

Legislative Analysis



SERGEANT RYAN J. PROXMIRE MEMORIAL HIGHWAY

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<http://www.house.mi.gov/hfa>

House Bill 5720 as reported from committee

Sponsor: Rep. Julie Rogers

Committee: Transportation

Complete to 2-23-22

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

SUMMARY:

House Bill 5720 would amend the Michigan Memorial Highway Act to designate the portion of highway US-131 in Kalamazoo County from West U Avenue to mile marker 35 as the “Sergeant Ryan J. Proxmire Memorial Highway.”

MCL 250.2073a

BACKGROUND:

According to committee testimony and online sources, Ryan J. Proxmire was born in Kalamazoo to Mark and Dawn Proxmire on October 7, 1981. He was a 1999 graduate of Three Rivers High School and proudly served with the Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Office for over nine years. During his service, he was assigned to road patrol, served in the Jail Division, and filled in as a temporary sergeant when needed. He also served as a field training officer, Taser instructor, and subject control/defensive tactics instructor. He was known throughout the department as an experienced and professional officer.

On the evening of August 14, 2021, Deputy Sheriff Proxmire responded to a report of a subject who had evaded officers in an earlier vehicle pursuit. The subject was spotted at a gas station on 35th Street near Galesburg. As Deputy Proxmire and other deputies approached him, the man produced a gun and fled in his vehicle, prompting a second pursuit. During the second pursuit, the subject started shooting at the pursuing deputies. One of the rounds struck Deputy Proxmire, causing his vehicle to leave the roadway near the intersection of MN Avenue and 38th Street in Charleston Township. Unaware that Deputy Proxmire had been wounded, the other deputies continued the pursuit.

A passing motorist encountered Deputy Proxmire's vehicle and called 911. He was then transported to a local hospital, where he succumbed to his wounds the following day. He was 39 years old.

Ryan J. Proxmire was posthumously promoted to sergeant. He was the second law enforcement officer in the history of the Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Department to die in the line of duty.

Dedicating a portion of Highway US-131 in Kalamazoo County to Sergeant Ryan J. Proxmire would be an appropriate way to honor his sacrifice to his state, his community, and his commitment to “protect the lives and property of Kalamazoo County citizens.”

FISCAL IMPACT:

Section 2 of the Michigan Memorial Highway Act indicates that the state transportation department shall provide for the erection of suitable markers indicating the name of the highway only “when sufficient private contributions are received to completely cover the cost of erecting and maintaining those markers.” As a result, the bill has no state or local fiscal impact.

POSITIONS:

Representatives of the Kalamazoo County Sheriff testified in support of the bill. (2-22-22)

The following entities indicated support for the bill (2-22-22):

- Police Officers Association
- Michigan Sheriff’s Association

The Department of Transportation indicated a neutral position on the bill. (2-22-22)

Legislative Analyst: E. Best
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