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**Sponsor Testimony: Senate Bill 253**

Chair Johnson, Vice Chair Wilson, Ranking Member Weinstein, and members of the Armed Services, Veterans Affairs, and Public Safety Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to present sponsor testimony on this meaningful legislation.

In continuing my support for the designation of February 20th as “Black Ohioan Civil War Medal of Honor Recipient Day,” I want to emphasize that this is more than just a ceremonial gesture. This is a necessary act of historical correction and intentional remembrance. When we look at the legacy of James H. Bronson, Robert A. Pinn, and Powhatan Beaty, we are reminded that history does not always speak for those who made it.

These men were symbols of resilience in a time when their very humanity was questioned. They fought not only for the Union, but for a future they may never have fully experienced. Their courage helped many to uncover what it meant to be an American.

This legislation is a commitment to remembering our shared history and honoring those who gave their all in service to a nation that did not always serve them in return. This is an opportunity to honor noble parts of American history that have often been left out of textbooks. I believe we have a duty to impart a sense of pride into other generations through our work here in the senate and this bill will do that.

Designating this day provides an opportunity for schools, civic groups, and communities across Ohio to engage with this important history. It encourages education, reflection, and pride, especially among young Black Ohioans who can see their heritage represented in the valor of these Medal of Honor recipients. It sends a powerful message that Ohio does not forget its heroes, and that sacrifice for American freedom are recognized regardless of race.

I respectfully urge your support for this bill. Thank you again for your time, attention, and dedication to honoring Ohio’s rich and diverse military history. I welcome any questions the committee may have.