

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 2018 Session of 2011

INTRODUCED BY KAVULICH, BOBACK, K. BOYLE, BRADFORD, BRENNAN, BROOKS, CALTAGIRONE, CAUSER, COX, CUTLER, DALEY, DENLINGER, DIGIROLAMO, DONATUCCI, ELLIS, FABRIZIO, FARRY, FLECK, GEORGE, GILLEN, GOODMAN, HALUSKA, HEFFLEY, HORNAMAN, KULA, MAHONEY, MAJOR, MARSICO, MILLARD, MULLERY, MURPHY, QUINN, READSHAW, ROCK, SCAVELLO, SONNEY, STERN, SWANGER, VULAKOVICH AND YOUNGBLOOD, NOVEMBER 17, 2011

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION, NOVEMBER 17, 2011

AN ACT

1 Designating the bridge crossing the Lackawanna River along 8th  
2 Avenue, also known as U.S. Business Route 6, in downtown  
3 Carbondale, Lackawanna County, as the 109th Infantry Bridge.

4 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
5 hereby enacts as follows:

6 Section 1. 109th Infantry Bridge.

7 (a) Findings.--The General Assembly finds and declares as  
8 follows:

9 (1) The 109th Infantry Regiment constitutes one of four  
10 regiments in the 55th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 28th  
11 Infantry Division. Units of this Brigade date back to the  
12 American Revolution and were engaged in all the wars of this  
13 nation.

14 (2) The 109th Infantry trace their origins to the  
15 Scranton City Guards Battalion, National Guard of  
16 Pennsylvania, which was constituted and organized on August

1 14, 1877. It was redesignated on September 23, 1878, as the  
2 13th Infantry Regiment. The unit was mustered into Federal  
3 Service on May 12 and 13, 1898, at Mount Gretna, Pennsylvania  
4 as the 13th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry Regiment for the  
5 Spanish American War. The unit did not serve outside the  
6 continental United States. It was mustered out of Federal  
7 service on March 11, 1899, at Augusta, Georgia.

8 (3) On September 26, 1916, the unit was mustered into  
9 Federal service at Mount Gretna for service on the Mexican  
10 border and was stationed at Camp Stewart, El Paso, Texas. As  
11 border patrol operations began to close, the unit continued  
12 in Federal service as the United States entered World War I.  
13 The unit was drafted into Federal service on August 5, 1917.  
14 The unit was consolidated with the 1st Infantry Regiment,  
15 which was organized in 1777 and it was reorganized and  
16 redesignated as the 109th Infantry Regiment, an element of  
17 the 28th Division. The unit was mustered out of Federal  
18 service from May 17 through 20, 1919, at Camp Dix, New  
19 Jersey, and returned to the Commonwealth's control.

20 (4) The soldiers of the 109th Infantry Regiment earned  
21 the nickname "Men of Iron" for the three-day defense against  
22 overwhelming odds during the German Army's Champagne-Marne  
23 Offensive when the 109th Infantry Regiment was attacked by  
24 the German 36th Division. A later German after-action report  
25 described the battle as "the most severe defeat of the war."  
26 The unit received campaign participation credit for the  
27 following: Champagne-Marne, Aisne-Marne, Oise-Aisne, Meuse-  
28 Argonne, Champagne 1918 and Lorraine 1918. The regiment had  
29 suffered more than 100% casualties from the time it began  
30 service in Europe until the signing of the Armistice on

1 November 11, 1918. Fighting was so fierce in some battles  
2 that in one case, an entire battalion was left in command of  
3 a sergeant. The red "Keystone," the symbol of the  
4 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, became the patch of the 28th  
5 Division. It was the second official unit patch recognized by  
6 the War Department, even though the symbol of the red  
7 keystone has been worn on the uniforms of Pennsylvania  
8 soldiers since the 1870s.

9 (5) Ten months before the Japanese sneak attack on Pearl  
10 Harbor, the 28th Division, including the 109th Infantry  
11 Regiment, received orders into Federal service. After the  
12 United States entered World War II, the division trained  
13 extensively in Pennsylvania, Louisiana, Florida, England and  
14 Wales. The 109th became a Regimental Combat Team. It landed  
15 in France after D-Day and fought through Normandy, helped  
16 liberate Paris and battled through the Hurtgen Forest of  
17 Germany. Elements of the Regiment led the Division into the  
18 Rhineland to become the first troops to invade German soil  
19 since Napoleon and became bitterly engaged in the "West Wall"  
20 of Germany. The 109th Infantry paid with human life and blood  
21 as they received the following battle honors: Normandy,  
22 Northern France, Rhineland, Ardennes-Alsace and Central  
23 Europe. They also received the following decorations from  
24 foreign governments: the French Croix de Guerre with Palm,  
25 streamer embroidered "COLMAR" and the Luxembourg Croix de  
26 Guerre, streamer embroidered "LUXEMBOURG."

27 (6) The most noteworthy of the 109th Infantry's  
28 achievements during World War II came while the Regiment  
29 rested in the Ardennes sector, considered a "quiet" area  
30 early in December 1944. At that time, the German General Von

1 Rundstedt launched the vicious, well-planned battle which  
2 became known as the Battle of the Bulge. For eleven days the  
3 109th Regimental Combat Team had frustrated the offensive  
4 efforts of the German 5th Parachute Division and the 352nd VG  
5 Division to seize key terrain and establish a firm southern  
6 defense line for the main offensive thrust to seize Antwerp.  
7 By December 23, 1944, the 915th Volksgrenadier Regiment,  
8 352nd Volksgrenadier (VG) Division, the major foe, had been  
9 eliminated by the 109th Regimental Combat Team as a combat  
10 organization. Elements of the 914th and 916th Volksgrenadier  
11 Regiments also suffered sizeable losses. By December 25,  
12 1944, except for the 2nd Battalion, the men of the 109th  
13 Infantry began to push back north across the Sure River which  
14 they had slowly been pushed through the previous eleven days.  
15 They had suffered 1,174 casualties in the battle in just the  
16 month of December, almost 40% of their effective strength.

17 (7) Those of the 109th Infantry also underwent  
18 mobilization for the Korean War with the 28th Infantry  
19 Division, Pennsylvania National Guard, as it reinforced NATO  
20 in Germany in 1950. Several Pennsylvania units saw active  
21 service in Korea. Additionally, from September 2002 until  
22 March 2003, the unit was mobilized in support of Operation  
23 Joint Forge in Bosnia-Herzegovina. On January 4, 2005, the  
24 battalion mobilized again and was assigned to the 2nd Brigade  
25 Combat Team, 28th Infantry Division (Mechanized) which  
26 deployed in June 2005 to Al Anbar Province, Iraq, in support  
27 of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

28 (8) Since that time, the 109th Infantry has provided  
29 assistance to local residents of northeastern Pennsylvania  
30 during times of flooding and other natural disasters.

1        Additionally, those in the Regiment continue their job of  
2        maintaining their equipment and training for needed future  
3        service. Among those who serve at the 109th Infantry  
4        Headquarters in Scranton are residents of Carbondale,  
5        Berwick, East Stroudsburg, Honesdale, Milton, Williamsport  
6        and other areas of Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Wayne, Pike,  
7        Lycoming and other northeastern Pennsylvania counties. All of  
8        these who serve do so for all of the people of Pennsylvania  
9        and the nation and stand proud with the military readiness  
10       entrusted them according to the Regiment's motto, "CIVES ARMA  
11       FERANT: Let the Citizens Bear Arms."

12       (b) Designation.--Because of the great history, sacrifice  
13       and commitment of those who have served in the 109th Infantry  
14       Regiment, the bridge crossing the Lackawanna River along 8th  
15       Avenue, also known as U.S. Business Route 6, in downtown  
16       Carbondale, Lackawanna County, is hereby designated the 109th  
17       Infantry Bridge.

18       (c) Signs.--The Department of Transportation shall erect and  
19       maintain appropriate signs displaying the names of the bridge to  
20       traffic in both directions on the bridge with the infantry's  
21       motto "CIVES ARMA FERANT: Let the Citizens Bear Arms" showing on  
22       the sign. Additionally, the department shall work with officials  
23       of the City of Carbondale and local residents on properly  
24       installing the 109th Infantry Regimental Crest with its motto  
25       "CIVES ARMA FERANT: Let the Citizens Bear Arms" on the bridge in  
26       the future.

27       Section 2.    Effective Date.

28       This act shall take effect in 60 days.