



Representative Terrence Upchurch
10th House District

**Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee
House Bill 137 Sponsor Testimony
Representative Terrence Upchurch
Designate “March 29th” as Ohio Tuskegee Airmen Day
May 24th, 2021**

Chairman Hoagland, Vice Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Thomas and members of the Veterans and Public Safety Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 137, legislation to designate “March 29th” as Ohio Tuskegee Airmen Day.

The Tuskegee Airmen were the first African-American fighter group to serve in the Army Air Corps. They fought in an Army that was still segregated, battling the enemy abroad with prejudice awaiting them when they returned home, and paved the way for the desegregation of the U.S. military in 1948 and the civil rights movement.

By the time the 332nd flew its last combat mission on April 26, 1945, two weeks before the German surrender, the Tuskegee Airmen had flown more than 15,000 individual sorties over two years in combat.

They had destroyed or damaged 36 German planes in the air and 237 on the ground, as well as nearly 1,000 rail cars and transport vehicles and a German destroyer. In all, 66 Tuskegee-trained aviators were killed in action during World War II, while another 32 were captured as POWs after being shot down.

Hearing stories about the Tuskegee Airmen, you cannot help but to be impressed by the lasting impact on American History. I respectfully ask that this committee adopt House Bill 137 to memorialize this brave individuals who served our great country. I will now take any questions you may have.

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