

Date of Hearing: July 5, 2023

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Laura Friedman, Chair

ACR 71 (Ta) – As Introduced May 1, 2023

SUBJECT: Little Saigon Freeway

SUMMARY: Designates the portion of Interstate Highway 405 from Bolsa Chica Road in the County of Orange to Magnolia Street in the County of Orange as the Little Saigon Freeway. The measure also would request the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) determine the cost of appropriate signs showing that special designation and, upon receiving donations from nonstate sources sufficient to cover the cost, to erect those signs.

EXISTING LAW: Assigns 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: In April 1975, the capital of South Vietnam, Saigon, fell to the Vietnamese communists, and over the following 48 years, millions of Vietnamese have fled communist oppression in their homeland. More than 2,500,000 Vietnamese refugees and immigrants became permanent residents and citizens of the United States, and over 800,000 resettled in California.

In June 1988, Governor George Deukmejian recognized the importance of Little Saigon as a major cultural, social, and commercial center of southern California, and freeway signs officially designating the Vietnamese business district in the Cities of Westminster and Garden Grove as “Little Saigon” were unveiled. The signs gave official status to the title “Little Saigon,” recalling the name of the South Vietnamese capital more than a decade after it was changed to Ho Chi Minh City by the communist government. Little Saigon is the largest Vietnamese community outside of Vietnam and is a destination for tourists and refugees from all over the world.

The designation of Little Saigon in the County of Orange represents the very first “Little Saigon” in the United States. One can find all types of services and businesses in Little Saigon, including restaurants, supermarkets, medical clinics and centers, pharmacies, and law offices serving the Vietnamese American community, as well as other local and surrounding area residents in the County of Orange. Têt festivals and parades in Little Saigon celebrating the Vietnamese lunar New Year have attracted thousands of participants.

Vietnamese voters in Little Saigon are now a significant voting bloc, and Vietnamese Americans are political leaders on the city councils of the Cities of Fountain Valley, Garden Grove, Santa Ana, and Westminster, and on the Orange County Board of Supervisors, as well as on the school boards in school districts serving these areas.

The Vietnamese community in Little Saigon pioneered many political movements, demanding freedom in Vietnam and fighting against the oppression and dictatorship carried out by the totalitarian communist regime, whose oppression is the main reason for slow economic growth in Vietnam. The Vietnamese community has launched a campaign demanding the immediate

release of all prisoners of conscience, who mainly ask that fundamental human rights be afforded to all of Vietnam's citizens and seek the separation of powers and removal of the one-party system.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

City of Westminster
Westminster Chamber of Commerce

Opposition

12 Individuals

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