 1922 season. This semi-pro team also marked wins over the New York Giants and Chicago Bears. The Tanks merged with Portsmouth Spartans' professional team in nearby Scioto County in 1930. This team survives today as the Detroit Lions.

Many of the Tanks' traditions continue to this day. Tanks Memorial Stadium at Ironton High School stands as one of the last remaining covered stadiums still in use by a high school team. The Tanks' Thanksgiving Day game, which began at Tanks Stadium when they beat the Huntington Boosters 12-0 on November 30th, 1922, continues each year when the Detroit Lions play on Thanksgiving.

The contributions of the Tanks and Fighting Tigers have left an incredible legacy for our state, nation, and the sport of football. The Ironton Fighting Tigers license plate will

celebrate the many past successes of the Ironton Fighting Tigers while creating much-needed opportunities to help current graduates and athletes succeed.

Thank you again for allowing me to testify to House Bill 310. I am happy to answer any questions the committee may have.