

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

SESSION 2009

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HOUSE BILL 1021

Short Title: Designate U.S. Highway 17 Scenic Byway. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Tucker, Hall, Cleveland, Stam (Primary Sponsors); and Lucas.

Referred to: Transportation, if favorable, Appropriations.

April 2, 2009

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO REQUEST THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO DESIGNATE THOSE PORTIONS OF U.S. HIGHWAY 17 AND CONNECTING ROADWAYS AS A SCENIC BYWAY TO BE KNOWN AS THE U.S. MARINE CORPS PARKWAY: HOME OF THE CAROLINA MARINES SINCE 1941.

Whereas, during 1940, amid the escalating mobilization of World War II, the 1st Marine Division and the 1st Marine Air Wings of the United States Marine Corps were in need of an operational staging area on the east coast of the United States; and

Whereas, in the summer of 1940, Major John C. McQueen and his pilot, Captain Verne McCaul, on the orders of then Major General Thomas Holcomb, Marine Corps Commandant, undertook an aerial survey that covered the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts from Norfolk, Virginia, to Corpus Christi, Texas, and determined that 14 miles of beach in Onslow County, North Carolina, was the only suitable location for a Marine Corps base in the Eastern United States; and

Whereas, in February 1941 President Roosevelt authorized an initial outlay of \$1,500,000 for the survey and purchase of a 174-square-mile tract near Jacksonville, North Carolina, and on April 5, 1941, the United States Congress authorized \$14,575,000 for the base's construction; and

Whereas, on May 1, 1941, the Marine Barracks New River was formally established as a major amphibious training ground and has grown since into the Marine Corps Base, Camp Lejeune, partly bounded by Highway 17 in Jacksonville, North Carolina; and

Whereas, from April 1942 until desegregation of the Marine Corps in 1949, Montford Point Camp in North Carolina was the exclusive training grounds for African-American Marines; and

Whereas, from 1943 until passage of the "Women's Armed Service Integration Act" in 1948, the New River Base was the principal training center for the women Marines, having trained over 20,000 women Marines; and

Whereas, in 1944 the United States Marine Corps assumed control of Camp Davis at Holly Ridge when the United States Army declared it excess to their needs and utilized it to train the Royal Netherlands Marine Corps; and

Whereas, other sites along or near Highway 17 in Eastern North Carolina have historical significance to the United States Marine Corps, including major air stations at Cherry Point and Edenton, North Carolina, and auxiliary or outlying landing fields at Atlantic Beach, Beaufort, Bogue, Greenville, Manteo, New River, Oak Grove, Washington, and Wilson; and

Whereas, the Museum of the Marine currently being planned at Camp Lejeune in Jacksonville, North Carolina, will honor the history of the Carolina Marines from World War II to the present and highlight the many historically significant locations along Highway 17; and



1 Whereas, estimates show that the Museum of the Marine has the potential to draw
2 100,000 visitors each year, and the designation of Highway 17 as a scenic byway will add to
3 this attraction; and

4 Whereas, the General Assembly desires to honor the United States Marine Corps'
5 large and enduring military presence at locations in Eastern North Carolina along Highway 17;
6 Now, therefore,

7 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

8 **SECTION 1.** The Department of Transportation shall consider the appropriateness
9 of designating Highway 17 a scenic byway in light of the historical contributions of the United
10 States Marine Corps. If, upon review, the Department of Transportation deems that this
11 designation is an appropriate recognition of the historical contributions of the United States
12 Marine Corps, it shall undertake steps necessary to designate Highway 17 a scenic byway.

13 **SECTION 2.** The Department of Transportation shall report to the Joint
14 Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee on the results of its consideration on or before
15 January 1, 2010.

16 **SECTION 3.** This act is effective when it becomes law.