



**House  
Legislative  
Analysis  
Section**

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**VETERANS MEMORIAL HIGHWAY**

**Senate Bill 705 as passed by the Senate  
First Analysis (9-24-02)**

**Sponsor: Sen. Bill Schuette  
House Committee: Transportation  
Senate Committee: Transportation and  
Tourism**

***THE APPARENT PROBLEM:***

It is appropriate that the state recognize the extraordinary contribution of those who have served as soldiers in the armed services of the United States, whether or not they were injured or mortally wounded in service to our country. The state's recognition is appropriate for two reasons: First, it allows citizens to honor those among them who were willing to disregard personal gain, and fight for the freedoms and liberty that are promised by the constitutional form of government here in the United States. Further, the state's recognition makes an ongoing public dialogue possible as it keeps citizens mindful about the horror of war, and the importance of an unrelenting efforts to seek peaceful solutions to social and political problems.

Among the ways that the state can recognize those who put their duty to their country before personal gain, often extracting a high cost in terms of physical and emotional well-being, is to designate public works in their memory. To that end, legislation is sometimes introduced. For example, recently a highway rest area near Perry, Michigan was named in honor of Purple Heart recipients, as well as a segment of nearby highway. Further, a proposal to name a roadway in the Upper Peninsula after a courageous winner of the Congressional Medal of Honor also was enacted into law by the legislature. In addition, a memorial highway has been designated near Battle Creek, in order to honor the 94<sup>th</sup> Combat Infantry Division that served with General George Patton's 3<sup>rd</sup> Army during World War II. See *BACKGROUND INFORMATION* below.

The veterans groups in the western counties of Michigan's Lower Peninsula have indicated to a state senator that they would like to designate a memorial highway to honor all veterans in their region. At their request, legislation has been introduced to name a portion of a highway in Mason county, in tribute to the veterans of the armed services.

***THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:***

The bill would amend the Michigan Memorial Highway Act to name the portion of US-10 in Mason County, beginning at the city of Scottville and continuing west to the city of Ludington, the "Veterans Memorial Highway."

MCL 250.1075

***BACKGROUND INFORMATION:***

Recently the legislature enacted Public Act 142 of 2001, the Michigan Memorial Highway Act, in order to consolidate and codify in a single statute more than 60 highways and portions of highways that have been named in memory of individuals and groups having historical prominence in their communities. Under that act, the Department of Transportation provides for the erection of suitable signs at the approach of any of the highways, after sufficient private contributions have been received to pay the cost of erecting and maintaining those markers. The cost of the signs varies, depending on their size and number. Citizens collect donations after consulting with the design and engineering officials in the Department of Transportation regional offices who determine the total cost of the project.

All memorial highways are listed on the Department of Transportation web site at [www.mdot.state.mi.us/misc/memhighways](http://www.mdot.state.mi.us/misc/memhighways).

***FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:***

According to the Senate Fiscal Agency, the bill would have no fiscal impact on state government. Private funds required for the cost of the markers would depend on the size of the markers. Generally, per-marker costs, including installation, range from \$820 to \$1,090. (11-9-01)

Senate Bill 705 (9-24-02)

**ARGUMENTS:**

***For:***

Historical events and prominent citizens deserve recognition in our communities. One way to commemorate events and people and to ensure ongoing public awareness is to place a sign along a public roadway. This bill allows the citizens of Michigan, and in particular the citizens of Mason county, to express their appreciation for the courage of freedom fighters. Naming a well-traveled portion of the state's busy road system in their honor gives the veterans of all wars the public recognition they deserve. While this recognition allows citizens to honor those among them who demonstrated courage in defense of freedom, it also makes possible an ongoing public dialogue about the horrors of war, and the importance of an unrelenting effort to seek peaceful solutions to social and political problems.

**POSITIONS:**

There are no positions on the bill.

Analyst: J. Hunault

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■This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.