



**House
Legislative
Analysis
Section**

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RENAME PORTION OF I-94 AFTER O'HARA

House Bill 5061 (Substitute H-1)
First Analysis (10-5-89)

RECEIVED

Sponsor: Rep. Nick Ciaramitaro
Committee: Transportation

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Mich. State Law Library

H.B. 5061 (10-6-89)

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

Congressman John G. O'Hara, who represented Michigan's twelfth Congressional district (made up of portions of Oakland, Macomb, and Sanilac Counties, and all of St. Clair County) from 1959 to 1977, reportedly was instrumental in securing federal funding for Interstate-94 when the freeway was built in the 1960s. The interstate freeway enters Michigan's southwestern border, meanders north and east through the state's lower mid-section to Detroit, and then turns north to Port Huron where it ends. The former Congressman died last spring, and to memorialize his contributions to the state, particularly his involvement in the I-94 project, some people have proposed naming the portion of I-94 which passes through Macomb and St. Clair Counties for him.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

The bill would rename that portion of I-94 located in Macomb and St. Clair Counties as the James G. O'Hara memorial highway, and would require the Department of Transportation to provide for the erection of suitable markers along the highway to indicate its name.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

According to the Department of Transportation, the bill would result in negligible costs to the state for the manufacture and placement of new road markers. (10-4-89)

ARGUMENTS:

For:

The bill would recognize James G. O'Hara's distinguished 18-year career as a member of the Michigan delegation in the U.S. House of Representatives. The late Congressman specialized in education and labor issues, and reportedly was instrumental in securing federal funds used to build one of Michigan's longest freeways, I-94. Renaming the portion of I-94 which cuts through his former district would be an appropriate tribute from state citizens.

Against:

According to a spokesperson from the state transportation department, the Federal Highway Administration — which, significantly, pays a large percentage of roadway costs — generally discourages the use of names other than numbered designations along roadways, especially on interstate freeways. Such non-numeric names may be confusing to motorists traveling at high speeds, particularly when they apply only to a specific portion of roadway. And since the bill fails to provide for the new name to be indicated on the official state highway map, motorists could be further confused by the disparity between road markers and highway designations on the map. Any confusion caused could pose traffic hazards.

POSITIONS:

The Department of Transportation has no position on the bill. (10-4-89)