



**Hearcel F. Craig**

Assistant Minority Leader

State Senator | 15th District

**Sponsor Testimony for Senate Bill 253 of the 136<sup>th</sup> General Assembly**

**Armed Services, Veterans Affairs, and Public Safety Committee**

**October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

Chair Johnson, Vice Chair Wilson, Ranking Member Weinstein, and members of the Armed Services Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on this meaningful piece of legislation.

Senator Reynolds and I are honored to introduce a bill that would designate February 20th as “Black Ohioan Civil War Medal of Honor Recipient Day.”

This is an intentional step to honor the bravery, sacrifice, and patriotism of Black soldiers from Ohio who received the Congressional Medal of Honor for their extraordinary service during the American Civil War. At a time when our nation was torn apart by the question of freedom and equality, these men stepped forward with courage that changed the course of history.

I think it would be disingenuous to recognize these soldiers and to not speak their names. These courageous men were known as: James H. Bronson, Robert A. Pinn, and Powhatan Beaty.

These brave men fought in one of the most defining moments in our nation’s story. Black Ohioans who fought in the Civil War, and particularly those who were recognized with our nation’s highest military honor, demonstrated valor in the face of grave danger, often while serving in segregated units and enduring discrimination even as they wore the uniform of the United States. Their sacrifices embodied the highest ideals of service: duty, honor, and country.

Yet too often, the heroism of these Americans has been overlooked or simply left untold. By formally recognizing February 20th as Black Ohioan Civil War Medal of Honor Recipient Day, we ensure that future generations will not forget. We acknowledge their extraordinary contributions not only to the Union’s

victory, but also to the ongoing struggle for freedom, equality, and justice that continues to shape our state and our nation.

Thank you, Chair Johnson, Vice Chair Wilson, Ranking Member Weinstein, and members of the committee. I respectfully ask for your support and would be glad to answer any questions.