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Dear Representative Hillyer and members of the 134<sup>th</sup> General Assembly;

I wish to express my appreciation for your consideration of naming the Johnson Drive, highway overpass on U.S. Route 250, Uhrichsville, Ohio, in honor of Specialist Ronald Gene Johnson. Additionally, I support your efforts in consideration of backing House Bill 521 for this purpose.

Specialist Johnson resided and grew up in the City of Uhrichsville. He graduated from Uhrichsville High school in 1962 where he played football, no different than many other young men, that age; it was the direction that his life took after high school that further defined the man that he was. From what I have learned about “Ronnie”, he was a man of distinction and character, he was quiet and not one that you would associate with violence. But when his country called, he answered, maybe not because he wanted to, but because he knew it was the right thing to do. He left a wife, his family, friends, his hometown, and a job in service of his country.

Ronald Gene Johnson served his country in the Republic of Vietnam, he died in the service of his country on February 7, 1968 in Quang Nam, Vietnam. Johnson was assigned to Company B, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 35<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. His company was assaulting a fortified village, occupied by an estimated platoon of North Vietnamese Army south of the City of Da Nang. As Specialist Johnson was leading his squad in the assault, which came under intense automatic weapon fire. With complete disregard for his own safety, Specialist Johnson remained exposed to hostile fire and directed the return fire of his squad against the enemy. He continued forward, encouraging his men as they advanced. “As they neared the enemy bunkers, he was mortally wounded by a burst of sniper fire along with four other men in his squadron. Through his leadership, his squad was positioned to continue the assault and overrun the enemy”. It was due to his courage, professionalism, and courage that Johnson’s company prevailed. Johnson was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star with a “V” device designation, meaning that meritorious or heroic acts were performed during actual combat. Additionally, he was awarded the Purple Heart.

The City of Uhrichsville named the road in Specialist’s Johnson’s honor after his death, though, to date, there are no indications as to the purpose of the name of the roadway. It is for this reason that I speak on behalf of the community to express our desires to have the newly restored bridge overpass to be named in the honor of Specialist Johnson. The actions of Specialist Johnson on that day, in Viet Nam, define him as a true hero, for which recognition in the naming of this overpass is greatly deserved. Thousands of

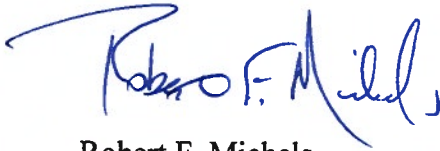
motorists traveling U.S. 250 will be able to view the marker in honor of Specialist Johnson.

Ironically and tragically, Specialist Johnson's brother, Glenn "Sonny" Johnson was killed in a motor vehicle accident directly under this specific U.S. Route 250 bridge-overpass in June of 2017.

Approximately one half of a mile south east of this overpass on 250, is the intersection of McCauley Drive, which is named in honor of Marine PFC Dale McCauley, who was killed in action in Vietnam. Johnson and McCauley are the only two residents of Uhrichsville that were killed in action in Vietnam, with three other men from the Twin-City area of Uhrichsville and Dennison being killed in action during the Vietnam war.

In conclusion, I wish to extend my most sincere appreciation for your consideration of naming the U.S. Route 250 Johnson Drive overpass in honor of Specialist Ronald Gene Johnson, I remain

Very truly yours,



Robert F. Michels

