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Senator Lesil McGuire

SPONSOR STATEMENT for Senate Bill 108

“An Act naming the Dowling Road overpass at milepost 123.7 on the New Seward Highway the Spc. Stephen “Max” Cavanaugh, Jr., Memorial Overpass.”

This bill was created to commemorate the Dowling Overpass in Spc. Stephen ‘Max’ Cavanaugh Jr.’s memory as a tribute to this hero who continues to save lives.

Stephen ‘Max’ Cavanaugh Jr. had recently returned from Iraq after surviving 300 convoys where he manned a .50 caliber machine gun. He was driving down New Seward highway, near the Dowling Overpass, when he hit a cow moose, two weeks before his discharge, which resulted in the loss of his life. Max was an organ donor and it was mentioned in his obituary that he continues to save lives even after the loss of his. This loss was the 6th human life lost to moose collisions with cars during 2007 and, though no human life is more important than any other, this loss really hit home.

A project was put together to help increase safety in the very corridor where this particular tragedy occurred. This effort was greatly assisted by the Department of Transportation, Highway Safety Office, SAGA (AmeriCorps youth program), the Department of Public Safety and the Department of Fish & Game. The project area was the West side of New Seward Highway between Dimond and O’Malley. The work area was between the bike trail and the highway right-of-way. This effort was performed for 4 days in October, 2008 where we cut, hauled and chipped 11 dumpsters worth of willow, cottonwood, birch and aspen trees.

The effort now is to commemorate the Dowling Overpass in Spc. Stephen ‘Max’ Cavanaugh Jr.’s memory as a tribute to this hero who continues to save lives.