

Lawrence Township Police Department

David Brown
Chief of Police

3/25/2023

Good afternoon, Chairman McClain, Vice Chair Ferguson, Ranking Member Grim, and Members of the House Transportation Committee,

I am David Brown, Chief of Police for Lawrence Township in Stark County. I am here today as a proponent of House Bill 88. House Bill 88 is a request to dedicate a portion of SR 236 (Akron Ave) as the Ptl. Sean VanDenberg Memorial Highway. Ptl. VanDenberg began his career in law enforcement in 2013 at the age 45 to pursue his long-time goal of serving his community and making it a better place for everyone he encountered. During his career at Lawrence Township, he held many roles including sniper for the regional SWAT Team, Motor Carrier Enforcement Officer, and firearms instructor. Ptl. VanDenberg's most distinguished role was Field Training Officer. He took pride in mentoring and teaching new officers and quickly became everyone's favorite instructor.

On December 3rd, 2021, Ptl. VanDenberg assisted in the arrest of person wanted on Burglary and Domestic Violence charges. During the arrest, the subject displayed symptoms of and complained of being sick with COVID-19. The following day, Ptl. VanDenberg was hospitalized with an illness and during his treatment also began to exhibit symptoms of COVID-19. Once diagnosed with COVID, Ptl. VanDenberg's health began to quickly deteriorate and after a brief but courageous battle, he passed away on December 25th.

I request SR 236 be dedicated in his name to honor his service, his sacrifice, and to help ensure he is never forgotten. This specific road was selected due to its ties to Ptl. VanDenberg's family: his wife, Jeanann, grew up on Akron Ave and where his mother-in-law still resides. His daughter, who also resides in the township, uses this road daily to commute to work. This memorial, if approved, will have special meaning to each of Ptl. VanDenberg's friends, his family, and brothers and sister in blue.

I would like to thank Representative Stoltzfus for sponsoring this bill and to the committee for allowing me the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

David Brown
Chief of Police
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