

HOUSE BILL 2506

By Mumpower

AN ACT to name a bridge on State Route 44 in Sullivan County in honor of the late Private First Class Eugene H. Stepp, United States Army.

WHEREAS, from time to time, the members of this General Assembly have seen fit to name certain highways and bridges to honor the memory of those courageous members of the United States Armed Forces who gave their lives in the defense of our nation; and

WHEREAS, no person is more deserving of this honor than the late Private First Class (PFC) Eugene H. Stepp, United States Army, who lost his life on September 5, 1968, while serving in Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, PFC Stepp followed the patriotic tradition for which Sullivan County and the Volunteer State are renowned by serving with distinction as a soldier in Company D, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry, United States Army; and

WHEREAS, like thousands of others of this nation's sons and daughters, PFC Stepp did not shrink from serving in combat, believing in the justice of the cause to protect our national security and liberty and to fight Communist aggression; and

WHEREAS, PFC Stepp believed strongly that confronting the enemies of freedom was also a positive step in protecting his homeland from invasion, as he endured the pangs of separation from his family and familiar surroundings; and

WHEREAS, PFC Stepp considered military service for the United States of America to be an honor and chose not to hand what he felt was his responsibility over to others; and

WHEREAS, Private First Class Stepp served with dignity, dedication, courage, and gallantry, giving his life for his country and for the cause in which he believed, and for that ultimate sacrifice, he deserves proper recognition; as a member of the United States Army, he

proudly continued an essential tradition of American society: the concept of the citizen-soldier;  
and

WHEREAS, PFC Stepp's dedication to excellence in the military and his love of his family, his fellow soldiers and his country, exemplified in his sacrifice of life itself in defense of all that he held dear, stand as enduring examples of all the characteristics that have ensured the continued freedom of our nation and the preservation of its ideals over the course of our history;  
and

WHEREAS, the Sullivan County Board of County Commissioners has petitioned this body to name the bridge spanning the right prong of Hatcher Creek on State Route 44 near the intersection of such route and Ryder Church Road in the Hickory Tree community of their county to permanently commemorate the singular patriotism, courage, and commitment to duty of the late Private First Class Eugene H. Stepp, United States Army; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly most heartily concurs with this excellent proposal;  
now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the bridge (Bridge No. 82-SR-044-9.91) spanning the right prong of Hatcher Creek on State Route 44 near the intersection of such route and Ryder Church Road in the Hickory Tree community of Sullivan County is hereby designated as the "Private First Class Eugene H. Stepp Memorial Bridge" in recognition of the life of valor and death in combat of Private First Class Eugene H. Stepp, United States Army.

SECTION 2. The Department of Transportation is directed to erect suitable signs or to affix suitable markers designating the bridge described in Section 1 as the "Private First Class Eugene H. Stepp Memorial Bridge". The cost of such signage shall be funded in accordance with Tennessee Code Annotated, § 54-1-133.

SECTION 3. The erection of such signs shall be within the guidelines prescribed by the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*.

SECTION 4. This act shall become operative only if the federal highway administrator advises the Commissioner of Transportation in writing that the provisions of this act shall not render Tennessee in violation of federal laws and regulations and subject to penalties prescribed therein.

SECTION 5. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.