



**Testimony on House Bill 2531
House Committee on Transportation**

**Presented by
Colonel Mark A. Bruce, Superintendent
Kansas Highway Patrol**

February 1, 2018

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I am Colonel Mark Bruce, Superintendent of the Kansas Highway Patrol. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today on behalf of the men and women of the KHP in support of House Bill 2531.

Since our inception in 1937, 10 members of the Patrol have sacrificed their lives in service to the citizens of Kansas. It is fitting and proper that segments of highways in this state be memorialized in honor of troopers tasked by this state to patrol those highways.

These 10 gentlemen were dedicated to a cause greater than themselves. They went to work every day, aware of the dangers they faced, yet willingly did so to serve and protect their fellow man. There is nothing more honorable than giving one's life in order that others might live relatively free of fear from criminal victimization or dying in a traffic collision.

My agency has been negligent in pursuing the provisions of House Bill 2531, now under your consideration. Memorializing the sacrifice each of our 10 fallen made, in the fashion sought, should have occurred years ago. For that, I am saddened. However, collectively, we can grant them the level of respect they deserve.

Again, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today. When House Bill 2531 is put to a vote, I hope you will favorably consider its passage. With that, Mr. Chairman, I would stand for questions.

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HONORABLY SERVED THE PATROL MAY 28, 1941 - DECEMBER 16, 1944

TROOPER MAURICE R. PLUMMER

Trooper Maurice R. Plummer was the first member of the Patrol to be killed in the line of duty. Trooper Plummer was fatally injured in an automobile accident while patrolling US-40 about five miles west of Russell on December 16, 1944.



HONORABLY SERVED THE PATROL JULY 6, 1956 - OCTOBER 6, 1959

TROOPER JIMMIE D. JACOBS

Trooper Jimmie D. Jacobs was fatally injured in an automobile accident on October 6, 1959 on US-54 east of El Dorado. Trooper Jacobs was making an emergency blood run and collided with a truck which turned in front of him. He then struck a telephone pole. The blood was recovered from the wrecked patrol car, and relayed to the hospital. The physician credited Trooper Jacobs and the Patrol for playing a major role in saving the patient's life.



HONORABLY SERVED THE PATROL OCTOBER 1, 1962 - DECEMBER 9, 1964

TROOPER JOHN B. MCMURRAY

Trooper John B. McMurray was fatally struck by a car on December 6, 1964 on K-18 near Manhattan while working a speed enforcement lane. Trooper McMurray was struck by a drunk driver while putting his camera into the trunk of his patrol car, which was parked on the shoulder.

Trooper McMurray died of his injuries on December 9, 1964, at the hospital. The drunk driver was convicted of Driving Under the influence of alcohol and Manslaughter.



HONORABLY SERVED THE PATROL APRIL 15, 1946 - MAY 28, 1967

LIEUTENANT BERNARD C. HILL

Lieutenant Bernard C. Hill was fatally injured in an automobile accident May 28, 1967 on the Kansas Turnpike near Andover during a heavy rainstorm. A car being towed by another vehicle jackknifed on the slick pavement and broke loose. The runaway vehicle overturned, caught fire, and struck Lieutenant Hill's car head on.



HONORABLY SERVED THE PATROL JANUARY 13, 1953 - JANUARY 19, 1968

SERGEANT ELDON K. MILLER

Sergeant Eldon K. Miller was shot and fatally injured on January 19, 1968. Sergeant Miller, the first member of the Patrol to be killed by gunfire, was shot while assisting in a manhunt for suspects who had robbed the Metcalf State Bank in Overland Park. Their vehicle was found abandoned at an apartment complex. As officers tried to enter the building, gunfire erupted. Miller, who was outside the complex, was shot while moving a patrol car to provide coverage for officers pinned down by gunfire.



Highway Dedicated

November 1, 2017

HONORABLY SERVED THE PATROL JULY 1, 1949 - OCTOBER 2, 1973

TROOPER JAMES D. THORNTON

Trooper James D. Thornton was shot and fatally injured on October 2, 1973, while checking a hitchhiker on I-70 at the east edge of Topeka. The man, who was wanted for the murder of his father in New York, was shot and killed by other officers when he refused to surrender.



THE PRAYERS OF 1,000'S OF KANSAS ... OLD HIGHWAY PATR

HONORABLY SERVED THE PATROL SEPTEMBER 18, 1974 - MAY 24, 1978

TROOPER CONROY G. O'BRIEN

On May 24, 1978, at approximately 5 a.m., Trooper Conroy G. O'Brien stopped a vehicle on the Turnpike near Matfield Green (approximately 44 miles east of Wichita). What transpired immediately after the stop is uncertain, but at approximately 6 a.m., a truck driver reported that a patrol car was stopped with its lights flashing and an officer was lying in the ditch. Troopers responding to the scene found that O'Brien expired from two gunshot wounds to the head at close range.



HONORABLY SERVED THE PATROL JULY 13, 1959 TO JULY 11, 1981

TROOPER FERDINAND "BUD" F. PRIBBENOW

Trooper Ferdinand "Bud" F. Pribbenow was shot and fatally injured on July 11, 1981, after stopping a speeding car on the Kansas Turnpike near El Dorado. The suspect was wounded and apprehended after a gun battle with officers near a Wichita Turnpike interchange.



HONORABLY SERVED THE PATROL SEPTEMBER 14, 1970 - NOVEMBER 26, 1993

MASTER TROOPER LARRY L. HUFF

Master Trooper Larry L. Huff was injured in an automobile accident on November 3, 1993. Master Trooper Huff was patrolling US-81 south of Concordia when his vehicle was struck broadside by a semi-truck as he was attempting to turn around in pursuit of a traffic violator. Master Trooper Huff died as a result of his injuries.



Clay Center Trooper Dies From Accident Injuries

A Clay Center Kansas Highway Patrol Trooper died Friday, November 26 at Joseph's Hospital in Concordia, where he had been a patient since a November 3 traffic accident south of Concordia.

Larry Huff, 54, Clay Center, was on highway several miles south of Concordia to pursue a speeder when his patrol car was hit by a tractor-trailer.

Huff, a 20-year veteran of the patrol, was pinned inside his vehicle 45 minutes after the accident.

The 1970's make of Mustang Trooper's car had been assigned to Clay Center.

The trooper was killed by a tractor-trailer that struck his patrol car while he was pursuing a speeder on U.S. 81 south of Concordia.

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HONORABLY SERVED THE PATROL NOVEMBER 1, 1972 - SEPTEMBER 6, 1995

MASTER TROOPER DEAN GOODHEART

Master Trooper Dean Goodheart was performing a roadside inspection of a semi-truck at about 6:30 a.m., on September 6, 1995 on westbound I-70 near Colby. As he conducted a walk-around safety inspection of the truck, a westbound car driven by an 18-year-old college student struck him. Goodheart's injuries were immediately fatal.

As a result of this tragic incident, House Bill 2641, known by many as the "Goodheart Law," was signed by Governor Bill Graves on May 16, 2000, requiring drivers on interstates and other multi-lane highways to slow down and move over for stopped emergency vehicles. This law was amended in 2006 to include vehicles engaged in highway construction or maintenance operations when those vehicles are displaying an amber flashing light.



Trooper killed in pre-dawn stop

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