

HB 2146 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Veterans, Emergency Management, Federal and World Affairs

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Meeting Dates: 4/20, 4/25

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.

FISCAL: Minimal fiscal impact

REVENUE: No revenue impact

HOUSE VOTE: 57-0-2

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- History of Gold Star Families
- How existing memorial highways will intersect with Highway 30
- Personal stories from Gold Star Families

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

During World War I, families with members serving in the U.S. Armed Forces would often display a 'Blue Star Service Banner' 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.

House Bill 2146 A designates U.S. Highway 30, between U.S. 101 and the Idaho Border, as the Oregon Gold Star Families Memorial Highway.