

**2021 SENATE TRANSPORTATION**

**SB 2297**

# 2021 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Transportation Committee Fort Totten Room, State Capitol

SB 2297  
2/4/2021

A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 24-01 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to designating state highway 57 as the Akicita (veteran) memorial highway; and to provide a continuing appropriation.

**Chair Clemens** calls the meeting to order. Present are Chair Clemens, Vice Chair Fors, Senators Bakke, Conley, Dwyer, D. Larsen. [2:31]

### Discussion Topics:

- Akicita
- Renaming a portion of highway 57
- Honoring veterans

**Senator Heckaman [2:31]** presents the bill and submits testimony #4970.

**Senator Marcellais [2:33]** testifies in favor and submits testimony #5517.

**Douglas Yankton Sr. [2:35]**, Spirit Lake Tribal Chairman, testifies in favor and submits testimony #5552.

**Brad Darr [2:39]**, State Maintenance Engineer for the ND Department of Transportation, offers neutral testimony.

**Chair Clemens** adjourns the public hearing. [2:43]

**Senator Bakke [2:43]** motions DO PASS.

**Senator Conley [2:43]** seconds.

Senators	Vote
Senator David Clemens	Y
Senator Robert Fors	Y
Senator Cole Conley	Y
Senator Michael Dwyer	Y
Senator Doug Larsen	Y
Senator JoNell Bakke	Y

Motion passes 6-0-0. [2:46]

**Senator Fors** will carry.

Senate Transportation Committee

SB 2297

2/4/21

Page 2

**Chair Clemens** adjourns the meeting. [2:47]

*Sheldon Wolf, Committee Clerk*

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE**

**SB 2297: Transportation Committee (Sen. Clemens, Chairman)** recommends **DO PASS** (6 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2297 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.

Sixty-seventh  
Legislative Assembly  
of North Dakota

**SENATE BILL NO. 2297**

Introduced by

Senators Marcellais, Heckaman, Oehlke

Representatives Buffalo, D. Johnson

1 A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 24-01 of the North Dakota  
2 Century Code, relating to designating state highway 57 as the Akicita (veteran) memorial  
3 highway; and to provide a continuing appropriation.

4 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

5 **SECTION 1.** A new section to chapter 24-01 of the North Dakota Century Code is created  
6 and enacted as follows:

7 **Akicita (veteran) memorial highway - State highway 57 - Continuing appropriation.**

8 The department shall designate state highway 57 from the junction of United States  
9 highway 281 and state highway 57 to the junction of state highway 57 and state highway 20 as  
10 the Akicita (veteran) memorial highway and shall place signs along the highway designating that  
11 name. The department may accept any appropriate signs or funds donated to the department  
12 for the placement of signs. Any donated funds are appropriated to the department on a  
13 continuing basis for the purpose of providing signs designating state highway 57 as the Akicita  
14 (veteran) memorial highway.

SB 2297

Senator Joan Heckaman

Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I am Senator Joan Heckaman from D-23 which encompasses all of Eddy, Nelson, Griggs, and Steele Counties and the eastern half of Benson County including all the Spirit Lake Nation.

I am here in support of SB 2297 which would name a portion of Hwy 57 from the intersection with Hwy 281 to the intersection of Hwy 20 as Akicita (Veterans) Memorial Highway. This highway runs through the Spirit Lake Nation and the passage of this bill will recognize the large number of veterans from Spirit Lake who served our state and nation.

I taught at Four Winds School which is on the Spirit Lake Nation. I was there for 10 years in a couple of different capacities. I still remember taking students to see the school nurse, Janice McKay. Outside her office was the wall of honor. She had photos of many Spirit Lake veterans on that wall. The students always wanted to stop and tell me which ones were related to them. The Dakota are proud people and this bill will provide a daily reminder of those who served, those who passed, and those still with us who sacrifice so much.

Let's take this opportunity to honor these veterans.

I believe Senator Marcellais, a veteran and a veteran service officer, will provide more information for you.

Thank you for your time.



#5552

February 4, 2021

SB-2297 Testimony from Spirit Lake Tribal Chairman Douglas Yankton Sr.

Chairman Clemens, members of the Senate Transportation Committee for the record my name is Douglas Yankton Sr., Chairman from the Spirit Lake Tribe. I am here to testify in support of Senate Bill 2297.

We are honored to have Highway 57 that runs through our reservation be named after, our Warriors, our Enforcers, our Veterans.

I want to share some history on the word Akicita from one of our local historians, Louis Garcia.

The Dakota nation usually gathered for four events a year, the spring and summer buffalo hunts; a religious event such as the Sun Dance; or when the nation was at war.

These national gatherings attracted hundreds of people. To determine how many warriors were in the camp, each male who could bear arms was required to give a Counting Stick to the Council Tent.

The Councilmen would have an accurate census of the warriors in the camp. In the case of a hasty gathering for war the Counting Sticks would be simple, quickly made, and undecorated. At other times great care was employed in their manufacture.

Counting Sticks are short sticks, usually about eight inches long. The diameter of the stick is the thickness of a man's finger. All the bark was removed; those men who have no war record leave the stick un-decorated. Those who have been wounded in battle paint their stick red, and those who have killed an enemy paint their stick black. A notch is cut into their sticks to indicate the number of times an event occurred.

These Counting Sticks served four uses, 1) for a census of the camp warriors, 2) used to keep score in male gambling games, 3) to request food for the Councilmen during their meetings, and 4) a symbol for a horse given away to the poor by a generous man.



February 4, 2021

SB-2297 Testimony from Spirit Lake Tribal Chairman Douglas Yankton Sr.

Back then the Tribal government was composed of ten men who were selected to act as a council usually twice a year during the spring and fall buffalo hunt.

The council would select four hunt leaders, and a man with a loud voice to be the Announcer or Speaker and four Policemen (Akicita), one being the Police Chief (Akicita Itancan) who enforced the proclamations of the Council.

There are many stories of how in the Buffalo days if you resisted the Akicita you were severely punished. Even had your horse and dogs killed, weapons broken, etc. And any further punishment was decided before hand by the Council and the order directed to the Akicita to carry out.

The word Akicita encompasses our warriors, our enforcers, a soldier, a veteran or a member of the armed forces.

The Spirit Lake Tribe is honored that this joint venture is a start in acknowledging our language, our tribe and our people. This is a sign of thank you to all of the nation's veterans.

Lastly, I urge you to vote a DO PASS on Senate Bill 2297.



**2021 HOUSE TRANSPORTATION**

**SB 2297**

# 2021 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

**Transportation Committee**  
Room JW327E, State Capitol

SB 2297  
3/12/2021

A bill relating to designating state highway 57 as the Akicita (veteran) Memorial Highway; and to provide a continuing appropriation.

9:01 AM **Chairman Ruby** opened the hearing.

## Attendance

<b>Representatives</b>	
Representative Dan Ruby	P
Representative Tom Kading	P
Representative Rick Becker	P
Representative Cole Christensen	P
Representative LaurieBeth Hager	P
Representative Jared C. Hagert	P
Representative Karla Rose Hanson	P
Representative Terry B. Jones	P
Representative Emily O'Brien	P
Representative Mark S. Owens	P
Representative Bob Paulson	A
Representative Gary Paur	P
Representative Robin Weisz	P
Representative Greg Westlind	P

## Discussion Topics:

- A thirteen-mile stretch of Highway 57.
- Akicita Memorial Highway

**Senator Marcellais** introduction. #8624

**Senator Joan Heckaman** oral supportive testimony.

**Wayde Swenson, ND Department of Transportation**, responded to question.

**Chairman Ruby** closed the hearing.

**Representative Christensen** moved a Do Pass.

**Representative Paur** seconded.

## Roll Call Vote

<b>Representatives</b>	<b>Vote</b>
Representative Dan Ruby	Y
Representative Tom Kading	Y

Representative Rick Becker	Y
Representative Cole Christensen	Y
Representative LaurieBeth Hager	Y
Representative Jared C. Hagert	Y
Representative Karla Rose Hanson	Y
Representative Terry B. Jones	Y
Representative Emily O'Brien	Y
Representative Mark S. Owens	Y
Representative Bob Paulson	A
Representative Gary Paur	Y
Representative Robin Weisz	Y
Representative Greg Westlind	Y

Motion Carried. 13-0-1 Representative Hager carrier.

9:17 AM Adjourned.

*Jeanette Cook, Committee Clerk*

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE**

**SB 2297: Transportation Committee (Rep. D. Ruby, Chairman)** recommends **DO PASS**  
(13 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2297 was placed on the  
Fourteenth order on the calendar.



## NORTH DAKOTA SENATE

STATE CAPITOL  
600 EAST BOULEVARD  
BISMARCK, ND 58505-0360



### Senator Richard Marcellais

District 9  
301 Laite Loop NE  
Belcourt, ND 58316-3877

R: 701-477-8985  
B: 701-477-8985  
C: 701-278-0632  
F: 701-477-8985  
[rmarcellais@nd.gov](mailto:rmarcellais@nd.gov)

### COMMITTEES:

Education  
Government and Veterans Affairs

8624

### ***SB 2297 Testimony*** ***House Transportation Committee*** ***Room 327E***

*Chairmen Ruby members of the House Transportation Committee for the record my name is Richard Marcellais Senator from Rolette County District 9.*

*I am here this morning to testify on SB 2297– relating to designating State Highway 57 approximately 13 miles long, as the Akicita (veteran) memorial highway; and to provide a continuing appropriation.*

*During the 66<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly (2019-20) on Vietnam Veterans Day I was approached by a Vietnam Veteran from Spirit Lake Nation, asking if we could change Highway 57 to the Sioux name “Akicita” which stands for Veteran.*

*We had meetings with the Spirit Lake Sioux Nation, Highway Department from Devils Lake during the intern and everyone agree it was a good idea to show relationship between the Spirit Lake Nation and State of North Dakota. Spirit Lake Nation agree to provide funds for the signage, if the state would pass the bill.*

*Chairmen Ruby members of the House Transportation Committee, I urge Do Pass on Senate Bill 2297. I will try an answer any questions.*