

Enrolled House Bill 2036

Sponsored by Representative HUFFMAN, Senators BAERTSCHIGER JR, FERRIOLI, GIROD, KNOPP, OLSEN; Representatives BENTZ, BUEHLER, MCLANE, WHISNANT, WHITSETT, Senators BOQUIST, DEVLIN, HANSELL, KRUSE, THATCHER, THOMSEN, WHITSETT, WINTERS (Presession filed.)

CHAPTER

AN ACT

Relating to veterans memorial highways; and declaring an emergency.

Whereas Oregon has honored its World War II and Vietnam War veterans with border to border memorial highways on U.S. Highway 97 and Interstate 84; and

Whereas Oregon has not similarly honored its veterans who served during World War I, the Korean War or the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan and Iraq Wars; and

Whereas many other states have designated major highways as memorial highways to honor veterans who served during these and other wars; and

Whereas 44,200 Oregonians served during World War I, with about 1,100 becoming war casualties; and

Whereas all of Oregon's World War I veterans have passed away; and

Whereas 60,000 Oregonians served during the Korean War, with 298 making the ultimate sacrifice or being identified as Missing In Action; and

Whereas there are approximately 29,600 Korean War veterans living in Oregon; and

Whereas recent statistics show that approximately 54,000 Oregonians have served during the Persian Gulf War and during the subsequent Afghanistan and Iraq Wars, collectively representing the longest war in America's history, with 148 making the ultimate sacrifice to date; and

Whereas there are approximately 74,500 Persian Gulf, Afghanistan and Iraq war veterans living in Oregon; and

Whereas at least 6,000 Oregon veterans from World War I to the present became eligible for award of the Purple Heart, our nation's oldest military award; and

Whereas the missions of the congressionally chartered Oregon Department of the Korean War Veterans Association and Oregon Department of the Military Order of the Purple Heart include honoring the service and sacrifice of Korean War veterans and all combat-wounded veterans; and

Whereas no congressionally chartered veterans organizations exist in Oregon to speak for World War I veterans and Persian Gulf, Afghanistan and Iraq war veterans, and someone must speak for them; and

Whereas the congressionally chartered American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars Departments of Oregon honor war veterans; and

Whereas Oregon's Blue Star Memorial Highways on Oregon Route 99E, Oregon Route 99W, U.S. Highway 97, Interstate 5, Interstate 84, U.S. Highway 101 and Interstate 205 honor the veterans who serve during war and peacetime; and

Whereas designating U.S. Highway 395 as the World War I Veterans Memorial Highway will honor for posterity all those who served during World War I; and

Whereas it is appropriate to designate Interstate 5 as the Korean War Veterans Memorial Highway due to its proximity to the Oregon Korean War Memorial in Wilsonville, which was created by the Korean War Memorial Foundation of Oregon and is served by Interstate 5; and

Whereas designating Interstate 5 also as a Purple Heart Trail will link the border to border Purple Heart Trails on Interstate 5 in California and Washington, creating the first National Purple Heart Trail in the United States connecting our nation to its neighboring countries of Canada and Mexico; and

Whereas the cities of Albany and Medford served by Interstate 5 were designated as Purple Heart cities in 2014; and

Whereas it is appropriate to designate U.S. Highway 101 as the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan and Iraq Veterans Memorial Highway due to its proximity to the American Veterans and Desert Storm Memorial in Lincoln City designed and developed by Mark S. Hemstreet; and

Whereas designating U.S. Highway 101 as the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan and Iraq Veterans Memorial Highway now as the war ends in Afghanistan, rather than waiting decades as has been done for veterans of earlier wars, will honor Oregon's youngest combat veterans sooner; and

Whereas Oregon's Korean War, Persian Gulf War, Afghanistan War, Iraq War and Purple Heart veterans will appreciate these new veterans memorial highways as World War II and Vietnam War veterans have appreciated their memorial highways; and

Whereas the existing names of U.S. Highway 395, U.S. Highway 101 and Interstate 5 and any maps will not be changed by the honorary designations of these new veterans memorial highways; and

Whereas Oregon's veterans have offered to pay the cost to create, install and maintain signs for each of these three border to border veterans memorial highways; now, therefore,

Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:

SECTION 1. (1) The portion of U.S. Highway 395, crossing the State of Oregon, beginning at the California state line and ending at the Washington state line, shall also be known as the World War I Veterans Memorial Highway.

(2) The portion of Interstate 5, crossing the State of Oregon, beginning at the California state line and ending at the Washington state line, shall also be known as the Korean War Veterans Memorial Highway, and as the Purple Heart Trail.

(3) The portion of U.S. Highway 101, crossing the State of Oregon, beginning at the California state line and ending at the Washington state line, shall also be known as the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan and Iraq Veterans Memorial Highway.

(4) The Department of Transportation shall place and maintain suitable markers along each highway described in this section to indicate the designation of each highway.

(5)(a) The department may accept moneys from and may enter into agreements with veterans groups to create, install and maintain the markers.

(b) The department may not use public funds for the installation and maintenance of the markers.

SECTION 2. This 2015 Act being necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is declared to exist, and this 2015 Act takes effect on its passage.

Passed by House February 16, 2015

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Timothy G. Sekerak, Chief Clerk of House

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Tina Kotek, Speaker of House

Passed by Senate May 12, 2015

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Peter Courtney, President of Senate

Received by Governor:

.....M,....., 2015

Approved:

.....M,....., 2015

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Kate Brown, Governor

Filed in Office of Secretary of State:

.....M,....., 2015

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Jeanne P. Atkins, Secretary of State