

HOUSE BILL 426

By Keisling

AN ACT to name a segment of State Route 53 in  
Gainesboro and Jackson County in honor of the  
late William Benson "Ben" Wooten II.

WHEREAS, from time to time, the members of this general assembly have seen fit to name certain highways and bridges to honor those exemplary public servants who, during their lifetimes, contributed significantly to the growth and prosperity of their respective communities; and

WHEREAS, no Tennessean is more deserving of this honor than the late William Benson "Ben" Wooten II of Gainesboro who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, a true patriot, Mr. Wooten proudly served his country for thirty years in the United States Navy; a veteran of both World War II and the Korean War, he retired with the rank of Lt. Commander; and

WHEREAS, a gentleman of singular ability and rare dedication, Mr. Wooten served with distinction as the Mayor of Gainesboro, a member of the Jackson County Commission, Chairman of the Jackson County Board of Education, an election commission officer, and Postmaster of Gainesboro; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Wooten's remarkable success as a public servant and civic leader was directly attributable to his reliance on the time-honored values of hard work and common sense and his uncommon ability to work well with people from all walks of life; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Wooten's passing on December 5, 2009, was keenly felt in this State; his indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors will be long remembered; and

WHEREAS, because he was such an invaluable asset to Gainesboro and Jackson County, this General Assembly desires to name a segment of State Route 53 in honor of Ben Wooten, as a memorial to this native son's many contributions to the United States military and his fellow citizens; 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 segment of State Route 53 in Gainesboro and Jackson County from such route's intersection with State Route 56 on the eastern side of Gainesboro to the western corporate limits of Gainesboro is hereby designated the "William Benson "Ben" Wooten II Memorial Highway" as a lasting tribute to one of the most effective and compassionate public servants this state has ever known.

SECTION 2. The department of transportation is directed to erect suitable signs or to affix suitable markers designating the segment of State Route 53 described in Section 1 as the "William Benson "Ben" Wooten II Memorial Highway."

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 become operative only if the cost of the manufacture and installation of such signs is paid to the department of transportation from non-state funds within one (1) year of the effective date of this act. Such payment shall be made prior to any expenditure by the state for the manufacture or installation of such signs. The department shall return any unused portion of the estimated cost to the person or entity paying for such signs within thirty (30) days of the erection of such signs. If the actual cost exceeds the estimated

cost, an amount equal to the difference in such costs shall be remitted to the department in non-state funds within thirty (30) days of the sponsoring person or entity receiving an itemized invoice of the actual cost from the department.

SECTION 6. The appellation "William Benson "Ben" Wooten II Memorial Highway" provided for in this act is for honorary purposes only and nothing contained herein shall be construed as requiring the alteration of any address or the governmental system for assigning addresses in any county, municipality, or other governmental entity affected by this act.

SECTION 7. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.