

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
88R11215 AJZ-D

S.B. 1542
By: Parker
Transportation
3/21/2023
As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

During WWII, the 2nd Battalion of the 131st Field Artillery Regiment, and part of the 36th Infantry Division, were sent to the Pacific in November 1941. In March 1942, they were taken prisoner by the Japanese when they overtook Java and were held as prisoners of war for 42 months.

This courageous group of men were referred to as the "Lost Battalion" due to their disappearance.

The Lost Battalion was comprised of approximately 902 American Army, Navy, and Marines who as prisoners of war, were interned in prison camps in Thailand, Burma, China, and Japan.

668 of these men were forced to work in the steaming jungles in construction of the Death Railway, the remainder were sent to work in coal mines, shipyards, and docks throughout Southeast Asia. All suffering from extreme brutality, harsh work conditions, starvation, and disease as POWs, 736 men were liberated. Among the group were five men from Bridgeport, Texas—four of whom eventually made it home, while one died in October 1943.

S.B. 1542 seeks to designate a section of U.S. Highway 380 in Wise and Jack Counties, Texas, as the Lost Battalion Memorial Highway, in honor of the soldiers who were part of the Lost Battalion during WWII.

S.B. 1542 would require the Texas Department of Transportation to design and construct markers indicating the designation and erect them at appropriate locations along the highway.

As proposed, S.B. 1542 amends current law relating to the designation of a portion of U.S. Highway 380 in Wise and Jack Counties as the Lost Battalion Memorial Highway.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter B, Chapter 225, Transportation Code, by adding Section 225.217, as follows:

Sec. 225.217. LOST BATTALION MEMORIAL HIGHWAY. (a) Provides that the portion of U.S. Highway 380 in Wise and Jack Counties between its intersection with U.S. Highway 281 and its intersection with U.S. Highway 287 is designated as the Lost Battalion Memorial Highway.

(b) Requires the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), subject to Section 225.021(c) (relating to prohibiting TxDOT from designing, constructing, or erecting a marker unless a grant or donation of funds is made to cover the cost), to:

(1) design and construct markers indicating the designation as the Lost Battalion Memorial Highway and any other appropriate information; and

(2) erect a marker at each end of the highway and at appropriate intermediate sites along the highway.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2023.