

Date of Hearing: April 25, 2022

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Laura Friedman, Chair

ACR 164 (Patterson) – As Introduced March 16, 2022

SUBJECT: Lieutenant Colonel Seth “Jethro” Nehring Memorial Highway

SUMMARY: Designate the portion of State Highway Route 168 between Lodge Road, postmile L27.368, and Qualls Prather Road, postmile L28.250, in the County of Fresno as the Lieutenant Colonel Seth “Jethro” Nehring 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: Seth was born on April 27, 1974, in Fresno, CA to Julia Smith and Timothy Nehring. He was a graduate of Clovis High School and remained active in sports, enjoyed swimming and water polo, was a member of the Clovis Judo Club, and continued with various forms of martial arts. He was an avid outdoorsman, enjoyed studying history, and was an Instructor with the National Rifle Association.

In 1994, Nehring joined the California Air National Guard, serving with distinction as an enlisted Crew Chief. Through his hard work and dedication, Nehring was selected for commissioning and went on to complete Undergraduate Pilot Training. In 1998, Nehring received his Bachelor of Science Degree in Aeronautics/Aviation Science and Technology from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. With over 20 years as a Fighter Pilot, Nehring achieved more than 2300 Flight Hours, flying both the F-16 Falcon and most recently the F-15 Eagle.

In his civilian capacity, Nehring was a valued family member and pilot with Southwest Airlines. Nehring was killed in a training accident, on October 16, 2018, during Clear Sky 2018, a joint military exercise between the United States Air Force and the Country of Ukraine, in the Khmelnytskyi Region of Ukraine. Nehring died doing what he loved, serving this great nation. Nehring leaves behind his loving parents, Julia and Butch Smith; members from the 194th Fighter Squadron and the 144th Fighter Wing; the Southwest Airlines family; Tim and Joanne Nehring, younger sister Nissa Lind (Trevor); niece and nephew, Kelsey and Kellan; grandmother, Erlene Nehring; cousin, Sondra Beal (Raymond); their children Ryan, Elizabeth, Braydon, and Logan; and large circle of friends.

According to the author, “Lt. Col. Seth Nehring was a loved and respected member of the 194th squadron, 114th Fighter Wing. His life was tragically cut short during a training accident in Ukraine. He was a selfless individual with a passion to serve his country, his community, and his family. ACR 164 would erect a highway memorial on the portion of the highway that connects travelers to the Sierra Nevadas, so that we may always remember and honor Lt. Col. Seth Nehring.”

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.

Analysis Prepared by: Jessica Sam / TRANS. / (916) 319-2093