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SHANNON FRANCIS
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Testimony Kansas House Transportation HB 2019

Thank you, Chairman Proehl and Committee Members, for allowing me to testify today in favor of House Bill 2019 naming two bridges on Highway 54 in honor of Jack Taylor and Max Zimmerman.

Max Zimmerman was born and raised in Liberal. He graduated from Liberal High School and the University of Kansas. He was a Captain in the United States Air Force and a navigator on a B-36 Bomber during the Korean Conflict. After his military service he returned home to raise his family and to join the family business. He was a City Commissioner and leader in many organizations including the Liberal Chamber of Commerce, Noon Lions Club, and Rotary Club. He was instrumental in the development of some of Liberal's leading tourist attractions, including Dorothy's House, the Land of Oz exhibit and the Mid-America Air Museum. He also spurred the effort to save and revitalize our Rock Island Depot. Importantly, Max started a coalition of communities called the Southwest Passage Initiative for Regional Interstate Transportation (SPIRIT) to coordinate efforts for four-lane expansion along Highway 54 from Wichita to El Paso. He loved his hometown and worked tirelessly to make it a better place.

Jack Taylor worked much of his career in the oil and gas industry. He wasn't born in Liberal, but he raised his family there and made it his own. After a success career in Oil and Gas he became the Executive Director of the Liberal Chamber of Commerce for several years. He was also the executive director of SPIRIT.

Like Max, Jack was active throughout our community and state and a leader in every organization he was a part of. Jack was member of the American Red Cross, National Petroleum Association, President of the State Chamber of Commerce, President twice of the Liberal Lion's Club, President of the Kansas Transportation Association, SW Kansas Mental Health Board, Focus on the Future, Economic Development, Kansas Economic Lifelines, and LHS Booster Club. When Jack went to a meeting with KDOT, Pat Roberts, or Jerry Moran they knew they were going to be pressed hard to four lane Highway 54.

These two men exemplify all that is good about Western Kansas. They took pride in their community and worked tirelessly to make it better. I can think of no better honor to recognize their work than the naming of these bridges after them.