

Good morning,

I'm here to ask for your support of House Bill 214 introduced by Representative Wagoner.

In May of 2012 my wife and I, and other veterans from Montana rode motorcycles back to Washington D.C. Along the way, we joined veterans riding across the U.S. to participate in a ceremony that has taken place on Memorial Day weekend for the last 25 years.

Part of that weekend is a peaceful demonstration ride from the Pentagon to the Vietnam Memorial Wall. The purpose is to continue to raise awareness of the POW/MIA issue.

After a humble call to action in 1988 with 2,500 participants, last year there were almost 700,000 motorcycles and approximately 1 million people lining the route or taking part in the ride. That is like the entire population of Montana standing outside our Capitol building. Give each one of them an American flag or a POW/MIA flag and you would see a very impressive, solemn gathering.

The one thing that got my attention both riding to D.C. and back home to Montana, was the number of states flying the POW/MIA flag with the flag of the United States of America. I felt very proud of the patriotism shown by the people in those states. They did not forget.

There are almost 83,400 veterans unaccounted for since WWII. 55 of those are from Montana: 8 from WWII; 28 from the Korean War; 18 from Vietnam; 1 from the Cold War. Many thousands are considered buried at sea and unrecoverable. Perhaps you or someone you know is waiting for news of a veteran from one of these wars. They will not be forgotten.

This is Montana's opportunity to show our concern and commitment to achieving the fullest possible accounting of U.S. military personnel who are or may in the future become POW, MIA or otherwise unaccounted for as a result of hostile action.

Montanans have a duty to honor their service every bit as much as we honor those who most recently served or are still serving today. We would be joining some of our neighboring states: Oregon, Washington and Idaho and several others across this great nation. Hopefully in the not too distant future, every state will join in flying the POW/MIA flag. We will never forget.

Thank you for allowing me to present my views to this committee. I appreciate your consideration of House Bill 214.

Dick Juvik

