

Legislative Analysis



DEPUTY SHERIFF WILLIAM BUTLER, JR., MEMORIAL HIGHWAY

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Senate Bill 70 as reported from House committee
Sponsor: Sen. Joseph N. Bellino, Jr.
House Committee: Transportation and Infrastructure
Senate Committee: Veterans and Emergency Services
Complete to 8-20-25

SUMMARY:

Senate Bill 70 would amend the Michigan Memorial Highway Act to designate highway M-34 in Hillsdale County between Pioneer Road and South Pittsford Road as the “Deputy Sheriff William Butler, Jr. Memorial Highway.”

Proposed MCL 250.1115

BACKGROUND:

According to committee testimony and the Officer Down Memorial Page, William Henry (Bill) Butler, Jr., was born January 16, 1973, in Oakland, California, to William and Joyce “Cindy” Butler. A short time later, he and his family moved to Michigan, where he attended and graduated from Hillsdale High School in 1991. For over 20 years, Bill proudly served his country in the United States Army National Guard, serving overseas during Operation Iraqi Freedom and later working as a recruiter.

Bill was the broker owner and realtor for Pure Realty Team in Hillsdale. He lived life serving others and was always willing to lend a helping hand to anyone in need. He had a great passion for law enforcement and police work. Bill followed that passion and attended the police academy. He completed his training and was hired as a deputy sheriff in Hillsdale County in 2012.

On Thursday, June 27, 2024, around 2:30 p.m., a detective initiated a traffic stop, then called out his stop. Deputy Butler responded to help as backup. Although the suspect did not give his name, the detective identified him and found there was a warrant for his arrest. While the officials tried to arrest them, a fight broke out. The detective who initiated the traffic stop tried to tase the suspect to no avail. The suspect then drew a gun from his waist band, shot Sheriff Deputy Butler, and ran away. Deputy Butler was taken to the hospital, where he died from his injuries. He was 51 years old. Deputy Butler had proudly served the Hillsdale County Sheriff’s Department for 12 years. He is the fourth Hillsdale County deputy sheriff to die in the line of duty.

Designating the portion of highway M-34 in Hillsdale County between Pioneer Road and South Pittsford Road would be an appropriate way to recognize and honor Deputy William

Butler's commitment to serving the residents of Hillsdale County and providing quality law enforcement services to the citizens of this state.

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.

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