

HB 2146 -1 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans

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Meeting Dates: 1/19, 1/26

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Designates the portion of U.S. Highway 30 between the intersection with U.S. Highway 101 and the Idaho border as the Oregon Gold Star Families Memorial Highway.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Other highways in Oregon with designations
- History of Blue Star and Gold Star programs
- Funding signs with private donations
- Coordinated efforts in other states to dedicate multi-state highways

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 Adds 'whereas' clause related to efforts to create a "Gold Star Families Memorial Highway Across America."

FIS: Minimal fiscal impact on measure with the -1 amendment

RIS: no revenue impact on measure with the -1 amendment

BACKGROUND:

During World War I, families with members serving in the U.S. Armed Forces would often display a 'Blue Star Service Banner' to be displayed on the family home. The banner was created by Captain Robert L. Queisser, 5th Ohio Infantry, whose two sons served during the war. Not long after the blue star banners became prevalent, an additional tradition was developed where families who lost a member during the war would cover the blue star on the banner with a gold star to indicate that the service member had died or was killed. Both these traditions carried over to World War II, when they were codified and became much more widespread.

Several of Oregon's roadways honor veterans who served their country in the United States Armed Forces. These dedications include the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway, designated by Senate Bill 461 (2013), and the Warm Springs Veterans Memorial Highway, designated by House Bill 4023 (2014). Furthermore, House Bill 2036 (2015) combined several border-to-border initiatives to honor veterans of the First World War; the Korean War; and the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan, and Iraq Wars, along with recipients of the Purple Heart, designated the Purple Heart Trail. Most recently, Senate Bill 1509 (2022) designated a portion of Oregon Route 35 as the Oregon Nisei Veterans World War II Memorial Highway.