

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1968
By: Harris, Caroline
Transportation
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Born on August 22, 1954, in Sherman, Texas, with a soul that had the courage to wear the badge, Officer Charles M. Whites Jr. served his community as an officer with the Round Rock Police Department (RRPD) for 19 years. He was a Patrol Officer, Field Training Officer, and SWAT Negotiator. Prior to his service, he earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from The University of Texas at Austin. When he wasn't working, he loved spending time outdoors hiking or working on his old truck. He was known for his love of classical music and his mustache smile. Officer Whites was struck by a vehicle on February 25, 2018, while directing traffic around a crime scene. He would succumb to those injuries on April 27, 2018. He is survived by his wife, Connie, and stepson, William Mannella. The doctor who stopped and rendered aid to Officer Whites on February 25 was presented the RRPD Heroism Award on January 10, 2019. In addition to the designation of I-35 through the City of Round Rock in his honor, Officer Whites has posthumously received the Star of Texas Award from Governor Greg Abbott in 2018 and the RRPD Purple Heart and Medal of Honor, presented by U.S. Representative John Carter, in 2019. His name is etched into the marble walls of the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington, D.C. In recognition of his sacrifice in the line of duty, H.B. 1968 posthumously honors Officer Charles Whites by designating the portion of Interstate Highway 35 in Williamson County, between its intersection with State Highway 45 and its intersection with Westinghouse Road, as the Officer Charles Whites Memorial Highway.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

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

H.B. 1968 amends the Transportation Code to designate, in addition to any other designation, the portion of Interstate Highway 35 in Williamson County between its intersection with State Highway 45 and its intersection with Westinghouse Road as the Officer Charles Whites Memorial Highway. The bill requires the Texas Department of Transportation, subject to a grant or donation of funds, to design and construct markers indicating the designation as the Officer Charles Whites Memorial Highway and any other appropriate information and to erect a marker at each end of the highway and at appropriate intermediate sites along the highway.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2023.