HOUSE BILL REPORT
SB 5161

As Passed House - Amended:
April 9, 2013

Title: An act relating to gold star license plates.

Brief Description: Authorizing certain eligible family members of United States armed forces members who died while in service or as a result of service to apply for gold star license plates.

Sponsors: Senators Braun, Carrell, Padden, Bailey, Becker, Fain, Roach, Sheldon, Dammeier, Honeyford, Schoesler, Conway, Rolfes and Kohl-Welles.

Brief History:
Committee Activity:
  Transportation: 3/14/13, 3/21/13 [DPA].
Floor Activity:
  Passed House - Amended: 4/9/13, 94-0.

Brief Summary of Bill
(As Amended by House)

- Authorizes widows or widowers, biological parents, adoptive parents, stepparents, adults in loco parentis or foster parents, biological children, or adopted children of United States Armed Forces members who died while in service or as a result of service to apply for Gold Star license plates.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 26 members: Representatives Clibborn, Chair; Fey, Vice Chair; Liias, Vice Chair; Orcutt, Ranking Minority Member; Hargrove, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Overstreet, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Angel, Bergquist, Farrell, Fitzgibbon, Habib, Hayes, Johnson, Klippert, Kochmar, Kristiansen, Morris, O'Ban, Riccelli, Ryu, Sells, Shea, Takko, Tarleton, Upthegrove and Zeiger.

Staff: Paul Ingiosi (786-7114).

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Background:

In the 2008 session the Legislature passed Substitute Senate Bill 6678, the Armed Forces license plate bill, which authorized the Department of Licensing (DOL) to issue special license plates denoting the recipient of the plate was the parent of a member of the United States Armed Forces who died while in service to his or her country or as a result of their service. The DOL was prohibited from setting or charging an additional fee for these plates but all other license fees still applied. An applicant had to be a resident of Washington and a mother or father of the member of the United States Armed Forces. The Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) would certify those who were eligible.

For purposes of eligibility the term "parent" was defined by the DVA to include:
- birth mother;
- birth father;
- stepmother;
- stepfather;
- mother through adoption;
- father through adoption; and
- adults who fulfilled the parental role including foster parents and kinship care provider or caretaker relative.

In 2010 the "Vehicle and Vessel Title and Registration Statutes - Reorganization" bill passed by the Legislature codified the Gold Star license plate.

Under current law, only the parents of a member of the United States Armed Forces who died in service or as a result of service may apply for Gold Star license plates.

Summary of Amended Bill:

Eligibility for Gold Star license plates is expanded to include a widow or widower, an adoptive parent, a step-parent, an adult in loco parentis or a foster parent, a biological child, or an adopted child of a member of the United States Armed Forces who died while in service or as a result of service.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill takes effect on August 1, 2013.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) License plates for parents have been available for a couple of years, but many of the brave military folks that are being killed in the wars today have young families at home. Wives, spouses, and family members should be able to get these plates too. It is highly recommended we go forward with this bill.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Bob Rudolph, Veterans and Military Families for Progress; and Skip Dreps, Paralyzed Veterans of America.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.