



**Senators Theresa Gavarone
Sponsor Testimony, Senate Bill 312
Transportation Committee
April 6, 2022**

Chair Kunze, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Transportation Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 312.

S.B. 312 would designate a portion of State Route 113 in Erie County as the “U.S. Navy Corpsman Maxton Soviak Memorial Highway.”

This bill would honor the late Navy Fleet Marine Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Maxton “Max” Soviak who, along with 12 other American heroes, was killed last year when terrorists struck the Kabul airport in Afghanistan. Corpsman Soviak was at the airport with his fellow soldiers to evacuate Afghani civilians as terrorists took over the country.

According to his family and friends, Soviak was full of life. He was actively involved in every way possible as a member of the football team, wrestling team, tennis team, track team and band during his school career. He was passionate about travel and enjoyed going all over the world during his time with the Navy. Soviak also prioritized his family back home, especially his 12 siblings who adored him. No matter how busy, he always kept in touch with his family. Max Soviak was truly your traditional, homegrown young man.

Following his graduation, Soviak joined the Navy to make a difference and to serve his country. He never wavered in that commitment. During his final days, Soviak personally transported three children to the mobile hospital at the airport, and when the bombs went off, he was caring for a mother and child. Soviak died instantly during the attack. He was only 22 years old.

In that moment, Ohio and America lost a hero.

Corpsman Soviak was well-respected and liked by everyone who knew him. He represented the very best of Ohio and made the ultimate sacrifice to protect his fellow Americans and our allies. Countless people across my district, our state and the country have paid their respects to this young Ohioan. I ask that we do the same and honor Corpsman Soviak for his bravery, for his compassion, and for his service.

To recognize his dedication to the nation, Corpsman Soviak was posthumously advanced to the rank of Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class, and was awarded the Purple Heart and Fleet Marine Force Corpsman warfare badge. S.B. 312 is an opportunity for Ohio to honor one of our own, a brave fallen soldier who left an indelible mark on his state and country.

Thank you again Madam Chair for allowing me to give sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 312. I am happy to answer any questions from the Committee.