

MINUTES OF THE SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Mike Petersen at 8:30 am on Thursday, February 05, 2015, 546-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Senator Jacob LaTurner – Excused

Committee staff present:

Jill Shelley, Legislative Research Department

Whitney Howard, Legislative Research Department

Adam Siebers, Office of Revisor of Statutes

Carolyn Long, Kansas Legislative Committee Assistant

Scott Wells, Office of Revisor of Statutes

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

El Dean Holthus, Trustee, Ellen Rust Living Trust

Senator Michael O'Donnell

Others in attendance:

[See Attached List](#)

Possible bill introductions

Chairman Petersen asked if there were any bill introductions. Senator Anthony Hensley asked for legislation that would require two-man crews on all railroad trains. This is considered a safety issue by the United Transportation Union located in Kansas. There were no Committee objections.

Hearing on: SB43 — Home on the range highway.

The Chairman opened the hearing on **SB 43**. Adam Siebers, Assistant Revisor, informed the Committee that this legislation would designate the portion of K-8 , from the junction of K-8 with US Highway 36, north on K-8 to the Nebraska state line as the Home on the Range Highway. The Secretary of Transportation would not erect any signage until monies had been received to cover the cost of placing the signs and an additional 50% of that amount to cover future maintenance or replacement of the signs.

El Dean Holthus, Trustee, Ellen Rust Living Trust, thanked the Committee for the opportunity to inform them that passage of this legislation would give this historical site statewide and national recognition. This portion of Kansas Highway 8 is the only paved road to the Home on the Range site on which the cabin built by Dr. Brewster Higley in 1872 is located. The cabin was fully restored in 2013 and re-dedicated in 2014. Dr. Higley is the author of the State song of Kansas, *Home on the Range*. The Home on the Range Highway would lead to the only combination log/limestone cabin in the nation still on its original site. It is the only location where an artist can play the State song on the site where it was written in a cabin built by the author ([Attachment 1](#)) .

Chairman Petersen introduced Senator Elaine Bowers, who requested the proposed legislation. Senator Bowers indicated that should this legislation be passed, the Governor has expressed his intention to

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sign the bill in the cabin. She also introduced Representative Troy Waymaster, who orally supported the bill, Murl Riedel from the Humanities Council, and Sarah Martin, Coordinator for Kansas, National Register, Kansas Historical Society.

There being no further testimony, Chairman Petersen closed the hearing on **SB 43**.

Hearing on: SB68 — George Ablah expressway.

The Chairman opened the hearing on **SB 68** and called on Adam Siebers, Assistant Revisor, for an explanation of the bill. Mr. Siebers informed the Committee that this legislation would rename a portion of K-96 Highway from the junction with Interstate Highway 1-35, then east to the junction with Rock Road in Sedgwick County as the George Ablah Expressway.

Senator Michael O'Donnell noted that Mr. Ablah was a Wichita philanthropist who donated millions of dollars to Wichita non-profits and this renaming would be a testament to his legacy ([Attachment 2](#)).

Written testimony was submitted by Senator Mike Petersen ([Attachment 3](#)).

It was noted that a portion of K-96 East had already been designated the Bonnie Huy Memorial Highway; however, no funds had been raised. It was stated the intent was to push to the east the portion of the highway designated for former Representative Huy as it would be closer to the area she represented. It was understood that the same group that would be financially responsible for the George Ablah Memorial Highway would undertake funding for the Bonnie Huy Memorial Highway as well.

Senator Schmidt remarked that in the two highway designation bills heard in Committee today, the fiscal notes were not comparable and she wondered what factors made the differences. Chairman Petersen said it was his understanding that installation played a major role in determining the cost.

There being no further discussion, the Chairman closed the hearing on **SB 68**.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 a.m. The next scheduled meeting is Tuesday, February 10, 2015.