



Assemblymember Rudy Salas, 32nd District
ASSEMBLY BILL 634 – STATE HIGHWAY ROUNDABOUTS
FACT SHEET

BACKGROUND

A roundabout is a traffic control device where traffic travels around a central island in a clockwise direction. Vehicles entering or exiting the roundabout must yield to vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

California has the second highest number of roundabouts of the United States with 683 roundabouts. Research shows that roundabouts can be an effective way to improve safety at intersections. A Caltrans review of traditional intersections that transitioned to roundabouts showed a 35 percent reduction in total crashes per year. More importantly, the number of severe injury related crashes was reduced by between 60 to 80 percent.

Roundabout memorials are common elsewhere in the United States. Citizens of Freetown, Massachusetts worked to build a roundabout at a busy intersection that was the site of multiple car accidents. After the roundabout was constructed, it was dedicated as the Navy Petty Officer Second Class Tyler J. Trahan Memorial Roundabout in honor of a local son who was killed in Iraq. In Oregon, Private First Class Andrew Keller, who was killed in Afghanistan, had a roundabout dedicated in his name in his hometown.

California is one of ten States that have a State Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). Of these States, only California and Missouri specifically outline what highway facilities may be named by their respective Legislative bodies. The national MUTCD only refers to a “route, bridge, or other highway component” when designating standards for memorial or dedication signing.

ISSUE

Caltrans cannot put up signage on a state highway as part of dedication or memorial signing unless that section has been named by the Legislature via concurrent resolution. The California MUTCD

Chapter 2M.10 defines the types of highway facilities that can be named. However, it does not define roundabouts as one of these facilities.

Aesthetic designs on the central islands of roundabouts are encouraged as they draw the attention of drivers to the fact that a roundabout is on the road. This aspect of roundabouts makes them ideal candidates for memorial or dedication signing and art.

AB 634 would bring roundabouts into the category of state highway facilities that can be named by the Legislature, which also includes highways and freeways, bridges, rest areas, interchanges, and vista points.

EXISTING LAW

The California Vehicle Code provides Caltrans the authority to adopt rules and regulations prescribing uniform standards and specifications for all official traffic control devices. Currently, Caltrans authorizes memorial designations for five other highway facilities, including highways and freeways, bridges, interchanges, rest areas, and vista points.

THIS BILL

AB 634 adds Section 101.15 to the California Streets and Highways Code which will add roundabouts as a type of highway facility that may be used for memorial or dedication signing.

SUPPORT

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Michael Dyar
P: (916) 319-2032
F: (916) 319-2132
Michael.Dyar@asm.ca.gov