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March 4, 2024

To: Chairman Ron Ellis and Members of the House Veterans and Military Committee  
RE: Written PROPONENT OF SB 431

## United States Senate

COMMITTEES:  
APPROPRIATIONS

COMMERCE, SCIENCE,  
AND TRANSPORTATION

INTELLIGENCE

VETERANS' AFFAIRS  
RANKING MEMBER

I write to express my full/strong support for SB 431, Directing the Capitol Preservation Committee to approve plans for a memorial honoring Emil Joseph Kapaun at the Kansas State Capitol.

This testimony is in recognition of the exemplary life and selfless service of a remarkable Kansan whose actions as a chaplain during the Korean War continue to inspire and resonate with people in our state and across the nation.

Father Kapaun's legacy is one of unwavering dedication to his fellow soldiers, first during World War II and again in the Korean War, and a commitment to the principles of compassion, courage, and sacrifice. Born in Pilsen, Kansas, on April 20, 1916, Father Kapaun's life was a testament to the values that define our great state. As a Catholic priest from the Diocese of Wichita, he demonstrated an unyielding devotion to his faith, fostering a sense of unity and comfort among those he served.

During the Korean War, Father Kapaun's acts of heroism and compassion stood out in the most challenging of circumstances. He selflessly ministered to the spiritual and physical needs of soldiers on the front lines, often risking his own life to save others. His actions earned him the Medal of Honor posthumously in 2013, a recognition that highlights the profound impact he had on the lives of his comrades and one that I advocated for by amending the 2012 National Defense Authorization Act, requiring the Department of Defense and President Obama to consider him. In 2021, I also worked tirelessly with the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency to get his remains identified and returned home to Kansas, where he lays at rest at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Wichita.

By erecting a memorial to Father Kapaun within the Kansas State Capitol, we not only pay tribute to a local hero but also celebrate the values that define our state and our nation. This monument would serve as a lasting symbol of selfless service, moral fortitude, and the enduring spirit of Kansans in the face of adversity.

Moreover, the presence of Father Kapaun's image would provide an educational opportunity for present and future generations. His story is a powerful example of how one individual's actions can make a profound difference, inspiring others to follow in his footsteps and strive for excellence in their own lives.

To that end, I urge the legislature to consider and approve the proposal for a memorial honoring Chaplain Father Emil J. Kapaun at the Kansas State Capitol. By doing so, we honor not just a man but a legacy that exemplifies the best of Kansas – a legacy that deserves to be displayed prominently for all to see and draw inspiration.

Sincerely,



Jerry Moran  
United States Senator