

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
HOUSE BILL NO. 2247
APRIL WARDEN, SEWARD COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
MARCH 23, 2021**

Chairman and Members of the Senate Transportation Committee,

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify on behalf of Liberal, Seward County Kansas, in regards to naming the new bridge and the existing bridge on Highway 54 in honor of Max Zimmerman and Jack Taylor for their life long efforts on improving Highway 54 and the S.P.I.R.I.T. organization.

I was born and raised in the very community I am now serving as the County Administrator. I have witnessed amazing changes over the years and there are many individuals that come to mind that I have gained knowledge from, that have mentored me, and showed me what can happen when you have a vision and the drive to make a change for the very place you call home. Jack Taylor and Max Zimmerman are two of those individuals.

In 1995, at a Kansas State Transportation Committee meeting that was held in Liberal, Kansas, a seed was planted for the Southwest Passage Initiative for Regional and Interstate Transportation (S.P.I.R.I.T.). The idea was to promote the US-54 route from Wichita, Kansas to El Paso, Texas as a four-lane divided trade corridor. Max Zimmerman was the President of this organization and Jack Taylor was the Executive Director of the Liberal Chamber of Commerce.

When S.P.I.R.I.T. was formed I was just completing college. I can truly say I witnessed these two individuals work passionately and tirelessly to achieve the results they had envisioned for our community and those along the Highway 54 corridor. In 2001 I became employed by Seward County, Kansas and had the opportunity to work directly with Jack Taylor. I was intrigued by the relationships he had developed along the way in his work and how he was recognized by local, State, and Federal Representatives at all levels. They knew who he was, what he represented, and where he was from.

It makes my heart happy to think we might have an opportunity to name the bridges after two gentleman and leaders who had a dream, a vision, and made so much progress over the many years for other's futures.

Thank you for your time and allowing us to share our testimony. Please consider naming the new bridge and existing bridge on Highway 54 for Max Zimmerman and Jack Taylor in honor of their legacy and lifelong commitment to their community and those along Highway 54.