
Transportation Committee

SSB 6830

Brief Description: Creating a "Support Our Troops" special license plate.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Benton, Haugen, Benson, Oke, Deccio, Schmidt, Sheldon, Weinstein, Poulsen, Roach, Pridemore, Zarelli, McAuliffe, Carrell, Kohl-Welles, Rasmussen, Eide, Shin, Rockefeller, Delvin, Franklin and Johnson).

<p>Brief Summary of Substitute Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creating a "Support Our Troops" special license plate.

Hearing Date: 2/22/06

Staff: Teresa Berntsen (786-7301).

Background:

Current law allows persons to purchase special vehicle plates issued by the Department of Licensing (DOL) in lieu of standard plates for an additional fee. Proceeds from the sale of special license plates go to the plate's sponsoring agency or organization, after the state's implementation costs are paid. The Legislature must authorize the creation of all new special license plates.

In 2003 the Legislature created the Special License Plate Review Board. The Board was charged with reviewing special license plates submitted by organizations, verifying the organization and proposed plate meet criteria set by state law, and forwarding approved applications to the Legislature. Under this process, the plate's sponsoring organization must be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization located in Washington, a government agency, or a college. The sponsoring organization must submit:

1. Proof of organizational qualifications.
2. Prepayment of all start-up costs associated with the creation and implementation of the plate.
3. A marketing strategy and financial analysis outlining anticipated revenue and planned expenditures of revenue.
4. At least 3,500 signatures of persons indicating they intend to purchase the plate.
5. A proposed plate design.
6. Signature of legislative sponsor.

If a plate that has gone through the Special License Plate Review Board process is approved by the Legislature, the organization must submit annual financial reports to the DOL outlining revenues and expenditures from the sale of the plates. These funds must be spent for the benefit of the public and within the state.

Special license plates may also be approved directly by the Legislature without being reviewed by the Special License Plate Review Board. Within 30 days of the enactment of legislation creating such plates, the sponsoring organization must submit:

- A proposed plate design to the DOL.
- Prepayment of all start-up costs associated with the creation and the implementation of the plate. If the organization demonstrates that it cannot prepay, these costs the revenue from the sale of the plates must be deposited into the Motor Vehicle Account until the state's costs have been fully reimbursed.

In 2005 the Legislature enacted a moratorium on the issuance of special license plates until June 1, 2007. During this time the Special License Plate Review Board is prohibited from reviewing plate applications and the Legislature may not enact special plates.

Summary of Bill:

In cooperation with the DOL, Support Our Troops, Inc. may create and design a special license plate displaying a symbol of a soldier and a child that may be used in lieu of standard vehicle license plates.

The special plate is exempt from the moratorium on the issuance of new plates, review by the Special License Plate Review Board, and the application procedures associated with Board-reviewed special plates. Creation of the plate is subject to Support Our Troops, Inc. providing signatures of persons indicating the intent to purchase at least 3,500 plates.

In addition to other registration and application fees, the Department will collect an annual fee of \$30 from each holder of a "Support Our Troops" license plate. Once the Department has recouped costs associated with the issuance of the license plate, the remaining proceeds from the sale of the plates will be deposited into the newly-created "Support Our Troops" account. Funds from this account must be used for the following purposes: 1) assisting the spouses and families of soldiers killed in military action; 2) providing training or assistance to soldiers injured in military action; 3) reintegrating soldiers returned from combat into society; or 4) purposes consistent with the articles of incorporation for Support Our Troops, Inc., a nonprofit organization.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.