

Cynthia Luchko - HB 2507

To whom this may concern on the committee:

Hello, my name is Cynthia Luchko. I am a Gold Star Mom. I share the sorrow and heartache with Paula Coffman, who I have gotten to know through several military groups we are in. Paula and I had formed a friendship from missing our sons who so bravely served our country. My son Josh was 19 when he went to heaven. Derek, Paula's only son passed away as one of the 22 around the same time I lost my son Josh.

Paula and I have spoken at great lengths. Unlike my son, Josh, her son Derek was deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq. Derek saw some things you can't recover from in my understanding. Paula, his mom, has been very candid in discussing both Derek's childhood as well as his adult hood and the 3 children he left behind. Paula is very active in a group that I am in for military families. We are not just Gold Star Families, but I can tell you this, everyone recognizes Derek's calm, handsome face with his blue eyes and smile that could light up a room.

Derek was a senior Airman, and I am thankful for his service and sacrifice.

Gold star families and even blue star families are very supportive of Paula. She is her son's voice. She still struggles listening to Metallica, a band Derek, would often listen to. I have a "derek" shirt. It's a Metallica shirt but I think of this airman every time I wear it.

This bridge would mean so much to not only Derek's mom but all of us moms that "have her 6". We would love to see this bridge go in Derek's name as Derek was a fan of the Kansas City chiefs having been near Paula's home state of Kansas for many years and raising her children there.

Derek was an avid golfer and a wonderful human being. Though I never met him he deserves this recognition. Please make this bridge project happen. Not just for Paula. But for Derek and his whole family. He was an upstanding citizen, a veteran and a person that was loved by many.