

Date of Hearing: July 2, 2024

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

SB 930 (Laird) – As Amended June 12, 2024

Policy Committee: Transportation

Vote: 11 - 1

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: No

Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill creates the Memorial Highway Signage Fund in the State Treasury to memorialize individuals who have promoted racial and gender equity.

This bill specifies that all moneys in the fund shall be available, upon an appropriation by the Legislature, to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) for the department's costs in erecting signage for memorial highway designations previously approved by the Legislature that memorialize individuals who have promoted racial and gender equity.

FISCAL EFFECT:

Minor costs General Fund (GF) costs to establish the Memorial Highway Signage Fund.

Significant cost pressure, ranging in the tens of thousands of dollars to the millions of dollars, to the GF and various special funds, to provide monies for erecting signage for memorial highway designations previously approved by the Legislature that memorialize individuals who have promoted racial and gender equity.

COMMENTS:

Background and Purpose. State law charges Caltrans, after consultation with local agencies and public hearings, with adopting rules and regulations prescribing uniform standards and specifications for all official traffic control devices placed on state highways consistent with existing law, including, but not limited to, stop signs, yield right-of-way signs, speed restriction signs, railroad warning approach signs, street name signs, lines and markings on the roadway and stock crossing signs. State law further requires that only those official traffic control devices that conform to Caltrans' uniform standards and specifications may be placed upon a street or highway.

The Legislature often considers resolutions to name portions of roads or highways in the memory of individuals who have provided extraordinary public service or some exemplary contribution to the public good. When approved, these namings are oftentimes accompanied by roadway signs to memorialize the naming of the road or highway. Such signs must comply with Caltrans' uniform standards and specifications. Typically, private parties provide funding to pay for the memorial signage.

Most roads and highways in California that are named in honor of an individual are named for men. The author notes that such naming practice “has not been representative of the diversity of our state.” The author describes this bill as seeking “to address this inequity and promote increased racial and gender representation in memorial highway designations by creating a fund that covers the cost of signage that memorialize individuals who have promoted racial and gender equity.” However, the bill provides no funding to this end. Nor is any such funding included in the proposed 2024-25 budget act.

Were the Legislature to provide such funding, it could direct the money to the purposes of this bill, regardless of whether there exists the Memorial Highway Signage Fund or any other subaccount predesignated to receive the funds.

Analysis Prepared by: Jay Dickenson / APPR. / (916) 319-2081