



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

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*Testimony by Representative Jason Perillo
Before the Transportation Committee
On House Bill 6123
February 18, 2011*

Representative Guerrero, Senator Maynard, Representative Scribner, Senator Boucher, and members of the Transportation Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you in support of HB 6123, AN ACT DEDICATING INDIAN WELL ROAD IN SHELTON TO THE MEMORY OF POLICE SERGEANT ORVILLE SMITH.

On the evening of July 3, 2010, Sgt. Smith was on duty at the entrance to Indian Well State Park, ensuring the safe travel of residents as they exited a popular fireworks display in Shelton. The evening was like any other until 10:00 pm. While directing traffic outside his vehicle, Sgt. Smith was struck by a pick-up truck traveling at thirty-five miles per hour. The vehicle's driver had just left a local bar and Sgt. Smith, who passed away four days later, paid the ultimate price.

Most of us would say that Sgt. Smith was simply in the wrong place at the wrong time. But those close to him understand that he knew he was really in the right place at the right time. For none of us knows who that drunk driver could have injured or killed if Sgt. Smith hadn't been there to stop it. He sacrificed his own life and in so doing, may have saved the lives of many others.

Sgt. Orville Smith died as he had lived - protecting the public - just as he had done during his thirty-nine year career as a Shelton police officer. Ironically, he was eligible for retirement but chose to continue doing the job he loved in the town he loved. He knew that he was still needed, and he was right.

We use the word "hero" too freely in society today. So much so that the word has lost much of its meaning. But Sgt. Smith was a hero in every sense of the word. He was a Marine Corps veteran, serving two tours in Vietnam. He was awarded the Navy Commendation Medal with a "V" for valor. He was a recipient of the Law Enforcement Purple Heart Award and the American Police Hall of Fame Medal of Honor. Everything he did in life and everything he stood for as a public servant is an example to all Americans of what selfless devotion to others truly means.

Thus, it is most fitting that we dedicate the spot where his life was tragically ended – Indian Well Road – in his memory.

I wish to thank Shelton Police Chief Joel Hurliman for his assistance and the entire Shelton Police Department and the Shelton Police Union for their support of this effort. I thank Shelton Mayor Mark Lauretti and the city's Board of Aldermen for their commitment to honoring Sgt. Smith's memory. And I extend special thanks to the residents of the neighborhood where Sgt. Smith was killed, especially Tim Manion, for suggesting that I introduce this bill to honor his memory.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to share with you Sgt. Smith's life-long commitment to protecting and serving the public. I ask for your support of HB 6123 and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Rep. Jason Perillo
State Representative
113th District