Ohio House of Representatives

State Representative Mark Johnson

District 92

HCR 27 Sponsor Testimony

Chair Richardson, Vice Chair Mathews, Ranking Member Lawson-Row, members of the Veterans and Military Development Committee; thank you for giving me the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Concurrent Resolution 27. This resolution would support use of state land for a new VA National cemetery in Chillicothe; a central location in the Midwest.

Camp Sherman, located near Chillicothe, Ohio, played a significant role in World War I as a major training and mobilization center for the U.S. Army. The camp was established in 1917, following the U.S. entry into the war. The federal government needed a large training facility to prepare soldiers for deployment to Europe. After the United States declared war on Germany in April 1917, the military rapidly expanded its infrastructure to support the war effort.

To create Camp Sherman, the federal government purchased about 2,000 acres of farmland near Chillicothe, Ohio. The land was acquired in May 1917, and construction of the camp began almost immediately. The site was chosen due to its proximity to railroads for troop and equipment transportation, as well as its relatively flat terrain, which was ideal for large military encampments and training exercises.

The camp was named after General William Tecumseh Sherman, a prominent Union Army general during the Civil War, who was born in Lancaster, Ohio. The camp was officially activated in August 1917 and became one of the largest training facilities in the United States during World War I. It housed

thousands of soldiers, trained them in various military disciplines, and prepared them for deployment to the European front.

During and after the war over 7,000 soldiers were hospitalized at Camp Sherman. After the war, Chillicothe became the sight of the first VA hospital medical center in 1924. In 1930, Congress Established the Veterans Administration, and the result being 54 hospitals nationwide.

We inquired about the Dayton National Cemetery and there are currently 63,000 veterans interred. They anticipate that their capacity will be reached at some point in the mid-2050's, and that is with including the current expansion that is in progress.

Ohio has nearly 700,000 veterans, which is the 6th largest veteran's population in the United States. And this is just the veterans. There are thousands of Active Duty, National Guard, and Reserve individuals in Ohio who are currently fighting for our freedoms.

I encourage your support in this effort. Thank you again for giving me the opportunity to give testimony, I welcome any questions.