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from the Illinois House of Representatives

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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Beiser Legislation to Protect Memory of Fallen Service Members Passes House

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – Legislation sponsored by State Rep. Dan Beiser, D-Alton, which will help preserve the dignity of military funerals, passed the house by an overwhelming margin on Tuesday.

“The Westboro Baptist Church and other hateful extremist groups have gained notoriety by disrupting the funerals of fallen American heroes,” Beiser said. “This measure will help put a stop to their actions by making it more difficult to intrude during memorial services.”

House Bill 1404 strengthens laws that ban disorderly conduct at the funerals and memorial services of soldiers. Disorderly conduct can include: making disruptive noises, such as yelling, singing or chanting; displaying threatening visual images or words; and preventing another person’s entry or exit to a funeral site.

Under the current law protestors must be at least 300 feet away from a funeral site and are prohibited from demonstrating during a service, and for 30 minutes prior to and 30 minutes after a memorial concludes. Beiser’s bill would extend the prohibited distance to 1,000 feet and the time that protests are banned to one hour before and one hour after a ceremony.

“The family and friends of fallen veterans deserve the opportunity to mourn without added pain,” Beiser added. “This is a small, but important way that we can acknowledge their loss and the heroic service of their departed loved one.”

House Bill 1404 passed the House of Representatives and now moves to the Senate for further consideration. For any additional questions, please contact Rep. Beiser’s constituent service office at (618) 465-5900.

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