

Testimony to State of Ohio Senate Regarding HB 59

By Frankie DiCarlantonio, June 27th, 2017, 9:45 AM

Chairman Uecker, Vice-Chairman Wilson, Ranking Member Thomas, and my home district Senator Hoagland,

I would first like to thank everyone for the opportunity to speak in front of the Local Government, Public Safety, and Veteran Affairs Committee on behalf of House Bill 59, a bill to designate October 7th Moses Fleetwood Walker Day.

As you have heard from this bill before, Moses Fleetwood Walker was the first African-American to play in the Major League Baseball Association. It is a common misconception that Jackie Robinson has this title, but Mr. Walker along with his brother, Weldy Walker who is the second African-American to play in the Major Leagues, took that record in 1883, well before Jackie Robinson was even born. They were a proud member of the Toledo Blue Stockings team in that year, with Jackie Robinson not even joining the Major League Baseball Association until 1947.

I am here today because as a citizen of the City of Steubenville, where Moses Fleetwood grew up, was a local businessman, and is laid to rest, I would like to see this notable man be honored for his accomplishments. The City of Steubenville would be proud to have this official day set for Moses Fleetwood Walker.

I first learned about this honorable City of Steubenville resident about two years ago in casual conversation. Upon learning this fact, I was amazed at whenever I would question fellow City of Steubenville residents about it, they did not know who Mr. Walker was and believed that Jackie Robinson held this title. Being able to honor Moses Fleetwood with a holiday of his own in the State of Ohio would bring us the opportunity to honor him locally in Steubenville and be able to educate others about this great achievement that he had in his lifetime.

I would implore that this committee vote this bill through and encourage your peers in the Ohio Senate to do the same if it successfully is voted on within this committee and makes it to the Senate Floor.

I thank you for your time today and would be happy to answer any questions that you may have of me. Thank you.