



Representative Jamie Callender

Sponsor Testimony: House Bill 61, Designate James A. Garfield Day
Senate Local Government Committee
June 28, 2023

Chair O'Brien, Vice-Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member DeMora, and members of the Senate Local Government Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak today on HB 61. As this legislation begins the second phase of its journey, I wanted to take the opportunity to highlight HB 61 unanimous votes out of both the House State and Local Government Committee and on the House floor.

Representative Troy and I are proud to represent the home of the 20th President of the United States James A. Garfield. While only serving for six months, President Garfield continues to have an impact on the lives of those living in North East Ohio. Garfield's House, located in Mentor, and his final resting place in Lakeview Cemetery, located in Cleveland, are visited by thousands of school fieldtrips, tourists, and researchers every year.

President Garfield had a wide and varied career, serving as the President of the Western Reserve Eclectic Institute, now known as Hiram College, an ordained minister, attorney, officer in the Union Army, nine term Congressman, and United States Senator during his journey to the presidency. During this time, he wrote prolifically and much of this work can be found in his Presidential Library, located in his home in Mentor. President Garfield's library was the first of its kind and is credited for starting the practice of constructing presidential libraries. I can count myself among the many scholars and students who have visited his presidential library seeking insight into the life of the shorted serving president in American history.

This legacy could not be more fitting as during his presidency, Garfield drafted the legislation to establish the department of education in order to support his ideas of universal education. Another lasting legacy is that, following his assassination, patronage jobs began to be phased out in favor of the professionalized civil service.

It is for the above reasons and many more that Ohio should designate November 19th, President Garfield's Birthday, as "James A. Garfield Day". Thank you for the opportunity to testify. We welcome any questions you may have.