

Date of Hearing: June 13, 2022

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Laura Friedman, Chair

ACR 177 (Bloom) – As Amended May 23, 2022

**SUBJECT:** Christopher Columbus Transcontinental Highway: removal of designation

**SUMMARY:** This measure would request that the Department of Transportation remove the “The Christopher Columbus Transcontinental Highway” designation from the portion of Interstate 10 in the state, as well as any signage and markers memorializing that designation, and advise the Federal Highway Administration of the state’s action.

**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:** Interstate 10 is a transcontinental Interstate Highway in the United States, stretching from Santa Monica, California to Jacksonville, Florida. There are designated portions of the freeway known as Rosa Parks Freeway, Redlands Freeway, and the Christopher Columbus Transcontinental Freeway. Places and statues are usually named after someone in regards to their historical relevance. In this case many activists have long seen Columbus as a villain responsible for the invasion, conquest and subsequent occupation of the Americas. He embraced slavery and colonialism, mass brutality and theft of indigenous land.

Many states are now voting to remove statues from state buildings and public parks, acknowledging the pain that celebrating Columbus causes for so many, and the way it privileges the settler narrative.

*According to the author,* “In recent years, the State Legislature has taken a number of positive actions to acknowledge past transgressions against Indigenous peoples, correct the historical record, and re- evaluate the priorities and values that govern the decisions to honor and promote the memory of historical individuals for their leadership, courage, and good works. ACR 177 is another step to promote increased cultural understanding sensitivity and empathy throughout the state for Indigenous people, especially for the approximately 160,000 Native Americans who reside in Los Angeles County, and those who live in regions along the entire route of Interstate 10 in California.”

*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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