



June 9, 2021

RE: Am. S.B. 59

Chairman Ghambari, Vice Chairman Loychik, Ranking Member Miller and members of the Armed Services and Veterans Affairs Committee. It is an honor to be given the opportunity to come before this committee today and testify in support of Am. S.B. 59. I am a Past Commander of the Ohio Department Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, and a Past National Commander of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. I am currently the National Commander of the Sons of Veterans Reserve (SVR) which is the uniformed military department of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. The SVR members wearing Civil War era uniforms serve as a Color Guard, and fire musket salutes at various ceremonies, march in parades, participate in Memorial Day services, conduct Civil War living history programs, and some of our members participate in Civil War re-enactments.

The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War is a Congressionally Chartered organization created in 1881 by the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR). One of our objectives is to perpetuate the memory of the GAR and to preserve our Civil War heritage.

I am a United States Air Force Vietnam War era veteran and a member of the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame. For over 30 years I have been involved in helping protect and preserve memorials erected to honor our military veterans.

One of the problems the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War faces is protecting Civil War cannons that serve as memorials to Civil War veterans. Almost every community had a GAR Post. The members were proud of their Civil War military service and the part they played in preserving our Union of States. Many of the war memorials erected by the GAR members still exist and the Civil War cannons and artillery pieces that serve as memorials have become very valuable.



Many of the small communities where these memorials are located have challenging financial needs. When officials charged with taking care of these war memorials are approached with an offer to buy a memorial and replace it with a replica that supposedly is just as good as the real thing, the officials responsible for the memorial often jump at the opportunity to obtain badly needed money.

A few weeks ago, I testified before this committee in support of H.B. 190 and related some of the situations that our organization has faced in attempting to save Civil War cannons that are part of GAR war memorials. I won't take time today to describe those particular issues again. But, without the intervention of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War several Civil War cannon memorials would be gone.

On some occasions our organization has been successful in saving a war memorial by convincing a legislative body, such as a city council, board of trustees etc. that disposing of a memorial dedicated to the memory of military veterans is simply the wrong thing to do. However, on other occasions legal action has been necessary to preserve a war memorial.

Am. S.B. 59 will be a great help in making sure that some of the successes we have had will not be reversed by local officials and judges in the future. We are also confident that it will help discourage the sale or disposal of war memorial cannons and artillery in the future.

I ask that you vote in favor of Am. S.B. 59.

Robert E. Grim
National Commander
Sons of Veterans Reserve