

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SJM 8000

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Transportation, January 30, 2025

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

**Sponsors:** Senators Kauffman, Lovelett, Valdez, Wellman, Lias, Orwall, Hasegawa, Frame, Riccelli, Nobles, Nguyen, Krishnadasan, Stanford and Wilson, C..

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Transportation: 1/20/25, 1/30/25 [DPS].

**Brief Summary of First Substitute Joint Memorial**

- Requests the Washington State Transportation Commission commence proceedings to extend the naming of Martin Luther King, Jr. Way along State Route (SR) 900 to its terminus in Renton near milepost 10, and then along the entirety of SR 515 from interstate 405 to SR 516 in Kent.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Joint Memorial No. 8000 be substituted therefor, and the substitute joint memorial do pass.

Signed by Senators Lias, Chair; Lovick, Vice Chair; Ramos, Vice Chair; King, Ranking Member; Goehner, Assistant Ranking Member; Alvarado, Chapman, Christian, Cortes, Fortunato, Harris, Holy, Krishnadasan, MacEwen, Nobles, Shewmake and Wilson, J..

**Staff:** Daniel Masterson (786-7454)

**Background:** Naming Highways. The Washington State Transportation Commission (Commission) is responsible for naming state transportation facilities, including highways and bridges. The Commission naming 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

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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.

The naming process can be initiated by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), state and local governmental entities, citizen organizations, or an individual providing sufficient evidence to the Commission indicating community support and acceptance of the proposal. Alternatively, the Legislature may pass a joint memorial requesting a facility be named, at which point the Commission will hold a public hearing to allow public input. After the Commission takes final action, WSDOT designs and installs the appropriate signs.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Way. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was born January 15, 1929, and was a Baptist minister and social activist who led the civil rights movement in the United States from the mid-1950s 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 Joint Memorial (First Substitute):** The Legislature requests the Commission commence proceedings to extend the naming of Martin Luther King, Jr. Way along SR 900 from its current terminus at the westerly city limits of Renton to near milepost 10 in Renton, and then along the entirety of SR 515 from interstate 405 to SR 516 in Kent.

**EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (First Substitute):**

- Updates the description of the highway sections to be named to align with the state's actual ownership of these routes.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Joint Memorial:** *The committee recommended a different version of the joint memorial than what was heard.* PRO: SR 515 runs along the East Hill in my district and it connects with what is currently Martin Luther King Jr. Way. In transportation we have named a few other highways in memory of other folks. This is certainly fitting, but it also carries certain significant meaning to us and to my constituents on East Hill. This is also within Martin Luther King County. This is fitting for this day and this area. This idea came to my attention at a stoplight. I was interested in how many other cities have Martin Luther King Way or Blvd. Martin Luther King was a pivotal

figure in American history and the civil rights movement, advocating for justice, equality, and nonviolent protest. He advocated for all of the people in these United States in the face of racism and discrimination. The extension of Martin Luther King Way is a symbol of the surrounding community and is an appropriate way to honor his life and contributions. This means a lot to me and to others who I've talked to about this.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Claudia Kauffman, Prime Sponsor; Gwen Allen-Carston.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.