Ohio Legislative Service Commission

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Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

Bill: Am. Sub. S.B. 245 of the 130th G.A. **Date**: May 15, 2014

Status: As Passed by the House **Sponsor**: Sens. Coley and Seitz

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: No

Contents: Designates five new memorial highways and changes the endpoint of an existing memorial highway

State Fiscal Highlights

- The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) will incur minimal costs to the highway operating fund to install signs marking two of the designated memorial highways under the bill. If any of the municipalities in the bill opt to have ODOT supply the signs, they would be charged for that cost but would still be responsible for the cost of installation.

Local Fiscal Highlights

- The cities of Middletown, Hamilton, and Cincinnati could each incur a nominal fee if they request ODOT to install signs for the highways named in the bill that fall within their borders.

Detailed Fiscal Analysis

The bill designates five memorial highways in Butler, Hamilton, and Warren counties. The following table summarizes these highways in the order that they appear in the bill, including the location of the highway and the entity responsible for paying any signage costs.

Memorial Highway Designations in S.B. 245			
Designation	**Road to be Named**	**County (Municipality, if applicable)**	**Entity Responsible for Signage Costs**
Elder High School Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway	SR-264	Hamilton County (Cincinnati)	City of Cincinnati
Capt. Bartt D. Owens Memorial Highway	SR-122	Warren County (Middletown)	ODOT/City of Middletown
Spc. Donald S. "Scott" Morrison Memorial Highway	I-71	Hamilton County	ODOT
Spc. Michael B. Cook, Jr. Memorial Highway	Tylersville Rd.	Butler County	ODOT
Sgt. Charles J. Webb Memorial Highway	South Fair Ave./ North Fair Ave.	Butler County (Hamilton)	City of Hamilton

The cost of signage to mark the highways is paid either by the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) or the municipal corporation through which the roadway passes, pursuant to ODOT's Traffic Engineering Manual.[1] In two cases above, ODOT will be responsible for the costs of installing signs to mark the designated roads. In cases where municipal corporations contain designated memorial highways entirely within their boundaries, the municipalities would be responsible for reimbursing ODOT for all signage costs. In other cases, where only a portion of a designated memorial highway passes through a municipal corporation, ODOT and the involved municipalities may share the costs, as those designated highways are not entirely contained within municipal boundaries.

In the case of the Elder High School Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway, the bill authorizes Elder High School to place auxiliary markers with individual names of veterans designated in the bill alongside the primary markers on an alternating basis.

[1] Under ODOT's Traffic Engineering Manual, for memorial highways designated in Chapter 5533. of the Revised Code, municipalities that opt to install signs designating memorial highways are responsible for reimbursing ODOT for those signage costs on United States routes and state routes within their borders, while ODOT covers the costs of memorial highway signs outside municipal borders and interstate highways within municipal borders.

However, as Elder High School is a private Catholic school, it is unclear if it would still be subject to the Traffic Engineering Manual guidelines for reimbursement.

Overall, ODOT and the associated municipalities would incur no more than minimal costs to install signs on each of the designated memorial highways in the bill. According to ODOT, the cost to manufacture and install a single set of flatsheet signs at one location is approximately $350 to $400 per sign, depending on sign size and equipment needed. Once a set of signs is installed, there are typically no maintenance costs unless the signs are damaged. Signs are usually in need of replacement every 12 to 15 years. When a highway or bridge is designated as a memorial, ODOT's policy is to install a marker in a rest area, scenic overlook, recreational area, or other appropriate location. If this is not practical, a marker is installed along the highway or near the bridge instead. For highways designated in two directions, two markers are usually installed, one in each direction at each location.

Change in existing highway designation

The bill alters the existing SFC William B. Woods, Jr. Memorial Highway, which is a stretch of U.S. 42 in Warren County, by changing its northeastern endpoint from W. Main Street in the city of Mason to Bunnell Road in unincorporated Warren County. However, the highway's origin point remains the same at the intersection of U.S. 42 and Butler Warren Road. As such, no change in signage should be necessary and there should be no fiscal effect resulting from the change in designation.

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