

Testimony of Senator Julia Lynn
before the Senate Committee on Transportation
on SB 377, designating a Bud Burke Memorial Highway
February 19, 2020

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I am most honored to appear before you this morning in support of the bill, SB 377, designating a portion of K-7 between K-10 and West Santa Fe Street in my Olathe District as the “Senator Paul ‘Bud’ Burke Memorial Highway.” I just could not think of a more deserving tribute to this outstanding former statesman, public servant, civic leader, legislator, businessman, veteran, and yes, Member of this very committee. He was a Shriner, Rotarian, Mason, and devout Jayhawk alum who was listed as “Who’s Who in the Midwest,” “Who’s Who in Government Service,” and “Who’s Who in America.”

Senator Burke was most known for his distinguished tenure as President of this body from 1988 to 1996. Prior to that he had served as Majority Leader from 1985-1988 and Chairman of the Tax Committee from 1982-1985. He began his Senate career in 1975 after having been elected to the Kansas House in 1972 and reelected in 1974. Some remarkable things were accomplished under his Presidency, most notably the 1992 overhaul of the State School Finance Formula that we still talk about today, as well as higher education and state welfare department reforms.

Because I have long been an admirer of and involved with the National Conference of State Legislatures and the great work they do, it stands out to me that Bud Burke was President of that organization in 1992. Probably due in part to his experience as an Air Force fighter pilot and Naval aviator, he had a reputation for being totally unperturbed as a legislator and fiercely devoted to his constituents and his state. He knew how to compromise quietly and effectively, a rare quality we can all aspire to, as well as do things without making a lot of promises; he never lost sight of the long-term consequences of legislation.

Mr. Chairman, Kansas is a far better place for Bud Burke’s having served it. It would be most fitting to have a portion of one of its highways in his home area named after him and all he meant to us as a lifetime resident of Johnson County. The fact that his mother was a concert pianist and trained vocalist makes it even more appealing to me personally, as I can imagine her “singing her way” down a highway bearing her son’s signage. I urge the committee’s adoption of this proposal, and hopefully, its ultimate placement on the Consent Calendar for favorable action yet this Session.