



**GEAUGA PARK
DISTRICT**

Ohio House of Representatives
Transportation Committee
c/o Representative Diane V. Grendell | House District 76
77 South High Street, 13th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Re: Testimony in Support of HB 584 Geauga County “Veterans Legacy Highway”

Mr. Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide an endorsement for House Bill 584. As Executive Director of Geauga Park District in Geauga County, I am honored to provide testimony in support of this endeavor. As a Veteran of the U.S. Air Force, it is a privilege to represent my fellow brothers and sisters who served the State of Ohio and the United States of America with distinction.

Veterans Legacy Highway will dedicate 4.3 miles of State Route 44 to our veterans. The route connects residents and visitors to many of our most prominent resources. It is a direct route through our county seat in Chardon. The route is located immediately adjacent to our County Veterans Memorial located between University Hospitals Geauga and the Geauga County Sheriff’s Department Safety Center. This highway presents a unique opportunity to connect the residents of Geauga County and Northeast Ohio to these amenities. If dedicated, the highway would make a perfect location for this distinction. The location would serve as the heart and soul of Geauga County in honoring our veterans.

In 2021 our organization completed its newest park, Veterans Legacy Woods. The 200-acre park is one of twenty-seven parks encompassing over 10,000 acres in our system. It is our only park dedicated exclusively to veterans of the armed forces. The park is located on State Route 44 in Newbury and Burton Townships between State Route 322 and State Route 87. The park was created and built with veterans and their families in mind. We are privileged to host a number of park guests. It is especially gratifying to host our veterans.

The newly built park has a veterans memorial walkway, open air shelter, a lodge for family and public events, public restrooms, and a boot camp themed playground. Flagpoles with armed services flags frame the entrance drive and parking lot and welcome our guests. In tune with our mission to provide outdoor recreational experience to our residents of every age, every ability, and at all times of the year the park has 4.68 miles of hiking and walking trails and



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ponds for fishing. The majority of the property is dedicated to the portion of our mission that is dedicated to the preservation, conservation, and protection of natural features. One of our goals for the property is to give veterans a special place to experience healing and peace through tranquility, and solitude in nature. This park is a special place for those who deserve it most, our Armed Services Veterans

I would like to thank Geauga County Veterans Service Commission Director Michele Pemberton and Ohio State Representative Diane Grendell for spearheading this effort. As a Veteran myself, it is an honor to see our Veterans recognized for their sacrifice by the members of the Ohio House and Senate. Geauga Park District is honored to be affiliated with this project. Thank you for your consideration of this noteworthy endeavor.

Sincerely,

John Oros, Executive Director