



OLR RESEARCH REPORT

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DISABLED VETERAN LICENSE PLATES

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You asked for information about Massachusetts' disabled veteran license plate, including the cost to the state's taxpayers and if surrounding states have similar policies.

SUMMARY

Massachusetts provides one free disabled veteran (DV) license plate to qualified veterans (i.e., those with a 60% or greater rating of certain service connected disabilities). Based on Massachusetts' \$50 biennial registration cost for a regular plate on a normal passenger vehicle, the state loses \$51,650 over two years for the 1,033 currently issued DV plates.

Of the other surrounding states, [Maine](#), [Rhode Island](#), and [New Hampshire](#) are similar to Massachusetts and provide a free plate with proper proof of certain disabilities. [New York](#) charges an initial \$28.75 fee, but nothing for renewal. [Vermont](#) does not appear to have a specific disabled veteran license plate, but its Department of Motor Vehicles charges \$10 for veterans' plates the first time a vehicle is registered with \$5 going to the Office of Veterans Affairs for veterans' programs.

Under Connecticut law, certain disabled wartime veterans are not charged for vehicle registration (CGS § 14-49(o)) and are eligible for special placards for people who have disabilities (CGS § 14-253a, PA 11-213 eliminates the Department of Motor Vehicles commissioner's authority to issue new special license plates for those people eligible for handicapped placards, except for these individuals with motorcycles).

For the purposes of the free registration and special placard in Connecticut, "disabled veteran" means a service member who served in time of war and (1) whose leg, legs, arm, or arms or portions of the limbs have been amputated or the use of which has been lost; (2) who is blind; (3) who has traumatic brain injury; or (4) is paraplegic or hemiplegic, with any disability being certified as service-connected by the Veterans' Administration (CGS § 14-254).

MASSACHUSETTS' DISABLED VETERAN (DV) LICENSE PLATES

As of December 14, 2011, Massachusetts had 1,033 active DV license plates, according to the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (DOT). Based on the registration cost of \$50 biennially for a regular plate on a normal passenger vehicle, the state loses \$51,650 over two years (if the number remained the same). However, a person who qualifies for a DV plate is also allowed a free driver's license, an excise exemption on one vehicle, and no sales tax on one vehicle. According to the DOT, calculating the cost to the state "would vary depending on the value of each car [and thus] it is difficult to calculate lost revenue because of additional entitlements associated with the plate in Massachusetts."

As background, according to the Massachusetts DOT, to receive the DV plate, a person must qualify for disabled parking (medically certified) and provide proof from the U.S. Veterans Administration (VA) that at least 60% of the VA-determined service connected disabilities qualify for disabled parking (e.g., 60% for congestive heart failure qualifies because of a heart impairment, but a 100% service connected disability of post traumatic stress disorder does not qualify for disabled parking or the DV plate).

For more information about Massachusetts' DV plate, visit the following link: <http://www.mass.gov/rmv/veteran/disvet.htm>

JH:tjo