



**College of Engineering**

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Madam Chair and members of the House Committee on Transportation & Economic Development:

My name is Scott Ashford and I serve as the dean of Oregon State University's College of Engineering. I grew up in Salem, attending North Salem High School, and Tebeaus were family friends. I am glad I had the chance to know Bill Tebeau personally.

It is an honor to appear before your committee today in support of Senate Bill 5 and the naming of a portion of Oregon State Highway 126 between Florence and Eugene in honor of William Tebeau.

The naming of this highway is a fitting tribute to an alumnus of my college and university – and an Oregonian – who led his life with humility and courage and who served as a role-model for many generations. Throughout his life, Bill Tebeau quietly accomplished many great things as a state highway engineer, as a parent, as an educator at Chemeketa Community College, and as a young man who initially was not welcomed at Oregon State – simply because of the color of his skin.

You might know that Bill was admitted to Oregon State College in 1943, but was turned away from receiving an on-campus housing assignment when administrators realized he was black. The dean of men at the time suggested that he might be better off at another university. Instead, Bill Tebeau worked tending the furnace in a fraternity house in exchange for a room in the fraternity's basement. In 1948, he completed his degree requirements making him the first African- American male to earn a degree from Oregon State College.

He was a man who overcame significant adversity and yet stayed connected to his alma mater his entire life. He was a dedicated engineer who left his mark on important projects throughout our state. He was a teacher of others who also aspired to become engineers. He was a community leader and tireless advocate for access and education. Most important, he was a family man who with his wife raised seven children and enjoyed the love of numerous grandchildren and great grandchildren.

In recent years, a number of recognitions have been provided Bill Tebeau. In 2010, he was inducted into the Oregon State College of Engineering Hall of Fame; he received a Trailblazer award for the Oregon Black Pioneers in 2008; and this past fall, Oregon State University dedicated a new residence hall in his honor.

Yet, as an engineer myself and as an Oregonian, I can think of no more appropriate honor than this state recognizing this man, his contributions and his quiet resilience than by dedicating a portion of the Florence-Eugene Highway in his honor.

Bill Tebeau's lasting impact on this state and his contributions to supporting access, education and transportation safety for all Oregonians – regardless of the color of their skin – should be so recognized.

Thank you,

Scott A. Ashford,  
Kearney Professor and Dean