

# Legislative Analysis



## **DEPUTY GATE KEEPER GEORGE W. HAIGHT MEMORIAL HIGHWAY**

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**House Bill 4832 as referred to second committee**

**Sponsor: Rep. Sarah L. Lightner**

**1st Committee: Transportation**

**2nd Committee: Ways and Means**

**Complete to 12-6-19**

Analysis available at  
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

### **SUMMARY:**

House Bill 4832 would amend the Michigan Memorial Highway Act to designate the portion of I-94 in Jackson County beginning at the intersection with Elm Avenue and extending east to the intersection with Dettman Road as the “Deputy Gate Keeper George W. Haight Memorial Highway.”

Proposed MCL 250.1018b

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

According to committee testimony and the Officer Down Memorial Page, Deputy Keeper George W. Haight was a Civil War veteran who began working at the Michigan State Penitentiary in Jackson in approximately 1885.

On March 27, 1893, as part of an elaborate escape attempt, Deputy Gate Keeper Haight was poisoned by an inmate who had been given additional liberties and freedom by the night captain.

On the night of his escape, the inmate assisted in preparing meals for the guards and poisoned them with a mixture of opium and prussic acid (cyanide). As the guards ate and drank, they immediately became extremely ill and unable to move. Deputy Gate Keeper Haight collapsed from his chair and knocked down several plates, causing a loud noise that drew the attention of another guard who was not poisoned. When he came to investigate, he discovered the inmate attending to Haight. The inmate told the guard that the gate keeper was dying. The inmate was sent for help, but instead he escaped with prison keys and two revolvers. He was captured one day later and charged with murdering Deputy Gate Keeper Haight.

Deputy Gate Keeper George W. Haight served at the Michigan State Penitentiary for eight years. He was 66 years old.

Dedicating a portion of I-94 in Jackson County to the memory of Deputy Gate Keeper George W. Haight would be an appropriate way to honor his service to our country and state.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

Section 2 of the Michigan Memorial Highway Act indicates that the state transportation department shall provide for the erection of suitable markers indicating the name of the highway only “when sufficient private contributions are received to completely cover the cost of erecting and maintaining those markers.” As a result, the bill has no state or local fiscal impact.

**POSITIONS:**

The Michigan Corrections Organization indicated support for the bill. (12-3-19)

The Michigan Department of Transportation indicated a neutral position on the bill. (12-3-19)

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