

Written PROPONENT testimony for SB 431 Directing the capitol preservation committee to approve plans for a memorial honoring Emil Joseph Kapaun.

To: Senator Mike Thompson, Chairman, Kansas Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee

From: Lee Tafanelli, Major General, US Army (Ret)

Date: February 14, 2024

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Members of the Committee,

My name is Lee Tafanelli, a retired Soldier for Life, and I stand in support of SB 431.

I believe having a memorial for Chaplain Emil Kapaun, a Medal of Honor recipient, in the Kansas Statehouse is important for several reasons. First and foremost, it would serve as a powerful tribute to his extraordinary acts of bravery and selflessness. Chaplain Kapaun's dedication to caring for wounded soldiers during the Korean War, even at great risk to his own life, exemplifies the highest ideals of service and sacrifice.

A memorial for Chaplain Kapaun in the Kansas Statehouse would also serve as an inspiration for future generations and a reminder that history is not just in books, but rather all around us and serves to inspire us in everyday life. Visitors to the Statehouse, especially our youth, would have the opportunity to learn about Kapaun's selfless actions and unwavering faith in the face of adversity, which continues to inspire people around the world.

And finally, a memorial in Chaplain Kapaun's honor would highlight the state's proud military heritage and pay tribute to all the men and women who have served in the armed forces. It would serve as a reminder of the sacrifices made by Kansans during times of war and the enduring spirit of service that defines us as Kansans.

The Medal of Honor Citation awarded to Chaplain Kapaun describes his "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty." I firmly believe a memorial in the Statehouse honoring Chaplain Kapaun would pay tribute to his remarkable acts of bravery and demonstrate Kansas' commitment to honoring those who have served and its appreciation for the sacrifices made by its military community.

Respectfully,



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