

Date of Hearing: April 25, 2022

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Laura Friedman, Chair

ACR 144 (Gray) – As Introduced February 17, 2022

SUBJECT: Paul Vincent Rotondaro Memorial Highway

SUMMARY: Designates a portion of Interstate 140 between postmile 6.5 and postmile 11 in the County of Madera as the Paul Vincent Rotondaro Memorial Highway.

EXISTING LAW: Assigns the Department of Transportation (Caltrans) the responsibility of operating and maintaining state highways. This includes the installation and maintenance of highway signs.

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown, but the measure requests that Caltrans determine the cost of appropriate signage consistent with requirements for the state highway system, and only erect the appropriate signage upon receiving donations from non-state sources covering the cost.

COMMENTS: Paul Vincent Rotondaro grew up in the City of Merced, and is an alumnus of Our Lady of Mercy School and Golden Valley High School. During his time at Golden Valley High School, Paul was an active member in the Future Farmers of America, as well as an outstanding offensive lineman for the Golden Valley Cougars football team.

After graduation from high school, always seeking to expand his knowledge, Paul graduated from Merced College, where he received his Associate of Science degree in Fire Science and was actively working on his bachelor's degree.

Paul began his career of public service with CAL-FIRE as a Firefighter 1 at the Ahwahnee Fire Station in the Madera-Mariposa-Merced Unit in 2006. Paul excelled at CAL-FIRE, promoting to Firefighter II in the Merced Division of the Madera-Mariposa-Merced Unit in 2011 and to LT Fire Apparatus Engineer in 2012, transferring to the Riverside Unit as a permanent Fire Apparatus Engineer in 2015, and returning to Madera-Mariposa-Merced Unit in 2016 to become a Fire Captain shortly thereafter.

Paul performed many aspects of the job, including as an active participant on the Type 1 Hazardous Materials team in Merced, a member of the CAL-FIRE Incident Management Team 3 in the Finance Section, a member of the Merced County Type 2 Rescue team, overseeing radio technology issues for the entire Merced County Fire Department, and serving as part of the aircraft rescue and firefighting team at Castle Airport.

Outside of his career as a firefighter, Paul was an avid outdoorsman who enjoyed camping, offroading, boating, and many more outdoor activities. Paul was killed on October 2, 2019, in a head-on collision while on duty with CAL-FIRE. Paul will be missed by not just his family, friends, and colleagues, but by the entire community that he protected and served so dutifully.

Paul is survived by the love of his life, Jennifer, his daughter, Kiersten (13 years old) and his son Wyatt Dune (16 months old), his father, Vincent Rotondaro, his parents, Michael and Toni McMillin, his brothers, Kirk, Kyle, and Chase, his sister, Shannon Dunch, his grandparents Tom

and Catherine Shippey, his goddaughter Emma Wortman, numerous loving uncles, aunts, cousins, and his family of firefighters.

According to the author, “Fire Captain Paul Vincent Rotondaro grew up in the City of Merced and began his Cal-Fire career at a Firefighter 1 at the Ahwahnee Fire State in the Madera-Mariposa-Merced Unit in 2006. Paul quickly rose through the ranks becoming a Fire Captain by 2016. Paul served on the Hazardous Materials Team, the Incident Management Team, the Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting team at Castle Airport, and oversaw radio technology issues for the entire Merced County Fire Department. Tragically, Fire Captain Rotondaro was killed on October 2, 2019 in a head-on collision while on duty. He is missed not just by his family, friends, and colleagues, but by the entire community that he protected and served.”

Committee Comments: It is the intent of the Assembly Transportation Committee to use the Memorial Highway Naming process to honor deceased Californians who have made significant public service contributions and also to reflect the diversity of our state. Currently, most named highways in California are for fallen male public safety officers, who made the ultimate sacrifice, and for whom we are indebted. However, these names do not fully represent the wide range of types of public service contributions, as well as the gender and racial diversity of California’s communities. The Assembly Transportation Committee is committed to working with the Department of Transportation in the upcoming year to improve the naming process to ensure greater equity and to better represent the diversity of California.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

None on file.

Opposition

None on file.

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