

BASIL JOINT FIRE DISTRICT

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Rob Cooley
Fire Chief

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**Senate Transportation Committee
Senate Bill 289 — Sponsor Testimony
March 1st, 2022**

Chairwoman Kunze, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Transportation Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on Senate Bill 289.

Senate Bill 289 would designate the portion of Interstate 70 in Fairfield County as the "Corporal Dustin A. Derga Memorial Highway."

Corporal Derga obtained a fire science degree through Columbus Community College and shortly after joined the the Basil Joint Fire District as a volunteer fireman. During his time at Basil, he served the citizens of our township with great dignity and respect.

Corporal Derga was not only a respected member of our department, but also chose to serve his country as a Marine. During his employment, he was called to service and was granted a leave of absence to join his unit in Iraq. Sadly, during his deployment, his unit was involved in an attack while conducting house to house searches. Corporal Derga was fatally wounded, thus ending a promising career and future.

During his time in the fire service, Corporal Derga had a memorable impact on his fellow fireman as well as the community members he served. He was not given the opportunity to accomplish what would have, no doubt, been a successful career with both the fire service and the military. The Basil Joint Fire District thoroughly supports Senate Bill 289, designating a portion of I-70 in Fairfield County in memory of this hometown hero.

Thank you once again Chairwoman Kunze and members of the committee for the opportunity to present this legislation to you today. I will be glad to answer any questions at this time.

Chief Rob Cooley