

**CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORT BRIEF
HOUSE BILL NO. 2481**

As Agreed to April 1, 2024

Brief*

HB 2481 would make various commemorative designations related to transportation.

Highway and Bridge Designations

The bill would designate two portions of K-96 highway and a bridge in Sumner County in honor of deceased service members from Kansas:

- The PFC Henry Lee Fisher Memorial Highway would be the portion of K-96 highway within the city of Haven in Reno County;
- The 96th Infantry Division Memorial Highway would be the portion of K-96 highway from its junction with 56th Avenue then northwest on K-96 highway to its junction with Nickerson Road in Reno County; and
- The SrA Derek Scott Martin Memorial Bridge would be bridge No. 160-96-293.72, located on US-160 highway in Sumner County.

The bill would designate two portions of highway in honor of distinguished Kansans:

- The Ken W Brock Memorial Highway would be the portion of US-69 between Grand Road in Bourbon County and East 650th Avenue in Crawford County; and
- The Merle Miller Memorial Highway would be US-81 in Republic County. The bill would remove this portion from the Frank Carlson Memorial Highway.

The bill would also designate as the First Responders Memorial Highway the portion of US-281 from the southern city limits of Russell north to its junction with K-18 in Russell County.

The bill would require the Secretary of Transportation to place suitable signs to indicate the designations once, pursuant to continuing law, sufficient moneys have been received from gifts and donations for the cost of placing such signs, plus an additional 50 percent of the initial cost to defray costs for future maintenance or replacement of the signs.

*Conference committee report briefs are prepared by the Legislative Research Department and do not express legislative intent. No summary is prepared when the report is an agreement to disagree. Conference committee report briefs may be accessed on the Internet at <http://www.kslegislature.org/kIRD>

The bill would make conforming amendments to remove newly designated portions of highway from previous designations:

- From the State Fair Freeway, the portion of K-96 highway to be designated as the Henry Lee Fisher Memorial Highway;
- From the American Legion Memorial Highway, the portion of US-281 to be designated as the First Responders Memorial Highway. [*Note:* The American Legion Memorial Highway currently extends from the Nebraska state line to the Oklahoma state line.]; and
- From the Frank Carlson Memorial Highway, the portion of US-81 to be designated as the Merle Miller Memorial Highway. [*Note:* The Frank Carlson Memorial Highway extends from the Nebraska state line to I-70.]

Railroad Heritage-related Designations

The bill would designate the official state steam locomotive and the official state heritage railroad:

- The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe #3415 Pacific class 4-6-2, built in 1919, would be designated as the official steam locomotive for the state; and
- The Abilene & Smoky Valley Railroad would be designated as the official state heritage railroad.

Conference Committee Action

The Conference Committee agreed to the contents of HB 2481, as amended by the Senate Committee on Transportation, and to insert the provisions of HB 2501, as amended by the House Committee on Transportation, and the provisions of SB 410, as amended by the House Committee on Transportation.

Background

As agreed to by the Conference Committee, the bill includes provisions of HB 2481, HB 2501, HB 2502, HB 2507, HB 2575, HB 2799, SB 357, and SB 410. [*Note:* The provisions of HB 2507 and HB 2575 were included in HB 2481, as amended by the Senate Committee on Transportation; the provisions of HB 2502 were included in HB 2501, as amended by the House Committee on Transportation; and the provisions of HB 2799 and SB 357 were included in SB 410, as amended by the House Committee on Transportation.]

HB 2481 (PFC Henry Lee Fisher Memorial Highway)

HB 2481 was introduced by the House Committee on Transportation at the request of Representative Seiwert.

House Committee on Transportation

In the House Committee hearing, **proponent** testimony was provided by Representative Seiwert and a family member of Private First Class (PFC) Henry Lee Fisher. According to testimony, PFC Fisher was born and raised in Haven, Kansas, and was killed in action while serving in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War. No other testimony was provided.

The House Committee amended the bill to:

- Insert the contents of HB 2575 (96th Infantry Division Memorial Highway provisions); and
- Remove the nickname “Deadeye” from the proposed name of the 96th Infantry Division Memorial Highway.

[*Note:* The Conference Committee retained these amendments.]

Senate Committee on Transportation

In the Senate Committee hearing, **proponent** testimony was provided on the contents inserted into HB 2481 from HB 2575. [*Note:* More information on that testimony is provided below.]

The Senate Committee amended the bill to include the contents of HB 2507 (SrA Derek Scott Martin Memorial Bridge). [*Note:* The Conference Committee retained this amendment.]

HB 2501 (Official State Steam Locomotive)

HB 2501 was introduced by the House Committee on Transportation at the request of Representative Hill.

House Committee on Transportation

In the House Committee hearing, **proponent** testimony was provided by Representative Hill, the President and General Manager of the Abilene & Smoky Valley Railroad, and the Director of the Abilene Convention and Visitors Bureau. The proponents described the locomotive and its significance to the community and to locomotive enthusiasts nationwide, noting it is used on the Abilene & Smoky Valley Railroad. Written-only proponent testimony was received from a representative of American Heritage Railways. No other testimony was provided.

The House Committee amended the bill to add the contents of HB 2502 (Official State Heritage Railroad). [*Note:* The Conference Committee retained this amendment.]

Senate Committee on Transportation

In the Senate Committee hearing, **proponent** testimony was provided by Representative Hill, two 5th grade students from St. Andrew's Elementary School in Abilene, and the President and General Manager of the Abilene & Smoky Valley Railroad Association. The proponents stated the locomotive's and railroad's historical significance to the area and the tourism benefits for the area and described the rides and services available. They also stated these designations would increase the chance for the railroad association to obtain grant moneys available for preservation.

Written-only proponent testimony was provided by Senator Claeys and representatives of the Abilene Convention and Visitors Bureau, American Heritage Railways, and the Topeka Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society. No other testimony was provided.

The Senate Committee amended the bill to be in effect upon publication in the *Kansas Register*. [Note: The Conference Committee did not retain this amendment.]

HB 2502 (Official State Heritage Railroad)

HB 2502 was introduced by the House Committee on Transportation at the request of Representative Hill.

House Committee on Transportation

In the House Committee hearing, **proponent** testimony was provided by three 5th grade students from Enterprise Elementary School, the President and General Manager of the Abilene & Smoky Valley Railroad, and the Director of the Abilene Convention and Visitors Bureau. The proponents described rides on the train, the visitors drawn to the area because of the railroad and benefits of the railroad to the local economy, and people's enthusiasm for riding trains drawn by steam-powered locomotives. Written-only proponent testimony was received from the 5th grade class at Eisenhower Elementary School in Abilene and the President of the Topeka Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society. No other testimony was provided.

HB 2507 (SrA Derek Scott Martin Memorial Bridge)

HB 2507 was introduced by the House Committee on Transportation at the request of Representative Rhiley.

House Committee on Transportation

In the House Committee hearing, **proponent** testimony was provided by Representative Rhiley and three family members of Senior Airman (SrA) Derek Scott Martin. One of the family members also read testimony provided by a veteran who had served with and continued after service as a friend to SrA Martin.

According to testimony, SrA Martin was born in Wellington, Kansas, and served six years in the U.S. Air Force, from which he was honorably discharged after serving multiple tours of

duty in Iraq and Afghanistan and being awarded a Purple Heart medal for his service. The proponents described his service to others, including to other wounded veterans.

Written-only proponent testimony was provided by five family members and three friends of SrA Martin, four friends of members of his family, a mother of another deceased veteran, and representatives of 22 Too Many and Operation Creekside. No other testimony was provided.

Senate Committee on Transportation

In the Senate Committee hearing, Representative Rhiley and two family members of SrA Martin provided **proponent** testimony. They described his commitment to service, his family, and fellow veterans. Written-only proponent testimony was provided by five family members, three friends of SrA Martin, four friends of members of his family, a mother of another deceased veteran, and representatives of 22 Too Many and Operation Creekside. No other testimony was provided.

HB 2575 (96th Infantry Division Memorial Highway)

HB 2575 was introduced by the House Committee on Transportation at the request of Representatives Seiwert, Murphy, Probst, and Waggoner.

House Committee on Transportation

In the House Committee hearing, **proponent** testimony was provided by Representative Seiwert and a resident of Reno County whose father was killed during World War II while serving with the 96th Infantry Division. According to testimony, many Kansans, including at least four Reno County residents, served in the 96th Infantry Division during World War II. No other testimony was provided.

[*Note:* The House Committee added the contents of HB 2575 to HB 2481.]

Senate Committee on Transportation

In the Senate Committee hearing on HB 2481 (to which HB 2575 had been added), Representative Seiwert provided **proponent** testimony on behalf of himself, Representatives Murphy, Probst, and Waggoner, and Senator Steffen. Representative Seiwert provided information on the history of the 96th Infantry Division Memorial Highway. Written-only proponent testimony was received from a resident of Reno County whose father was killed during World War II while serving with the 96th Infantry Division. No other testimony was provided.

HB 2799 (First Responders Memorial Highway)

HB 2799 was introduced by the House Committee on Appropriations at the request of Representative Waymaster on behalf of the city of Russell.

House Committee on Transportation

In the House Committee hearing, written-only proponent testimony was provided by Representative Waymaster, Senator Bowers, and the mayor of the city of Russell. The proponents generally stated the bill would demonstrate respect and appreciation for Kansans serving as emergency responders. The mayor of the city of Russell noted unanimous city council support for the designation. No other testimony was provided.

[*Note:* The House Committee added these contents to SB 410.]

SB 357 (Merle Miller Memorial Highway)

SB 357 was introduced by the Senate Committee on Transportation at the request of Senator Bowers.

Senate Committee on Transportation

In the Senate Committee hearing, the daughter of Mr. Miller and the current publisher of the Belleville Telescope provided **proponent** testimony. They described the dedication of Merle Miller, who was editor and publisher of the Belleville Telescope, to improving highways, particularly US-81. Written-only proponent testimony was provided by a representative of the City of Belleville. No other testimony was provided.

[*Note:* The Senate Committee added these contents to SB 410.]

SB 410 (Ken W Brock Memorial Highway)

SB 410 was introduced by the Senate Committee on Transportation at the request of Senator Tyson.

Senate Committee on Transportation

In the Senate Committee hearing, **proponent** testimony was provided by the president of Midwest Minerals and the chairman of the U.S. Highway 69 Association. They described Mr. Brock's advocacy for improving US-69 to four lanes from Kansas City to I-44 and his involvement in other community improvement endeavors. Written-only proponent testimony was provided by U.S. Senator Jerry Moran, U.S. Representative Jake LaTurner, the Pittsburg City Manager, and the President of the Pittsburg Area Chamber of Commerce. No other testimony was provided.

The Senate Committee amended SB 410 to add the contents of SB 357 (Merle Miller Memorial Highway). [*Note:* The Conference Committee retained this amendment.]

House Committee on Transportation

In the House Committee hearing, **proponent** testimony was provided by Senator Bowers, Senator Tyson, Representative Moser, the president of Midwest Minerals, and the daughter of Merle Miller. The proponents described Ken Brock's and Merle Miller's advocacy for improving US-69 and US-81, respectively, and their involvement in other community improvement endeavors. Written-only proponent testimony was provided by U.S. Senator Jerry Moran, U.S. Representative Jake LaTurner, the Pittsburg City Manager, the President of the Pittsburg Area Chamber of Commerce, and the chairman of the U.S. Highway 69 Association. No other testimony was provided.

The House Committee amended SB 410 to add the contents of HB 2799 (First Responders Memorial Highway). [*Note: The Conference Committee retained this amendment.*]

Fiscal Information

Bridge and Highway Designations (Provisions of HB 2481, HB 2507, HB 2575, HB 2799, SB 357, and SB 410)

According to the fiscal notes prepared by the Division of the Budget on HB 2481, HB 2507, HB 2575, HB 2799, SB 357, and SB 410, as introduced, the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) estimated the following costs to manufacture and install two signs indicating each of the designations and the amounts that KDOT would need to receive from donations to install the signs:

- HB 2481 (PFC Henry Lee Fisher Memorial Highway) — \$8,440 to manufacture and install two signs and \$12,660 would be required from donations;
- HB 2507 (SrA Derek Scott Martin Memorial Bridge) — \$2,280 to manufacture and install two signs and \$3,420 would be required from donations;
- HB 2575 (96th Infantry Division Memorial Highway) — \$5,240 to manufacture and install two signs and \$7,860 would be required from donations;
- HB 2799 (First Responders Memorial Highway) — \$4,320 to manufacture and install two signs and \$6,480 would be required from donations;
- SB 357 (Merle Miller Memorial Highway) — \$5,580 to manufacture and install two signs and \$8,370 would be required from donations; and
- SB 410 (Ken W Brock Memorial Highway) — \$5,580 to manufacture and install two signs and \$8,370 would be required from donations.

KDOT indicates implementation of the bill would require an increase of \$31,440 to the expenditure limitation for the agency operations account for FY 2025 (in amounts for each designation equal to the cost of manufacture and installation).

Any fiscal effect associated with enactment of these provisions of HB 2481, as recommended by the Conference Committee, is not reflected in *The FY 2025 Governor's Budget Report*.

Railroad Heritage-Related Designations (Provisions of HB 2501 and HB 2502)

According to the fiscal notes prepared by the Division of the Budget on HB 2501 and HB 2502, as introduced, KDOT and the Kansas State Historical Society indicate enactment of the bills would have no fiscal effect.

Memorial highway; memorial bridge; first responders; veterans; heritage railroad; locomotive

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