

Legislative Analysis



SOC JASON R. FREIWALD MEMORIAL HIGHWAY

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House Bill 4731 as reported from committee

Sponsor: Rep. Jeff Yaroach

1st Committee: Transportation

2nd Committee: Ways and Means

Complete to 10-2-19

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

(Enacted as Public Act 121 of 2019)

SUMMARY:

House Bill 4731 would amend section 21b of the Memorial Highway Act, which designates the portion of highway M-53 in Macomb County between 31 Mile Road and 32 Mile Road as the “Chief Petty Officer Jason Freiwald Memorial Highway.”

The bill would revise the designation of that highway portion to the “SOC Jason R. Freiwald Memorial Highway.”

MCL 250.1021b

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

SOC Jason R. Freiwald was born on December 20, 1977 in Utica, Michigan. After graduating from Armada Senior High School, he enlisted in the Navy on April 25, 1996, reporting for basic training in November of that year. He completed basic training and later graduated from the Navy and Marine Corps Intelligence Training Center Dam Neck, Virginia. He then reported for Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL training at Coronado, California, and, after graduating, completed airborne school in Fort Benning, Georgia.

According to information obtained from the Arlington National Cemetery and Navy-Together We Served websites, Freiwald’s initial duties were with SEAL teams in California, where he completed qualifications to prepare him for combat, including sniper training, Arabic, and tactical rock climbing. He was a highly decorated SEAL combat veteran who was honored with awards including the Bronze Star with combat “V” distinguishing service; Joint Service Commendation Medal with combat “V”; two Navy and Marine Corps Commendation medals; and numerous campaign medals. SOC Freiwald also distinguished himself during numerous combat deployments in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

On September 11, 2008, SOC Jason R. Freiwald was in Afghanistan on a top-secret night mission. He was the lead breach on the team. Upon entering the compound and engaging in a battle with heavily armed militants, Jason sustained fatal injuries and died from those injuries on September 12, 2008. He was 30 years old.

Designating the portion of M-53 between 31 Mile Road and 32 Mile Road in Macomb County as the “SOC Jason R. Freiwald Memorial Highway” would be an appropriate way to honor his life, his service, and his sacrifice for our country.

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 is neutral on the bill. (9-10-19)

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