

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HJM 4000

As Reported by House Committee On:
Transportation

Brief Description: Extending the naming of Martin Luther King, Jr. Way.

Sponsors: Representatives Gregerson, Obras, Street, Ormsby and Hill.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 1/23/25, 1/29/25 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Joint Memorial

- Requests the Washington State Transportation Commission to commence proceedings to extend the naming of a portion of State Route 900 in King County as the "Martin Luther King Jr. Way" as a memorial to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 25 members: Representatives Fey, Chair; Bernbaum, Vice Chair; Donaghy, Vice Chair; Reed, Vice Chair; Barkis, Ranking Minority Member; Low, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Mendoza, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Schmidt, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bronoske, Dent, Duerr, Griffey, Hunt, Klicker, Ley, Nance, Orcutt, Paul, Ramel, Richards, Stuebe, Taylor, Timmons, Volz and Wylie.

Staff: Christine Thomas (786-7142)

Background:

State Highway Facility Naming.

The Washington State Transportation Commission (Commission) is responsible for naming

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state transportation facilities, including state highways, bridges, rest areas, and other state highway facilities. The Commission's policy states, "A naming is done in a thorough and deliberative manner to honor and institute an enduring memory of a person or group of people who have contributed significantly to the well-being of the state or nation, and with the widespread support of the people from the area in which the facility is located."

For the Commission to consider a proposal, the requesting entity must provide sufficient evidence indicating community support and acceptance of the proposal. This evidence can include a letter of support from the state or federal legislator representing the area encompassing the facility to be renamed. Other evidence that can provide proof of community support includes a resolution passed by other elected bodies in the impacted area, support from the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), and supportive action from a local organization such as a chamber of commerce.

Upon passage of a joint memorial requesting the naming of a facility, the Commission holds a public hearing prior to taking action. After the Commission takes final action in naming a state transportation facility, the WSDOT designs and installs the appropriate signs.

Martin Luther King Jr. Way.

Martin Luther King Jr. was born January 15, 1929, and was an American Baptist minister, social activist, political philosopher, and a leader in the civil rights movement in the United States from 1955 until his death by assassination in 1968. In 1986 the Commission approved the renaming of State Route (SR) 900 between the southerly city limits of Seattle to the westerly city limits of Renton as "Martin Luther King Jr. Way."

Summary of Substitute Joint Memorial:

The memorialists request that the Commission commence proceedings to extend the naming of Martin Luther King Jr. Way, as a memorial to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., along SR 900 from the westerly city limits of Renton to its terminus near milepost 10, and then continuing the entirety of SR 515 between the junction with Interstate 405 and the junction with SR 516.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

Technical corrections are made to more accurately reflect the portion of the state highway to be named the Martin Luther King Jr. Way.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Naming roads and highway infrastructure is important and symbolic to honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. It shows commitment to his principles and commemorates the civil rights movement to close the divide between all of us. These named streets represent both the Black struggle and Black empowerment, as well as the relative progress that society has made in realizing Dr. King's dream of racial equality and integration.

Extending the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way in the county for which he is named is appropriate as it represents not just Dr. King, but also all the different peoples and communities living in Washington. The named highway serves as a reminder to the community of Dr. King's vision of inclusivity, respect, equity, justice, and unity, and also serves as a call to action to continue his work.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Mia Gregerson, prime sponsor; and Gwen Allen-Carston.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: John Boyd.