

Ohio House of Representatives
Committee on Transportation and Public Safety
Testimony: Ranking Member Michael Sheehy, House Bill 19

Chair Baldrige, Vice-Chair McClain, and members of the Ohio House Transportation and Public Safety Committee: thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on House Bill 19, which designates a portion of State Route 184, also known as Alexis Road, the "Officer Anthony Dia Memorial Highway."

On July Fourth when many Ohioans were celebrating the Birth of Our Nation, Toledo Police Officer Anthony Dia answered a call to assist a citizen at a large retail store on Alexis Road. After attempting to make contact with the citizen, the citizen inexplicably shot and killed Officer Dia.

This senseless murder of young Officer Anthony Dia shocked and saddened an entire community. Capable, respected, loyal, and just shy of two years of service on the Toledo Police Department, Officer Dia was the beloved husband to his wife, Jayme, and father to sons Younes and Maytham. This unprovoked murder of one of Ohio's finest peace officers is an affront to and an assault on every citizen in Ohio.

A man of faith, Officer Dia attended a religious retreat during the Holy Days of Ramadan. During that time of prayer and reflection, he wrote a letter to his wife and sons. This moving letter was read by Imam Moustafa Rahal at the funeral service at John Savage Arena attended by hundreds of mourners and area law enforcement professionals. In moving and precise language, Officer Dia penned his last requests to his beloved wife and sons.

Toledo Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz evoked Officer Dia's loyalty by quoting William Shakespeare and Mother Teresa. Toledo Police Chief George Kral quoted George Orwell in understanding the service and loyalty of this fallen officer.

Members of the Ohio House Transportation and Public Safety Committee, I find no joy in asking you to consider this legislation for a mile marker to recognize Officer Dia, but I do find solace in knowing that we are able to honor the commitment he made to protect and serve his community. In this new age of information, I urge you to watch the entire service for Officer Anthony Dia on YouTube. I have saved a program of his funeral service as a reminder of his sacrifices.

Please know that this violence is not typical, but also not unheard of in the City of Toledo. Etched in my mind from my grade school days, are the loss of Toledo Police Officers Walter Boyle and William Miscannon, in my adult life the loss of Officer Keith Drussel, and now young officers Anthony Dia and Brandon Stalker.

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today, and I urge passage of this legislation so that this recognition can move forward expeditiously.