

HCS HB 996 -- ROUTE 66 IN MISSOURI

SPONSOR: Black

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Special Committee on Tourism by a vote of 9 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules-Administrative by a vote of 9 to 0.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 996.

Currently, the Department of Transportation may not use State money for Route 66 signs. This bill repeals that prohibition and creates the "Route 66 Signage Maintenance and Enhancement Act of Missouri".

The bill establishes the "Route 66 Maintenance and Enhancement Program" within the Department to maintain and repair existing Route 66 supplemental signage across the State. The Program can be expanded to include enhancement of the signage, including beyond rights-of-way to include county and city roads. Signs must highlight historical roadside features and comply with certain Department standards.

No later than January 31, 2026, the Department, in coordination with the Missouri Route 66 centennial commission, must establish guidelines for supplemental signage design and collaborate with counties and municipalities to implement the installation and maintenance of the signage. The replacement of existing signage and installation of new signage must be completed by May 30, 2026. The program must implement theft prevention measures for the signage.

The Department must seek guidance from the Route 66 Association of Missouri with respect to historical context and expertise on signage placement and must seek assistance from the Association on public outreach and education campaigns.

The Department can establish a program to provide matching grants for local governments and organizations to address specific signage needs or enhancements within their jurisdictions.

The bill also specifies that the Missouri Route 66 centennial commission can use its funds for the signage program. Currently, the Commission must submit its final report by June 30, 2027. This bill extends the date to June 30, 2030.

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that Route 66 plays a large roll in the history of Missouri. People travel from all around the world to see Route 66 and the stops along on it. This bill would promote tourism for Route 66 and the anniversary celebration while also protecting the signs from them.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Black; Richard Dinkela, Route 66 Association of Missouri; and Missouri Association of Convention and Visitors' Bureaus.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony and witnesses testifying online can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.