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Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, for allowing me to present this testimony.

I stand, before you today to honor and pay tribute to a true American hero, Corporal Monte Wayne Forrest, who gave his life in the service of our nation during the Vietnam War. It is with great respect and gratitude that I advocate for HB 2124 which would designate a 1.5-mile section of Highway 160, between mile marker 275 and Eden Road, as the CPL Monte Wayne Forrest Memorial Highway.

On August 5, 1970, during an intense firefight near Kham Duc, Monte demonstrated the very essence of heroism. Despite suffering multiple wounds, he refused to abandon his post, and continued to fire illumination rounds, exposing the enemy's position and providing critical support to his fellow soldiers. His actions allowed his unit to successfully repel the enemy forces, but tragically, Monte lost his life that day.

For his extraordinary bravery, CPL Forrest was posthumously awarded the Silver Star Medal for valor, a recognition of the selfless courage he demonstrated in the heat of battle. His name is etched in the annals of history as a testament to the sacrifices made by so many who served in Vietnam and throughout the United States Armed Forces.

Monte's legacy extends far beyond his heroic actions in Vietnam. He was a beloved son, friend, and neighbor, cherished by his family and community in Argonia, Kansas. The dedication of this section of Highway 160, which runs by the Argonia Cemetery where CPL Forrest is laid to rest and near his family's farm, serves as a lasting tribute to his memory. His service and ultimate sacrifice remind us of the profound cost of the freedoms we hold dear. As we approach the anniversary of his passing, it is only fitting that we honor him in a way that ensures future generations will remember his courage, commitment, and sacrifice.

This highway designation is not just for CPL Monte Wayne Forrest, but for every service member who gave their life in defense of this nation. It is an opportunity for us to reflect on the sacrifices made by our military, to recognize the invaluable contributions of our veterans, and to ensure that the legacy of heroes like Monte is never forgotten.

I respectfully urge you to approve this proposal, to honor CPL Monte Wayne Forrest, and to ensure that his story lives on in the hearts of future generations.

Representative Kyle Hoffman
Assistant Majority Leader

