

Legislative Analysis



2ND LT. ROOSEVELT STIGER MEMORIAL HIGHWAY

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House Bill 4145 as reported from committee

Sponsor: Rep. Kathy Schmaltz

Committee: Transportation and Infrastructure

Complete to 5-19-25

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

SUMMARY:

House Bill 4145 would amend the Michigan Memorial Highway Act to designate highway US-127 in Jackson County between mile markers 39 and 40 as the “2nd Lt. Roosevelt Stiger Memorial Highway.”

Proposed MCL 250.1046a

BACKGROUND:

According to committee testimony and online sources, Roosevelt Stiger was born March 24, 1919, in Shelby, Tennessee, to Willie and Adlena Stiger. In 1930, Willie Stiger moved his family to Jackson, Michigan, where he was employed as a painter for a steam railroad.

After attending Jackson Junior College (now Jackson College), Roosevelt commuted from Jackson to attend the Literary College at the University of Michigan (now known as U of M’s College of Literature, Science, and the Arts). He participated on the track team as a sprinter and cross-country runner, winning a medal for the college in the two-mile race as a freshman. Roosevelt registered for the selective service on October 16, 1940, while still attending college. He enrolled in the Tuskegee Aviation Cadet program and successfully completed his training in November 1943. He graduated from flight training on March 12, 1944, at Tuskegee Army Air Field in Alabama. He then deployed to Italy with the 302nd Fighter Squadron of the 332nd Fighter Group (also known as the “Tuskegee Airmen”).

On October 7, 1944, when he was about ten minutes inland from the coast of Yugoslavia during a bomber escort mission to Vienna, Austria, 2nd Lt. Stiger reported his oxygen was low, and his flight leader accompanied him to a lower altitude. Over the water, visibility worsened. When the two aircraft descended further, they nearly collided. Stiger appeared to be heading into the water; his flight leader ordered him to pull up, and when the two aircraft emerged from the clouds, they were level with each other at about 600 feet altitude. However, within seconds, 2nd Lt. Stiger’s aircraft went into a steep dive down. Visibility remained poor. According to his flight leader, there was no possibility of recovery out of the dive. The flight leader circled the area while attempting to radio Stiger, but could not see or contact him. Stiger was 24 years old. He was not recovered following the crash and was declared dead a year and one day later.

2nd Lt. Roosevelt Stiger’s name is included on the Tablets of the Missing at the Sicily-Rome American Cemetery and Memorial in Italy. He was awarded a Purple Heart for his military service.

Dedicating a portion of US-127 in Jackson County would be an appropriate way to honor and recognize his contributions to our state and his service and ultimate sacrifice for our country.

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:

The Michigan Department of Transportation indicated a neutral position on the bill. (4-29-25)

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