



**House
Legislative
Analysis
Section**

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THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

To commemorate the sacrifices of nearly 60,000 American men and women who died in the Vietnam conflict, 2,646 of whom were from Michigan, some have proposed renaming a portion of state highway M-59 between Howell and Mount Clemens as the "Vietnam veterans memorial highway." Currently, the portion of M-59 between Pontiac and Utica is known as the "veterans memorial freeway." It is felt that designating a similar name in honor of Vietnam veterans to the remaining portion of the approximately 40-mile highway would be a fitting memorial.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

The bill would rename a portion of state highway M-59 between Interstate 96, near Howell, and state highway M-3, near Mount Clemens — except for that portion of M-59 between the cities of Pontiac and Utica known currently as the "veterans memorial freeway" — as the "Vietnam veterans memorial highway." Under the bill, the Department of Transportation would provide for the erection of suitable markers along the highway showing its proposed new name.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

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

ARGUMENTS:

For:

The bill would honor the many American men and women who served in the Vietnam conflict by renaming most of state highway M-59 between Howell and Mount Clemens as the "Vietnam veterans memorial highway." Of the 58,100 men and women who died in the conflict, 2,646 were from Michigan. (Since the portion of M-59 between Pontiac and Utica is currently known as the "veterans memorial freeway," naming the rest of M-59 after Vietnam veterans seems appropriate. Also, extending the "veterans" name to the rest of M-59 would be fitting since some of the largest Vietnam veterans chapters in the U.S. are located in the three counties (Livingston, Oakland, and Macomb) through which M-59 runs.

Against:

According to a spokesperson from the transportation department, the Federal Highway Administration — which pays a large percentage of roadway costs — generally discourages the use of names other than numbered designations along both state highways and, especially, interstate freeways. Such non-numeric names can be confusing to motorists traveling at high speeds, particularly when they apply only to a specific portion of roadway. And

VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL HIGHWAY

House Bill 5117 with committee amendment
First Analysis (10-5-89)

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Sponsor: Rep. Sal Rocca
Committee: Transportation

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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 Commander's Group has no position as yet on the bill. (9-4-89)

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

H.B. 5117 (10-5-89)