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Ohio House of Representatives

James Hoops
State Representative

Chairman Willis, Vice Chairman Daniels, Ranking Member Grim, and all members of the Transportation Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 339. This issue was brought to my attention last summer by a young man named Grady whose Poppa was a recipient of the Purple Heart.

House Bill 339 is legislation that would allow the spouses of Purple heart recipients to retain the Purple Heart specialty license plate following the death of their spouse, under specified conditions. This legislation ensures that the honor associated with the Purple Heart does not end with the life of the recipient but continues to recognize the sacrifice made by both the service members, and their family. The Purple Heart Award is one of our nation's oldest and most honored military decorations, dating back to 1782. It is awarded to service members who have been wounded or killed in action, and it continues to stand as a symbol of American sacrifice and courage. While the medal is awarded to the service members, the sacrifice was also made by their families as well.

Currently, Ohio law only allows the Purple Heart plate to be issued to the recipient, and it must be surrendered upon their death. This current requirement ends a meaningful form of military decoration and recognition. House Bill 339 corrects this by allowing spouses to retain the Purple Heart license plate after the recipients passing.

Several states including Louisiana, Illinois, Indiana, Maine, and Washington have taken steps to continue to allow surviving spouses to retain Purple Heart plates, recognizing that honoring military sacrifice should be honored past the death of the recipient. Ohio should join these states in ensuring that our polices reflect, respect and extend our appreciation to those families who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. House Bill 339 continues to allow loved one's honor and remember their loved one's sacrifice. I respectfully urge the transportation committee to support House Bill 339 and help Ohio preserve its long tradition of supporting and Honoring veterans and their families. I'd like to thank all of the members of the Transportation Committee for allowing me to speak for House Bill 339. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.