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HARAZ N. GHANBARI

State Representative | Ohio House District 3

Chairman
Armed Services and Veterans Affairs

Committees
Finance
Finance Subcommittee on Higher
Education
Transportation and Public Safety
Technology and Innovation

March 23, 2021

Chairman Baldrige, Vice Chair McClain, Ranking Member Sheehy, and colleagues of the Transportation and Public Safety Committee — thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 164.

My fellow Ohioans, House Bill 164 will name a portion of State Route 795 the “Lake Township Veterans Memorial Highway.” This request was brought to me by fellow veteran and Lake Township Trustee Ken Gilsdorf who also serves as the Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Walbridge Post 9963. Lake Township has a rich history of service to our nation and this road naming will honor those residents who have served in our armed services and those who gave their final sacrifice in defense of the United States and the freedoms that we hold dear.

Lake Township has done a lot over the last few years to honor these veterans and a memorial highway will only add to the community’s efforts to consecrate the sacrifice of their neighbors, family members, and friends. In 2019 Lake Local Schools unveiled and dedicated their Veterans Wall Memorial at their high school to honor anyone who attended and/or graduated from Lake Local Schools.

There are approximately six hundred names on the wall, including six who paid the ultimate sacrifice and one former Prisoner of War: 97-year-old Irwin Welling who was a farmer in Millbury that served in the Army Air Corp and was a POW for 11 months during WWII. Mr. Welling was killed in the 2010 EF4 tornado that destroyed the school and took six lives. This Veterans Wall Memorial project took over a year to design and implement and was a combined effort of school officials and VFW Walbridge Post 9963 veterans.

Additionally, Lake Township Cemetery, a short distance from the high school, is the final resting place of approximately 2,300 veterans. Each year Lake Township, the VFW Walbridge Post 9963, Lake Local Schools and the greater community combine efforts during Memorial Day for a parade and ceremony at Lake Township Cemetery. Approximately four hundred people attend annually. The Post also performs approximately thirty military burial funeral honors each year at the cemetery.

Thank you for your consideration of House Bill 164. The naming of the “Lake Township Veterans Memorial Highway” will serve as a generational reminder of the service and sacrifice local residents gave to their community, this state, and our nation. More importantly it will help inform visitors of the heritage of Lake Township. Thank you for your earnest consideration; I respectfully ask for your unanimous support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Haraz N. Ghanbari".

Haraz N. Ghanbari
Member of the Ohio House of Representatives