



**House  
Legislative  
Analysis  
Section**

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**SIDNEY OUWINGA MEMORIAL  
HIGHWAY**

**House Bill 5421 as introduced  
First Analysis (3-9-00)**

**Sponsor: Rep. Rick Johnson  
Committee: Transportation**

***THE APPARENT PROBLEM:***

Sidney Ouwinga served with great distinction as a State Representative of the 18th Representative District in the Michigan House of Representatives from 1982 until his untimely death in July 1991. During his nine years as an elected state officeholder, Mr. Ouwinga served as minority vice-chairman of the House Transportation Committee, and a member of the Agriculture Committee, the Forestry and Minerals Committee, and the Towns and Counties Committee.

Sidney Ouwinga began his career in local government service by succeeding his father in a township supervisor's post, and their joint career spanned 32 years. After leaving township government, Mr. Ouwinga served as a member of the Osceola County Board of Commissioners from 1972 to 1982, chairing the county commission for seven years during his decade of service. While a county commissioner, he served for five years as chairman of the Northern Michigan Association of Counties, and then from 1977 to 1982 as a member of the board of directors for the Michigan Association of Counties, his last year of that term as president of the organization.

Mr. Ouwinga represented the state of Michigan on the steering committee of the National Association of County Transportation Officials for four years. Further, he was instrumental in the decision to locate and build U.S. 131 in western Michigan, working tirelessly as a member of the U.S. 131 Association, which monitored progress on the construction of the highway section by section.

To recognize his career of public service which spanned more than two decades, the citizens of his community would like to honor Sidney Ouwinga by naming a portion of a highway after him.

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

House Bill 5421 would create a new act to designate the part of the bypass of highway U.S.-131 that is located between highway M-115 and Boon road in Wexford county as the "Sidney Ouwinga Memorial Bypass". The bill would require the state transportation department to provide suitable markers at the approach of the designated part of the highway when sufficient private contributions had been received to pay the cost of erecting the markers.

***BACKGROUND INFORMATION:***

Sidney Ouwinga was born in Marion, Michigan on August 24, 1927. He attended the Highland Christian School, a two-room schoolhouse having eight grades and located in Highland Township. His father operated a general merchandise store in the community, and young Sidney made the store's customer deliveries beginning at age 12, serving those in the community who were without transportation. Mr. Ouwinga also worked as a potato farmer before entering public service.

On April 14, 1950, Mr. Ouwinga married his wife Marilyn. He is survived by his wife, their daughter Kathy Sue, and their sons Carl Thomas, Dale John, and Robert.

Mr. Ouwinga was a member of the Christian Reformed Church, the Republican Party, and the Farm Bureau Association.

***FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:***

The House Fiscal Agency notes that the bill would have no impact on state or local costs or revenues. (3-7-00)

House Bill 5421 (3-9-00)

**ARGUMENTS:*****For:***

This tribute to Representative Ouwinga is particularly fitting, because of his dedication to transportation issues, especially in the northern and western regions of the state, including the Upper Peninsula. Representative Ouwinga served as vice-chairman of the Michigan House of Representatives committee that addressed transportation issues, and while a county commissioner worked to monitor construction of U.S. 131 as a member of the U.S. 131 Association. He also represented Michigan on a federal steering committee of county transportation officials.

It has been said of Representative Ouwinga that “he had a heart as big as all outdoors,” and that he was “simply the best”. His many friends relate that Representative Sid Ouwinga espoused a political philosophy that held friendship, family values, and personal freedom in high regard. It is fitting, then, to recognize a man so able and so widely respected, both by his constituents in the five counties of the 18th District, and by all who served with him in local and state government.

**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.