

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HJM 4002

As Reported by House Committee On:
Transportation

Brief Description: Designating the bridge that carries Interstate 90 over the Columbia river near Vantage, Washington as the "Medal of Honor Bridge."

Sponsors: Representatives Dent, Paul, Barkis, Nance, Entenman, Orcutt, Klicker, Mena, Shavers, Dufault, Ormsby, Springer and Timmons.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 1/29/25, 2/6/25 [DP].

Brief Summary of Joint Memorial

- Requests the Washington State Transportation Commission to commence proceedings to designate the bridge that carries Interstate 90 over the Columbia River near Vantage, Washington as the "Medal of Honor Bridge" to show respect and remember Medal of Honor recipients.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 27 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, Entenman, Griffey, Hunt, Klicker, Ley, Nance, Orcutt, Paul, Ramel, Richards, Stuebe, Taylor, Timmons, Volz, Wylie and Zahn.

Staff: Christine Thomas (786-7142)

Background:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

State Highway Facility Naming.

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

If a naming request is submitted for a person who has recently died, the Commission does not act on the request for at least 12 months after the date of passing to allow for a respectful period of mourning and reflection.

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. If the facility is a bridge, the Regional Administrator at the WSDOT in which the bridge is located provides a description of the bridge and its location to the State Bridge and Structures Preservation Engineer.

The Medal of Honor.

The Medal of Honor (Medal) is the highest military decoration that may be awarded by the United States government. It is presented by the President of the United States, in the name of Congress, and is conferred only upon members of the United States Armed Forces who distinguish themselves through "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty." The Medal is awarded in three distinct versions: one for the Army, one for the Air Force, and one for the Navy, the Marine Corps, and the Coast Guard. The Medal was first authorized in 1861 for sailors and marines, and the following year for soldiers as well. Since then, more than 3,400 Medals of Honor have been awarded to members of all Department of Defense services and the Coast Guard, including 34 recipients from Washington.

Summary of Bill:

The memorialists request the Commission to commence proceedings to designate the bridge that carries Interstate 90 over the Columbia River near Vantage, Washington as the "Medal

of Honor Bridge" as a way for the state to show respect and remember Medal recipients.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) People in the military receive respect for their service to our country and for keeping United States citizens free and able to exercise their constitutional rights. The bridge in Vantage, Washington that goes over the Columbia River is in a picturesque region of the state and is currently being rebuilt. The Vantage bridge is unique in that two recipients of the Medal of Honor were born and lived near each end of the bridge, including the only recipient who served in the Coast Guard. It would be a fitting tribute to rename the bridge the Medal of Honor Bridge to honor the 34 recipients of the Medal and the 500,000 veterans from Washington, as well as the more than 3,400 Medal honorees of the United States.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Tom Dent, prime sponsor; and Mike Montaney, No.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.