

## U.S. 27; VETERANS MEMORIAL HIGHWAY

### House Bill 5090 (Substitute H-2) First Analysis (10-11-01)

**Sponsor: Rep. Larry DeVuyst**  
**Committee: Transportation**

#### ***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 is under consideration by the legislature.

The veterans groups of Ithaca, Michigan have raised \$150,000 to construct an "All Wars Veterans Memorial" in their community. They plan to dedicate the memorial on November 12, 2000—Veteran's Day. At their request, legislation has been introduced to also name a portion of nearby highway.

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

House Bill 5090 would create a new act to name a portion of highway US-27 as the "Veterans Memorial Highway." The bill would designate a route through the City of Ithaca, as follows: the portion of highway business route US-27 beginning at Polk road in

Emerson township in Gratiot county, continuing south through the city of Ithaca to Center Street, and continuing east to the intersection of highway business route US-27 and US-27 in Emerson township in Gratiot county.

Further, the bill would require the Department of Transportation to place and maintain suitable signs to name the highway, after sufficient private contributions had been received to completely cover the cost.

#### ***FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:***

The House Fiscal Agency notes that the bill has no state or local fiscal impact. (10-8-01)

#### ***ARGUMENTS:***

##### ***For:***

This bill allows the citizens of Michigan, and in particular the citizens of the 93rd legislative district in the City of Ithaca, 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. Further, the naming of this roadway complements the dedication of an "All Wars Veterans Memorial" which will be unveiled in Ithaca on Veterans Day, November 12, 2000.

##### ***Response:***

Although recognition of veterans is a worthy, and indeed, laudable aim, the proliferation of signs along the highway has increased with time. In an effort to coordinate sign placements, both to ensure driver safety, and to preserve the natural beauty of the landscape, the Department of Transportation supports an effort to consolidate highway naming processes and procedures, and to limit additional highway sign markers. The proposal is embodied in House Bill 4878, which has passed both the House and Senate during this legislative session, and is currently awaiting enrollment for presentation to the governor.

(The Department of Transportation web site [www.mdot.state.mi.us] lists all of the named memorial highways in Michigan.)

***POSITIONS:***

The Department of Transportation does not oppose the bill. (10-10-01)

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.