

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2522

As Reported by House Committee On:
Community Development, Housing & Tribal Affairs

Title: An act relating to modifying qualifications for disabled veterans to receive fee exempt license plates.

Brief Description: Modifying qualifications for disabled veterans to receive fee exempt license plates.

Sponsors: Representatives Pike, Blake, Kraft, Peterson, Orcutt, Shea, Vick, Caldier, Manweller, Reeves, Doglio, Riccelli, Smith, Muri, McBride, Wylie, Hargrove, Eslick, Stanford, Tharinger, Kilduff and Young.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Community Development, Housing & Tribal Affairs: 1/17/18, 1/18/18 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Decreases the percentage rate of service-related disability compensation required to qualify for the Disabled American Veteran or Former Prisoner of War special license plate from 100 percent to 70 percent.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, HOUSING & TRIBAL AFFAIRS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Ryu, Chair; Macri, Vice Chair; Barkis, Ranking Minority Member; McCabe, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Jenkin, Reeves and Sawyer.

Staff: Travis Yonker (786-7383).

Background:

There are a number of special license plate categories established to recognize various groups. The Department of Licensing (DOL) is responsible for processing special license

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plate applications. One category of special license plates that the DOL processes is the Disabled American Veteran or Former Prisoner of War special license plate, which is issued without payment of vehicle license fees, license plate fees, or excise taxes. To qualify for the Disabled American Veteran or Former Prisoner of War special license plate, an applicant must be a veteran and also be the registered owner of the vehicle. In addition, the applicant must meet one of the following requirements:

- the veteran has a service-connected disability rating;
- the veteran has lost the use of both hands or one foot;
- the veteran was captured and incarcerated by an enemy of the United States during war and has received a prisoner of war medal;
- the veteran has become blind in both eyes as the result of military service; or
- the veteran is receiving service-connected disability compensation at the 100 percent rate.

The United States Veterans Administration generally determines compensation for disabled veterans based on the percentage of service-connected disability rating. If a veteran has two or more separate service-related disabilities, they may be aggregated to calculate a final total service-connected disability percentage rating. In addition, the Veterans Administration may consider the individual unemployability of the veteran to increase the percentage of compensation beyond the service-connected disability rating to 100 percent.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Veterans may qualify for a Disabled American Veteran or Former Prisoner of War license plate if the veteran has a service-connected disability and is receiving service-connected disability compensation at the 70 percent rate or higher.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill changes the percentage of service-connected compensation required to qualify for the fee-exempt license plate from 75 percent to 70 percent.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The bill will allow more disabled veterans to benefit from receiving a fee-exempt license plate.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Ted Wicorek, Veterans Legislative Coalition; and Cameron Bailey, Freemasons of Washington.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.