

Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the committee:

Your consideration of Ohio House Bill 452 is very important to honor a proud chapter of our history and to inspire future generations.

I respectfully support Ohio House Bill 452, which honors the historic 761st Tank Battalion, a unit renowned for its perseverance and bravery. As a former Mayor of Springfield, Ohio, I have always believed that communities are strengthened when we remember and recognize the courage of those who served our nation with distinction. The story of the 761st Tank Battalion—the legendary “Black Panthers”—is one of perseverance, bravery, and commitment to a country that did not always fully recognize their sacrifice.

This legislation is especially meaningful to me on a personal level. Growing up in Springfield, I was inspired by Lymon Alexander, a proud member of the 761st Tank Battalion, whose quiet dignity left a lasting impression on me as a fellow church member, community leader, and my Boy Scout leader.

Springfield has always been a close-knit community where stories and service are passed down through generations. That sense of civic responsibility shaped my own path in public service. It eventually led me to serve the State of Ohio as one of the House Clerks during the 113th and 114th Ohio General Assemblies. Experiences like that reminded me how important it is for institutions—and communities—to remember the people whose service helped shape our nation.

Honoring the 761st Tank Battalion ensures that Ohio remembers soldiers like Lymon Alexander and his fellow soldiers—men whose bravery helped secure freedom abroad and whose service continues to inspire us at home. I respectfully urge your favorable consideration of this bill so that their sacrifices are recognized, and their stories are told and preserved for future generations.

Timothy Ayers, Former Mayor - Springfield, Ohio