



**House
Legislative
Analysis
Section**

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M-33 VETERANS' MEMORIAL DRIVE

**House Bill 5264 (Substitute H-1)
First Analysis (3-2-00)**

**Sponsor: Rep. Ken Bradstreet
Committee: Transportation**

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

Veterans of the armed services have made sacrifices for the American people and for democratic ideals, so that Americans may live, work, and play in the way few citizens of the world are able. The sacrifices made by veterans should remain prominent in the collective memory of the nation, and veterans who have acted in the nation's behalf should be held in high esteem.

In order to pay tribute to those who have fought and sometimes died to uphold American values, and also to help young Americans remain mindful of the tragic consequences of war and the need to pursue peace, many communities have designated a portion of their street scape to honor veterans.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

House Bill 5264 would designate the part of highway M-33 that is located in Ogemaw and Oscoda counties between Houghton Creek road and Miller road as the "Veterans' Memorial Drive." The bill would require the state transportation department to erect suitable markers only at the approach of the highway indicating its name when sufficient private contributions were received to completely cover the cost of erecting the markers.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Community petition. Those who spearheaded the effort to designate a Veterans' Memorial Drive in Ogemaw and Oscoda counties are themselves veterans of World War II. They presented the Transportation Committee of the House of Representatives with petitions supporting the designation signed by more 100 people who live along the roadway.

The portion of highway that would be designated by this legislation to memorialize veterans begins near Rose City in Ogemaw county, and extends nearly to Fairview in Oscoda County. According to committee testimony, this roadway links the districts of two state representatives (the 103rd district and the 105th districts), and also the districts of two state senators (the 34th and 37th Michigan Senate districts).

Veterans' memorialized state highways. According to the Department of Transportation (MDOT), Michigan has a tradition of memorializing highways that began with the first recorded highway memorialization in 1919. While not all memorializations are of veterans' groups, memorialization of these groups has been particularly popular with constituents of state representatives and senators, and there have been many state (not to mention local) roadways named for veterans' groups. Memorialization of state highways over the years has taken place through a variety of legislative mechanisms, including House or Senate resolutions, House or Senate concurrent resolutions, and state laws. MDOT currently is in the process of compiling a list of memorialized state highways (local units of government also apparently can memorialize highways under their jurisdiction), but that list has not yet been completed. By 1996, though, apparently at least sixteen state highways in Michigan had been named in honor of veterans, either by resolution or public act.

Some of the memorialized state, or state portions of interstate, highways are as follows:

- House Concurrent Resolution 21 of 1969 designated the Michigan portion of I-75 as "*the American Legion Memorial Highway*";

- In 1978, M-59 between Pontiac and Utica was named “the Veterans’ Memorial Freeway”;

- In 1980, M-21 between Flint and Port Huron was named “the Veterans’ Memorial Highway,” while in 1980, M-21 between Lapeer and Flint also was named “the Veterans’ Memorial Highway”, and House Resolution 365 of 1989 named M-125 in Monroe County “the Veterans’ Memorial Highway”;

- Public Act 240 of 199 designated M-59 between Howell and M-3 near Mount Clemens (except for the portion of M-59 between Pontiac and Utica) “the Vietnam Veterans’ Memorial Highway”;

- Public Act 124 of 1994 designated I-96 “the Amvets Memorial Highway”;

- M-37 in Lake County was named “the World War II Veterans’ Memorial Highway” in 1995;

- Public Act 185 of 1996 designated I-275 north of the Livonia intersection of I-275 and I-96 “the Disabled American Veterans’ Memorial Highway” (in addition, M-121, which has since reportedly reverted to county jurisdiction and is now known as Bristol Road, in Genesee County also had previously been designated “the Disabled American Veterans’ Highway”);

Department of Transportation policy. According to the Department of Transportation, over recent years the department has been working on a policy with regard to the memorialization of highways with a view to encouraging a reasonable, consistent approach to memorialization. This policy now has been proposed in legislation, in House Bill 5050, which would create a new act to regulate the cost of placing signs and markers that honored individuals or organizations by naming or renaming a highway (or part of a highway) in their honor. Under the bill, the department could provide for the erection of such signs only if sufficient private contributions were received to completely cover the cost. According to the House Fiscal Agency, the Department of Transportation estimates that sign fabrication costs for a single sign, four feet by eight feet, come to about \$450 (at \$14 per square foot). Installation costs between \$1,200 and \$1,800 for each sign of that size, for a total cost of between \$3,300 and \$4,500 to both fabricate and install the customary two signs. (See the House Legislative Analysis Section analysis of House Bill 5050 dated 11-3-99.)

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

The House Fiscal Agency notes that the bill would have no impact on state or local costs or revenues. (2-28-00)

ARGUMENTS:

For:

To memorialize veterans by designating a portion of the highway system in their honor is a visible way for citizens within a community to testify to each other, and also to those who visit, that service and commitment to others, and to ideals, are clearly valued. Veterans of military service have expressed concern that young people seem to have no understanding of wartime sacrifice. This legislation provides an opportunity to promote that understanding.

POSITIONS:

The American Legion supports the bill. (2-28-00)

The mayor and city council of Rose City support the bill. (2-16-00)

The Rose Township Board supports the bill. (2-23-00)

Post #4126 Veterans of Foreign Wars of Mio, Michigan whose post is located on the portion of highway to be designated, supports the bill. (2-29-00)

Post #6468 Veterans of Foreign Wars of Rose City, Michigan whose post is located on the portion of highway to be designated, supports the bill. (2-29-00)

Analyst: J. Hunault

■ 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.