



**State Representative
Jack Cera**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: MAY 22, 2014

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Rep. Cera Supports Families of Deceased Veterans

COLUMBUS— Today, the Ohio House of Representatives held a special joint session with the Ohio Senate to honor recipients of the Ohio Military Medal of Distinction. The Medal of Distinction honors Ohio service members who have died while serving in the armed forces.

According to Rep. Jack Cera (D-Bellaire), legislation from the 127th General Assembly expanded the law to include the families of fallen soldiers, allowing them to obtain the Military Medal of Distinction on behalf of the fallen. “When a loved one loses his or her life while serving our country, the families of that individual suffer a great loss. House Bill 532 from the 127th makes it possible to recognize the service and sacrifice made by fallen military members by giving the award to his or her family,” said Rep. Cera.

Today’s ceremony honored SPC Angel L. Lopez, a member of the U. S. Army from Parma, Ohio and SSG Sonny C. Zimmerman, an Army member from Lima, Ohio.

As tribute to their ultimate sacrifice, a wreath laying ceremony was conducted in the Atrium of Statehouse.

Rep. Cera also noted that earlier this year, the House voted to assist disabled veterans by passing House Bill 85. This legislation calls for increasing the amount of the homestead exemption from \$25,000 to \$50,000 for veterans who are permanently and totally disabled.

The homestead exemption was a constitutional amendment approved by Ohio voters in 1970 that reduces property taxes for senior citizens. Veterans under the age of 65, who were honorably discharged with a service-connected total and permanent disability and who possess a certified letter from the US Department of Veterans Affairs stating such, may now qualify for this tax exemption under HB 85.

“This small gesture may help keep disabled veterans or their families in their own homes. To me, this is a small thank you for serving our country,” said Rep. Cera.

HB 85, too, reaches out to the family of a deceased, disabled veteran by allowing the surviving spouse to receive the exemption until he or she ceases to own the homestead, remarries or passes.

Cera, a co-sponsor of the bill, noted that it passed the Ohio House with unanimous support.

With Memorial Day upon us, Rep. Cera asked that we remember all who have paid the ultimate price while wearing a military uniform.