Senate Bill 659

Sponsored by Senator KNOPP; Senator FINDLEY (Presession filed.)

SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure as introduced.

Provides that U.S. Highway 30 in Oregon shall be known as Gold Star Families Memorial Highway.

A BILL FOR AN ACT

Relating to memorial highways.

Whereas almost one-half million Oregonians served in the United States Armed Forces during five major wars since World War I, with approximately 6,000 veterans making the ultimate sacrifice; and

Whereas the Bend Heroes Foundation initiated legislation creating eight war-related highways across Oregon: World War I Veterans Memorial Highway, World War II Veterans Historic Highway, Korean War Veterans Memorial Highway, Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway, Persian Gulf, Afghanistan and Iraq Veterans Memorial Highway, Purple Heart Trail, Oregon Medal of Honor Highway and POW/MIA Memorial Highway honoring Oregon’s approximately 480,000 wartime veterans who served, died, were wounded, became prisoners of war or are missing in action; and

Whereas family members of fallen veterans are named Gold Star families and Gold Star mothers by acts of the U.S. Congress; and

Whereas Gold Star families include parents, spouses, siblings, sons and daughters of fallen veterans, numbering as many as 20,000 individuals across Oregon since World War I; and

Whereas display of Gold Star banners at the homes of fallen wartime veterans became an enduring tradition more than a century ago during World War I; and

Whereas Gold Star Mother’s and Family’s Day was created by the U.S. Congress in 1936 to honor families of veterans who lost their lives during wars, with proclamations issued by the President of the United States and annual public ceremonies conducted across our nation; and

Whereas display of Gold Star memorials at cemeteries and veterans monuments is now becoming a reality due to the Oregon State Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc., and the Oregon chapter of American Gold Star Mothers, Inc.; and

Whereas the State of Oregon has not dedicated a border-to-border highway honoring its Gold Star families; and

Whereas designating U.S. Highway 30 as the Gold Star Families Memorial Highway would help to fulfill the mission of American Gold Star Mothers and National Garden Clubs to honor and help give closure to the families of Oregon’s nearly 6,000 veterans who perished during wars since World War I; and

Whereas a Gold Star Families Memorial Highway on U.S. Highway 30 would intersect with other Oregon war memorial highways, connecting Gold Star families of several generations; and

NOTE: Matter in boldfaced type in an amended section is new; matter [italic and bracketed] is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in boldfaced type.

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Whereas designating the 477-mile portion of U.S. Highway 30 in Oregon as Gold Star Families Memorial Highway will neither change existing designations of U.S. Highway 30 nor require maps to be changed; and

Whereas Oregon’s veterans and other patriots have offered to finance the creation, installation and maintenance of special markers for the Gold Star Families Memorial Highway; now, therefore,

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

SECTION 1. (1) The portion of U.S. Highway 30, crossing the State of Oregon, beginning at its intersection with U.S. Highway 101 in Astoria and ending at the Idaho state line, shall also be known as the Gold Star Families Memorial Highway.

(2) The Department of Transportation shall place and maintain suitable markers along the highway described in this section that indicate the designation of the highway as the Gold Star Families Memorial Highway.

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

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