



**Tim Ginter**  
**Speaker Pro-Tempore**  
State Representative, 5<sup>th</sup> District

Chair Baldrige, Vice-Chair McClain, Ranking Member Sheehy and members of the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak on House Bill 543 – to designate “PFC Melvin E. Newlin, Medal of Honor Recipient, Memorial Highway”.

Melvin Newlin grew up in Wellsville, a small village that sits on the Ohio River in Columbiana County. In 1966, he enlisted in the Marine Corp at the age of 17, being assigned as a machine gunner with Company F of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Batallion, 5<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment, 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division. That November, he was sent to Vietnam.

On the night of July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1967 his unit was stationed at an outpost at Nong Son Mountain when 400 enemy fighters launched an attack on his position. Despite sustaining a series of wounds from small-arms fire, he relentlessly engaged the enemy attack to repel two attempts on the outpost. A third attempt rendered him unconscious during a grenade explosion and the offensive, believing he had been killed, continued their assault towards the platoon’s main force.

When he regained consciousness, Melvin Newlin crawled back to a machine gun and was able to engage the enemies from behind. Thrown off by his fire, he was able to repel two subsequent assaults on his position and disrupt the attack on his platoon. In the early hours of July 4, 1967, Melvin Newlin lost his life as he continued to protect his unit. His actions inflicted heavy casualties among the enemies and allowed the Marines to organize a successful defense of the outpost. His actions undoubtedly saved countless American lives and earned him the Congressional Medal of Honor posthumously on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 1969.

The stretch of this highway is actually already named in honor of Private First Class Newlin, having been designated as “Melvin E. Newlin Memorial Highway” during the 124<sup>th</sup> General Assembly. This legislation would simply change its name to reflect the bravery and sacrifice which earned him the Congressional Medal of Honor. Melvin Newlin remains the pride of Wellsville because of his remarkable actions during the Vietnam War and this road renaming accurately reflects the magnitude of his service to our country. Included in written testimony is two letters, one from a childhood friends and the other from the local American Legion post. Thank you for your time and I’d be happy to take any questions.