

Legislative Analysis



BISHOP P.A. BROOKS MEMORIAL FREEWAY

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House Bill 5059 as reported from committee

Sponsor: Rep. Natalie Price

Committee: Transportation, Mobility and Infrastructure

Complete to 10-14-23

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

SUMMARY:

House Bill 5059 would amend the Michigan Memorial Highway Act to designate highway M-39 from highway M-10 in Southfield to Lafayette Boulevard in Lincoln Park as the “Bishop P.A. Brooks Memorial Freeway.”

Proposed MCL 250.1113

BACKGROUND:

According to committee testimony, the *Detroit News*, and the Church of God in Christ, Inc., Phillip Aquilla Brooks, born on December 21, 1931, acknowledged the calling of service on his life for many years. Coming to Detroit from Chicago in 1949, Bishop Brooks brought with him a powerful civic and spiritual platform to speak to the issues that plagued Detroit’s underserved communities.

As the founder of New St. Paul Tabernacle Church of God in Christ, and its pastor for 63 years, from 1956 until his death in 2021, Bishop Brooks was known as a pioneer. During his lifetime of service to the city of Detroit, he was the first African American minister to appear regularly on television, broadcasting the “March of Faith” in 1978, a broadcast still running on television and now on radio. Bishop Brooks was a confidant and spiritual adviser to Detroit Mayor Coleman A. Young. It was Bishop Brooks and Mayor Young who lead a Detroit delegation to South Africa to deliver donations raised in support of Nelson Mandela. Bishop Brooks’s humanitarian endeavors were far-reaching and often stretched beyond Detroit. He led efforts to raise funds for victims of the Flint water crisis and Hurricane Katrina and for families of the victims in the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in New York.

His deep compassion and generosity were reflected in his ministry as a pastor and denominational leader. At the time of his death, Bishop Brooks was serving as first Assistant Presiding Bishop and Prelate of the Historic Northeast First Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction of Michigan. He was the longest-serving general board member in the Church of God in Christ, Inc., spanning over 40 years. Bishop Brooks, known as “Mr. Church of God in Christ,” was beloved as a champion for civil rights and economic justice and for ministering with dedication, devotion and the spirit of excellence. On April 9, 2020, Bishop P.A. Brooks died in a Detroit hospital from medical complications. He was 88 years old.

Dedicating a portion of highway M-39 in Southfield would be an appropriate way to honor his commitment of service to the city of Detroit and the state of Michigan.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Section 2 of the 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 the markers.” As a result, the bill would have no state or local fiscal impact.

POSITIONS:

The Department of Transportation indicated a neutral position on the bill. (10-3-23)

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