

STORAGE NAME: h1449a.tu

DATE: March 29, 1999

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON
TOURISM
ANALYSIS**

BILL #: House Bill 1449

RELATING TO: Official State Designations

SPONSOR(S): Representative Sorensen

COMPANION BILL(S):

ORIGINATING COMMITTEE(S)/COMMITTEE(S) OF REFERENCE:

(1) TOURISM YEAS 9 NAYS 0

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

I. SUMMARY:

House Bill 1449 designates the schooner Western Union, a historic sailing vessel of the tallship class, built in Key West, Florida, and first launched in 1939, as the official flagship of the State of Florida.

II. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS:

A. PRESENT SITUATION:

The Western Union is a 130-foot long wooden auxiliary coasting schooner launched at Key West, Florida, on April 7, 1939. The Western Union typifies the traditional American coasting schooner, a type and form that was prevalent in the U.S. shipbuilding from 1800 to 1939. The Western Union is one of the last true examples of this type of vessel built.

The vessel is constructed of madeira framing, the keel, deck beams, planking and decking are of long-leaf yellow pine. The two-masted schooner has a clipper bow and an overhanging counter at the stern. The vessel's dimensions are as follows:

Length on Deck.92	Feet
Length Water Line.86	Feet
Length Overall.	130	Feet
Extreme Beam.23.5	Feet
Height of Main Topmast Truck.	94	Feet

The original appearance of the hull is unaltered. The rest of the vessel appears much today as when she was launched. The original paint colors have been retained or duplicated. The hull is painted with a black sheet stripe and black boot toppings. The cabin and companionway tops are buff and cap rails are cream colored.

The vessel was employed to maintain and repair undersea telegraph cables in the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean and adjacent waters from 1939 until 1974. A total of eleven telegraph cables were laid between Key West and Havana, Cuba, between 1867 and 1931. The Western Union played no part in laying cables, but was instrumental in the maintenance of what was then called the "southern group" of cables. The vessel maintained these cables from 1939 to 1974.

From 1974 to 1997, the ship participated in America's Bicentennial, was chartered for cruises out of the Chesapeake Bay, the Virgin Islands, and Florida, brought over 300 Cuban refugees to the United States during the Mariel Boat lift, and was used in VisionQuest's OceanQuest program to help redirect troubled youth. In 1997, a consortium brought the Western Union back to Key West where it was redesignated as the Flagship of the City of Key West and the Conch Republic. The vessel is now available for self-guided tours at the dock. The ship's management team views the vessel as a community based educational resource and offers free tours to all Key West residents and student groups.

The Western Union is listed in the National Register. Properties that are listed in the National Register have local, state or national significance. According to the Department of State, there are thousands of state properties, including real properties, that are listed on the National Register.

Chapter 15, F.S., contains numerous items that have been designated as representative of the State of Florida. The broad areas of designation include state tree, state beverage, state shell, state stone, state gem, official state wildflower, official state play, official state animal, official state freshwater fish, official state saltwater fish, state marine mammal and saltwater mammal, official state butterfly, official state reptile, official state air fair, official state rodeo, official festival, official state image center and archive, official litter control symbol, official state pageant, official state opera program, official state renaissance festival, official state railroad museums, official state transportation museum, official state soil, official state fiddle contest, and official state band.

B. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

House Bill 1449 creates s. 15.0465, F.S., designating the schooner Western Union, a historic sailing vessel of the tallship class, built in Key West, Florida, and first launched in 1939, as the official flagship of the State of Florida.

C. APPLICATION OF PRINCIPLES:

1. Less Government:

a. Does the bill create, increase or reduce, either directly or indirectly:

(1) any authority to make rules or adjudicate disputes?

No.

(2) any new responsibilities, obligations or work for other governmental or private organizations or individuals?

No.

(3) any entitlement to a government service or benefit?

No.

b. If an agency or program is eliminated or reduced:

(1) what responsibilities, costs and powers are passed on to another program, agency, level of government, or private entity?

N/A

(2) what is the cost of such responsibility at the new level/agency?

N/A

(3) how is the new agency accountable to the people governed?

N/A

2. Lower Taxes:

a. Does the bill increase anyone's taxes?

No.

b. Does the bill require or authorize an increase in any fees?

No.

c. Does the bill reduce total taxes, both rates and revenues?

No.

d. Does the bill reduce total fees, both rates and revenues?

No.

e. Does the bill authorize any fee or tax increase by any local government?

No.

3. Personal Responsibility:

a. Does the bill reduce or eliminate an entitlement to government services or subsidy?

N/A

b. Do the beneficiaries of the legislation directly pay any portion of the cost of implementation and operation?

N/A

4. Individual Freedom:

a. Does the bill increase the allowable options of individuals or private organizations/associations to conduct their own affairs?

N/A

b. Does the bill prohibit, or create new government interference with, any presently lawful activity?

N/A

5. Family Empowerment:

a. If the bill purports to provide services to families or children:

(1) Who evaluates the family's needs?

N/A

(2) Who makes the decisions?

N/A

(3) Are private alternatives permitted?

N/A

(4) Are families required to participate in a program?

N/A

(5) Are families penalized for not participating in a program?

N/A

b. Does the bill directly affect the legal rights and obligations between family members?

N/A

c. If the bill creates or changes a program providing services to families or children, in which of the following does the bill vest control of the program, either through direct participation or appointment authority:

(1) parents and guardians?

N/A

(2) service providers?

N/A

(3) government employees/agencies?

N/A

D. STATUTE(S) AFFECTED:

Creates s. 15.0465, F.S.

E. SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS:

A section-by-section analysis is not required. Please see "Effect of Proposed Changes" section.

III. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT:

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE AGENCIES/STATE FUNDS:

1. Non-recurring Effects:

N/A

2. Recurring Effects:

N/A

3. Long Run Effects Other Than Normal Growth:

N/A

4. Total Revenues and Expenditures:

N/A

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AS A WHOLE:

1. Non-recurring Effects:

N/A

2. Recurring Effects:

N/A

3. Long Run Effects Other Than Normal Growth:

N/A

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

1. Direct Private Sector Costs:

N/A

2. Direct Private Sector Benefits:

N/A

3. Effects on Competition, Private Enterprise and Employment Markets:

N/A

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

None.

IV. CONSEQUENCES OF ARTICLE VII, SECTION 18 OF THE FLORIDA CONSTITUTION:

A. APPLICABILITY OF THE MANDATES PROVISION:

This bill does not require counties or municipalities to spend funds or to take an action requiring the expenditure of funds.

B. REDUCTION OF REVENUE RAISING AUTHORITY:

The bill does not reduce the authority that municipalities or counties have to raise revenues in the aggregate.

C. REDUCTION OF STATE TAX SHARED WITH COUNTIES AND MUNICIPALITIES:

The bill does not reduce the percentage of a state tax shared with counties or municipalities.

V. COMMENTS:

The National Landmark Registry is another designation for important properties of national interest. Properties on the National Landmark Registry are considered to have greater national significance than properties that are on the National Register, according to the Department of State. A property that is designated as a National Landmark is automatically listed in the National Register. A property that is listed on the National Register, however, is not automatically listed as a National Landmark. There are 33 properties in Florida that are listed as National Landmarks. Included among these is The Governor Stone, a two-masted schooner that was built in 1877. The home port for The Governor Stone is Appalachicola, Florida.

VI. AMENDMENTS OR COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES:

On March 29, 1999, the Tourism Committee passed House Bill 1449 unanimously with one amendment. The amendment removed the reference to the Western Union as "the" official flagship to "an" official flagship. This gives the opportunity for other vessels to become known as "an official flagship."

VII. SIGNATURES:

COMMITTEE ON TOURISM:

Prepared by:

Staff Director:

Judy C. McDonald

Judy C. McDonald