

**Introduced by Senator Rubio  
(Coauthor: Senator Fuller)**

(Coauthors: Assembly Members Grove and Salas)

December 6, 2012

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Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 4—Relative to the Vernon P. Valenzuela Memorial Highway.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 4, as introduced, Rubio. Vernon P. Valenzuela Memorial Highway.

This measure would designate a specified portion of State Highway Route 204 in the City of Bakersfield as the Vernon P. Valenzuela Memorial Highway. The measure would also request the Department of Transportation to determine the cost of appropriate signs showing this special designation and, upon receiving donations from nonstate sources covering that cost, to erect those signs.

Fiscal committee: yes.

- 1 WHEREAS, Vernon P. Valenzuela was born January 15, 1949,
- 2 to the late Louis and Nellie Valenzuela. He was raised in
- 3 Bakersfield, California, the youngest of five siblings; and
- 4 WHEREAS, In 1966 Mr. Valenzuela quit high school to join
- 5 the U.S. Army and volunteered to serve in Vietnam; and
- 6 WHEREAS, Mr. Valenzuela served in Vietnam from October
- 7 1967 to May 1968, when he was wounded in battle. After his
- 8 honorable discharge in 1969, he returned to Bakersfield and
- 9 obtained his high school diploma by attending night school; and
- 10 WHEREAS, The following September, Mr. Valenzuela became
- 11 the first member of his family to attend college; and

1 WHEREAS, Mr. Valenzuela discovered the large Associated  
2 Veterans Students Club at Bakersfield College, and his association  
3 with the organization began his life as a leader and veterans  
4 advocate; and

5 WHEREAS, Mr. Valenzuela became an active student and held  
6 positions as President of both the Associated Veterans Students  
7 Club and the Bakersfield College Student Body; and

8 WHEREAS, After graduating with an associate of arts degree  
9 in 1973, Mr. Valenzuela continued his education at California  
10 State University, Bakersfield (CSUB), where he was a charter  
11 member of the first student council and began working in the  
12 Veterans Cost of Instruction Program (VCIP); and

13 WHEREAS, While still attending CSUB, Mr. Valenzuela was  
14 hired to be Assistant Director of the Bakersfield College VCIP;  
15 and

16 WHEREAS, Mr. Valenzuela obtained his bachelor's degree in  
17 June 1975 and began counseling students at Bakersfield College,  
18 many of whom were veterans. He touched so many people's lives  
19 during his college years that for the rest of his life he would run  
20 into people he knew while at college, who remembered him, who  
21 were helped by him, or whose children thanked him; and

22 WHEREAS, Mr. Valenzuela received his masters degree in  
23 counseling in 1977 and earned his license in marriage and family  
24 therapy in 1979, specializing in treating post-traumatic stress  
25 disorder (PTSD); and

26 WHEREAS, Mr. Valenzuela began his private practice shortly  
27 after his marriage in 1981, focusing on veterans with PTSD. He  
28 worked as a contract counselor with the Sepulveda Vet Center  
29 from 1981 to 1989, inclusive; and

30 WHEREAS, During the 1990s, Mr. Valenzuela traveled to the  
31 Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C. and joined the  
32 Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA). He became the President  
33 of the charter chapter of Bakersfield VVA and gradually worked  
34 through local, state, and national levels of the organization; and

35 WHEREAS, Mr. Valenzuela served as VVA's California  
36 president in 1993, and went on to serve on national committees  
37 for PTSD, substance abuse, and the Veterans Initiative, which  
38 involved several trips to Vietnam to recover MIA remains; and

39 WHEREAS, Mr. Valenzuela presented PTSD seminars  
40 throughout the nation, and was called on to work with Oklahoma

1 City Bomb survivors and United Auto Workers members in the  
2 New York Area after 9/11; and

3 WHEREAS, During his involvement with VVA, Mr. Valenzuela  
4 became a leading advocate for the Vet Center program, meeting  
5 quarterly in Washington with Readjustment Counseling Services  
6 Director Dr. Al Batres to discuss issues related to the Vet Center  
7 program; and

8 WHEREAS, In 1997, Mr. Valenzuela made a conscious decision  
9 to bring his efforts to a more local level and was welcomed into  
10 the Kern County Network for Children. His efforts over the last  
11 decade included advocating for children and bridging the gap of  
12 community services for veterans. Throughout the late 1990s, he  
13 collaborated with the network to raise funds for graduating seniors  
14 and families in need during the holiday season within Kern County;  
15 and

16 WHEREAS, In April 2008, Mr. Valenzuela was recruited to be  
17 the first Team Leader for the new Bakersfield Vet Center, helping  
18 to establish a much needed counseling resource for combat veterans  
19 throughout Kern County; and

20 WHEREAS, As Team Leader of Bakersfield Vet Center, Mr.  
21 Valenzuela's goal was to meet all needs of the veterans, and make  
22 the vet center a safe haven, a place where veterans could come for  
23 any help or need. He wanted the vet center in Bakersfield to be a  
24 model for all other vet centers, knowing that the people of  
25 Bakersfield are truly unique in their giving capacity and  
26 collaborative efforts; and

27 WHEREAS, In addition to providing counseling and overseeing  
28 the operation of the vet center, Mr. Valenzuela was instrumental  
29 in beginning the Veterans Justice Program in Kern County and,  
30 along with other veterans and community resources, created and  
31 chaired the newly formed Kern County Veterans Collaborative.  
32 Mr. Valenzuela's goal was not just to provide counseling services,  
33 but also to provide any service or answer any question a veteran  
34 may have; and

35 WHEREAS, Mr. Valenzuela passed away at 63 years of age on  
36 Monday, March 26, 2012, overlooking the ocean and surrounded  
37 by his family; and

38 WHEREAS, Vernon P. Valenzuela is survived by his wife of  
39 30 years, Lise, and their three grown children, Robert, Alison, and

1 Katie, all of whom are very proud to have been his family; now,  
2 therefore, be it

3 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly*  
4 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature hereby designates the  
5 portion of State Highway Route 204 between F Street and Q Street  
6 in the City of Bakersfield as the Vernon P. Valenzuela Memorial  
7 Highway; and be it further

8 *Resolved*, That the Department of Transportation is requested  
9 to determine the cost of appropriate signs consistent with the  
10 signing requirements for the state highway system showing this  
11 special designation and, upon receiving donations from nonstate  
12 sources sufficient to cover the cost, to erect those signs; and be it  
13 further

14 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of  
15 this resolution to the Department of Transportation and to the  
16 author for appropriate distribution.