

Legislative Analysis



BATAAN AND CORREGIDOR VETERANS MEMORIAL HIGHWAY

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House Bill 4570 as referred to second committee

Sponsor: Rep. Tim Sneller

1st Committee: Transportation

2nd Committee: Ways and Means

Complete to 6-18-19

SUMMARY:

House Bill 4570 would amend the Michigan Memorial Highway Act to designate the portion of highway I-69 between Center Road and Belsay Road in the city of Burton as the "Bataan and Corregidor Veterans Memorial Highway."

Highway I-69 between the cities of Flint and Port Huron is currently designated the "Veterans Memorial Highway" under section 32 of the act. The bill would amend that section to designate the portion described above as the "Bataan and Corregidor Veterans Memorial Highway."

MCL 250.1032

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

According to committee testimony and the American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor Memorial Society, a conflict involving 100 million people and at least 30 countries occurred in the Philippine Islands during World War II a few months after the surprise attack on the United States naval forces stationed at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

After months of brutal fighting between Japanese forces and the United States and its allies, on April 9, 1942, 10,000 Americans became prisoners of war (POWs) with the surrender of the Bataan Peninsula in the Philippines. The Japanese Army forcibly marched nearly 75,000 military POWs on a deadly 65-mile trek that would become known as the Bataan Death March. The Bataan Death March resulted in the deaths of approximately 9,000 Filipinos and more than 1,000 Americans and the torture and brutal treatment of tens of thousands of prisoners.

In early May 1942, 11,500 Americans were surrendered on Corregidor, a fortress island in Manila Harbor. The surrender was the largest in United States military history. Over 26,000 Americans were held as POWs. Nearly 11,000 died in POW camps, aboard "hell ships," or as slave laborers. It is believed only 15,000 returned home to their families. Michigan had 634 who were POWs of Imperial Japan.

Designating the portion of highway I-69 between Center Road and Belsay Road in the city of Burton as the "Bataan and Corregidor Veterans Memorial Highway" is an appropriate

way to recognize and honor the service of these brave men who endured the unthinkable while defending our country, our state, and our communities.

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 Department of Transportation indicated a neutral position on the bill.
(6-11-19)

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