

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 1117
By: Carona
Transportation
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Under current law, the Texas Transportation Commission is prohibited from naming a highway component other than by numerical designation. A local government is authorized to assign a memorial or other identifying designation to a highway system component by submitting an application to the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) executive director describing the nature and objectives of the designation. Furthermore, the legislature can pass bills to name a portion of a highway. TxDOT is designated with the responsibility of constructing highway signs in accordance. During the past five regular sessions, the legislature has passed 42 bills naming highways. There are only 53 named segments of the state highways under state law, encompassing 5,000 miles of highways. Therefore, 80 percent of the state-named highway segments have been named within the last decade. The number of bills and lack of criteria for naming highways has become time consuming. Establishing criteria for the naming of highways would make the process more efficient.

SB 1117 establishes criteria for naming state highways. This bill authorizes a highway to be named after a person if the person is deceased and has had a significant impact on the state's history or the lives of people of the state. Finally, this bill places the financial responsibility for the construction of signs upon grants or donations of funds made to TxDOT.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 225.001, Transportation Code, as follows:

Sec. 225.001. New heading: RESTRICTIONS ON NAMING HIGHWAY. (a) Creates this subsection from existing text. Deletes existing text prohibiting the Texas Transportation Commission from designating a part of the highway system, including a bridge or street, by the name of a dead individual.

(b) Prohibits a part of the highway system, including a bridge or street, from being designated by a name, except as otherwise provided by statute.

(c) Authorizes a part of the highway system, including a bridge or street, to be designated by the name of a person only if the person is deceased and was significant in the state's history or in the lives of the people of this state.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 225.021, Transportation Code, by adding Subsections (c) and (d), as follows:

(c) Provides that the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is not required to design, construct, or erect a marker under this subchapter (Specific State Highway Names) unless a grant or donation of funds is made to TxDOT to cover the cost of the design, construction, and erection of the marker.

(d) Requires money received under Subsection (b) to be deposited to the credit of the state highway fund.

S.B. 1117 80(R)

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2007.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Upon passage, or, if the Act does not receive the necessary vote, the Act takes effect September 1, 2007.