

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Gary Hayzlett at 1:30 P.M. on February 14, 2008 in Room 519-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Representative Pat George- excused
Representative Joe Humerickhouse- excused

Committee staff present:

Hank Avila, Kansas Legislative Research
Bruce Kinzie, Revisor of Statutes Office
Betty Boaz, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Representative Jim Morrison
Representative Tom Holland
Francis Landry, Colby, Kansas
John Bremenkamp, Colby, Kansas
Jason Peck, Vice Chair, Libertarian Party

Others attending:

See attached list.

Chairman Hayzlett called the meeting to order. He opened hearings on **HB 2704**.

HB 2704 - In God We Trust distinctive license plate

Chairman Hayzlett recognized Representative Jim Morrison who explained the bill had been requested by many people but the first request was from Francis Landry who is a neighbor of Representative Morrison. Representative Morrison introduced Francis Landry.

Mr. Landry said he was supporting this "In God We Trust" license plate because of a firm belief that this country was founded under God and all around us this belief was being attacked. (Attachment #1) He said while he and his wife were traveling through Indiana they noticed many vehicles displayed an "In God We Trust" license plate. Mr. Landry said they feel they have a constitutional right to display this license plate on their vehicle and asked the Committee to favorably pass this bill.

The next proponent was John Bremenkamp from Colby. (Attachment #2) Mr. Bremenkamp said he supported this bill to allow "In God We Trust" license plates because he believes this country was founded by Christians and Christianity. He said this license plate was a way for him to display on his vehicles that he is a Christian. He concluded by asking the Committee to favorably pass **HB 2704**.

Carmen Alldritt, Director of Motor Vehicle Div. answered questions from the Committee about the number of plates that would need to be run, where the money would come from and where it would go. Director Alldritt compared this plate to the firefighters plate. The cost of the plates she said would be \$40 for a specialized plate plus whatever the registration and renewal fee is on your particular vehicle. The \$40 would go to the State. She said it would take more than two years after it is approved for the plates to become available. She said the cost would be determined when the design was sent off to their vendor and the costs will be determined at that time, current law says it is not to exceed \$10,000.

There were no other proponents. Representative Hayzlett mentioned the large number of letters and e-mails he had received in support of this bill.

Representative Hayzlett recognized the only opponent, Jason Peck, Vice Chair of the Libertarian Party of Kansas. (Attachment #3) According to Mr. Peck their opposition to this bill is on the grounds that it is a violation of the establishment clause of the first amendment of the United States Constitution. He said their objection hinged on the word "WE". He said that when the state issues an official government document, emblem, sign, license plate or other such item, it represents us all. Mr. Peck said his Party would have no

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objection to a state issued license plate with the motto: "In God I Trust." He said they believe government should be neutral in matters of religion, just as founding fathers intended. Mr. Peck concluded by saying, "We seek only to promote a neutral state, and are resolved that a republic is superior to a theocracy."

There were no other proponents nor opponents so the Chairman closed the hearing on **HB 2704**.

Chairman Hayzlett opened the hearings on **HB 2720**.

HB 2720 - Designating part of K-10 highway as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Highway

Chairman Hayzlett recognized Representative Tom Holland. According to Representative Holland (Attachment #4) a constituent requested that a stretch of Highway 10, approximately seven miles in length, in West Lawrence, be named as the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Highway to honor the legacy of Dr. King. He said this area is beautiful and encompasses the Clinton Lake area. He said it reflects Dr. King's vision for harmony in America.

Representative Ballard said she feels this would be an appropriate area to be named for Dr. King because of the beauty and scenic values. In response to her question she was advised that there were no other stretches of highway in this area named for Dr. King.

There being no other proponents and no opponents Chairman Hayzlett closed the hearing on **HB 2720**.

It was the Chairman's desire to work **HB 2665**. Director Alldritt explained that **HB 2665** would allow the Division of Motor Vehicles to destroy Kansas licenses that have been submitted that are no longer usable due to suspensions, revocations and renewals. She said they currently have approximately 16,000 licenses on hand. Representative Burgess made a motion to favorably pass **HB 2665** and place it on the consent calendar, seconded by Representative Ballard, the motion carried.

There was a discussion on **HB 2691**, the Gold Star family license plates. According to Chairman Hayzlett, it was the Gold Star Mothers Organization that requested the license plates but the problem is not what the Gold Star Mothers want but the fact that the bill says family star members - meaning any person who is a Gold Star family member and that could branch way out. Chairman Hayzlett asked the Committee if they thought we are on the right track saying this is a plate that should be printed for the mothers of fallen soldiers and leave the rest of the family out of it. The Committee discussed the number of plates that would be made, the cost of purchasing a plate, and the possibility of making it for "parents" rather than limiting to mothers. The Committee also discussed the problem of authenticating gold star family members. The Chairman suggested a little more research might be done to verify with the Gold Star Mothers Organization that their intention was to have just the "mothers" plate. Director Alldritt stated that in the four years she has been Director she has received only one request. Chairman Hayzlett said the Committee would take this bill up again next week.

There being no further business before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned. The next meeting will be February 19, 2008, at 1:30 p.m. in Room 519-S.