



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 224

January Session, 2023

Substitute House Bill No. 5048

House of Representatives, March 27, 2023

The Committee on Veterans' and Military Affairs reported through REP. NOLAN of the 39th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING THE FEES FOR VETERANS' SPECIALTY LICENSE PLATES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Subsections (a) and (b) of section 14-20b of the general
2 statutes are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof
3 (*Effective October 1, 2023*):

4 (a) The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, at the request of any veteran
5 or member of the armed forces or the surviving spouse of such veteran
6 or member, shall register any motor vehicle owned or leased for a period
7 of at least one year by such person and shall issue a special certificate of
8 registration and a set of number plates for each such motor vehicle,
9 including a special certificate of registration and a set of number plates
10 for any motor vehicle used exclusively for farming purposes by any
11 such veteran or member of the armed forces, or the surviving spouse of
12 such veteran or member, who is engaged in agricultural production as
13 a trade or business. The plates shall expire and be renewed as provided

14 in section 14-22. The commissioner shall charge a fee for such plates,
15 which fee shall cover one-half of the [entire] cost of making such plates
16 and shall be in addition to the fee for registration of such motor vehicle.
17 The commissioner shall charge a fee of fifteen dollars to replace such
18 plates that become mutilated or illegible. As used in this subsection,
19 "veteran" and "armed forces" have the same meanings as provided in
20 section 27-103.

21 (b) (1) The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, at the request of any
22 person who was a member of the Hmong Laotian special guerilla units,
23 which units served in the United States secret war in the Kingdom of
24 Laos during the Vietnam War, or the surviving spouse of such person,
25 and after verification from the Department of Veterans Affairs as
26 provided under subdivision (2) of this subsection, shall register any
27 motor vehicle owned or leased for a period of at least one year by such
28 person and shall issue a special certificate of registration and a set of
29 number plates for each such motor vehicle, including a special certificate
30 of registration and a set of number plates for any motor vehicle used
31 exclusively for farming purposes by any such person, or the surviving
32 spouse of such person, who is engaged in agricultural production as a
33 trade or business. The plates shall expire and be renewed as provided
34 in section 14-22. The commissioner shall charge a fee for such plates,
35 which fee shall cover one-half of the [entire] cost of making such plates
36 and shall be in addition to the fee for registration of such motor vehicle.

37 (2) Any person who was a member of the Hmong Laotian special
38 guerilla units, or the surviving spouse of such person, may submit a
39 request to the Department of Veterans Affairs to be listed as a veteran,
40 based on such service, for the purpose of obtaining a special certificate
41 of registration and a set of number plates under subdivision (1) of this
42 subsection. Such person, or the surviving spouse of such person, shall
43 provide to said department (A) an affidavit stating (i) when such person
44 served, (ii) where such person served, (iii) the unit in which such person
45 served, and (iv) the capacity in which such person served; (B) any
46 available corroborating witness affidavits; (C) any available official
47 documentation of service; and (D) any other documents supporting

48 such person's or such surviving spouse's affidavit. Said department
49 shall, not later than thirty days after receipt of such request, verify
50 whether such person was a member of the Hmong Laotian special
51 guerilla units and, if so, notify the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles of
52 such request and verification.

53 Sec. 2. Subsection (b) of section 14-20d of the general statutes is
54 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
55 *1, 2023*):

56 (b) The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles shall, at the request of any
57 veteran or member of the armed forces who received a campaign medal,
58 issue special registration number plates to indicate service during a
59 period of war. Such plates shall bear the words "(Name of War) Veteran"
60 and shall be designed in consultation with the Commissioner of
61 Veterans Affairs. The plates shall expire and be renewed as provided in
62 section 14-22. The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles shall charge a fee for
63 such plates, which fee shall cover one-half of the [entire] cost of making
64 such plates and shall be in addition to the fee for registration of such
65 motor vehicle. No use shall be made of such plates except as official
66 registration number plates.

67 Sec. 3. Subsection (b) of section 14-21u of the general statutes is
68 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
69 *1, 2023*):

70 (b) (1) A fee of sixty dollars shall be charged for Support Our Troops!
71 commemorative number plates, in addition to the regular fee or fees
72 prescribed for the registration of a motor vehicle. Fifteen dollars of such
73 fee shall be deposited in an account controlled by the Department of
74 Motor Vehicles to be used for the cost of producing, issuing, renewing
75 and replacing such number plates, and forty-five dollars of such fee
76 shall be deposited in an account to be used by Connecticut Support Our
77 Troops, Inc. for the purposes of subsection (c) of this section. No
78 additional fee shall be charged in connection with the renewal of such
79 number plates. No transfer fee shall be charged for the transfer of an
80 existing registration to or from a registration with Support Our Troops!

81 commemorative number plates. Such number plates shall have letters
 82 and numbers selected by the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles. The
 83 Commissioner of Motor Vehicles may establish a higher fee for number
 84 plates [:(1) Which contain] that: (A) Contain the numbers and letters
 85 from a previously issued number plate; [(2) which] (B) contain letters in
 86 place of numbers, as authorized by section 14-49, in addition to the fee
 87 or fees prescribed for registration under said section; and [(3) which] (C)
 88 are low number plates, issued in accordance with section 14-160, in
 89 addition to the fee or fees prescribed for registration under said section.
 90 All fees established and collected pursuant to this section, except the
 91 amount deposited in the account controlled by the Department of Motor
 92 Vehicles, shall be deposited in the "Support Our Troops!"
 93 commemorative account, established pursuant to subsection (c) of this
 94 section. The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles may adopt regulations, in
 95 accordance with the provisions of chapter 54, to establish standards and
 96 procedures for the issuance, renewal and replacement of Support Our
 97 Troops! commemorative number plates.

98 (2) Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision (1) of this
 99 subsection, in the case of any veteran, as defined in section 27-103, or
 100 member of the armed forces, as defined in said section, a fee of thirty
 101 dollars shall be charged for Support Our Troops! commemorative
 102 number plates, in addition to the regular fee or fees prescribed for the
 103 registration of a motor vehicle. Seven dollars and fifty cents of such fee
 104 shall be deposited in an account controlled by the Department of Motor
 105 Vehicles to be used for the cost of producing, issuing, renewing and
 106 replacing such number plates, and twenty-two dollars and fifty cents of
 107 such fee shall be deposited in an account to be used by Connecticut
 108 Support Our Troops, Inc. for the purposes of subsection (c) of this
 109 section.

110 Sec. 4. Section 14-19a of the general statutes is repealed and the
 111 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2023*):

112 (a) (1) The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles shall adopt regulations
 113 in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54 to establish [(1)] (A)

114 standards for the issuance of a special certificate of registration and
115 special number plates to a member of an organization which qualifies
116 for issuance, [(2)] (B) qualifications of organizations whose members
117 wish to apply for such special registrations, [(3)] (C) procedures for
118 application for such special registration, and [(4)] (D) a fee for such
119 special number plates which shall cover at least the entire cost of making
120 the plates and which shall be in addition to the fee for registration of the
121 motor vehicle. The regulations shall provide that a labor union shall be
122 a qualifying organization.

123 (2) In the case of any veteran, as defined in section 27-103, or member
124 of the armed forces, as defined in said section, who applies for any of
125 the following special number plates and who is eligible to apply for such
126 plate, the fee for such plate shall be equal to fifty per cent of the fee
127 established in any regulation adopted under subdivision (1) of this
128 subsection for such plate and shall be in addition to the fee for
129 registration of the motor vehicle: (A) Connecticut Army National Guard
130 Aviation plate; (B) Disabled American Veterans plate; (C) First
131 Company Governor's Foot Guard plate; (D) First Company Governor's
132 Horse Guard plate; (E) Greater Hartford Chapter of the Eighty-Second
133 Airborne plate; (F) Iwo Jima Survivor plate; (G) Korean War Veterans
134 Association plate; (H) Laos Veterans of America plate; (I) Marine Corps
135 League plate; (J) Military Order of the Purple Heart plate; (K) National
136 Guard Association of Connecticut (active) plate; (L) National Guard
137 Association of Connecticut (retired) plate; (M) Pearl Harbor 1941
138 Survivor plate; (N) Second Company Governor's Foot Guard plate; and
139 (O) United States Submarine Veterans plate.

140 (b) The Department of Motor Vehicles, in consultation with the Board
141 of Regents for Higher Education, shall adopt regulations, in accordance
142 with the provisions of chapter 54, to establish standards for the issuance
143 and renewal of collegiate special number plates with the logos or
144 emblems of Connecticut public and independent institutions of higher
145 education.

146 (c) On or after July 1, 2004, the commissioner may issue special

147 certificates of registration and special number plates in accordance with
 148 the regulations adopted under subdivision (1) of subsection (a) of this
 149 section provided the commissioner may not issue a set of special
 150 number plates bearing the same numerals as any other plate issued by
 151 the department. The commissioner may discontinue the issuance of any
 152 such special number plates issued for a qualified organization, or special
 153 plates issued in accordance with the provisions of sections 14-19b and
 154 14-21f to 14-21p, inclusive, at any time, upon written notice to the
 155 organization if, in the opinion of the commissioner, the demand for such
 156 plates is insufficient to support the costs of production.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	October 1, 2023	14-20b(a) and (b)
Sec. 2	October 1, 2023	14-20d(b)
Sec. 3	October 1, 2023	14-21u(b)
Sec. 4	October 1, 2023	14-19a

Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

Section 3(b)(2) was rewritten for internal consistency; and Section 4 was rewritten for consistency with standard drafting conventions.

VA *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 24 \$	FY 25 \$
Department of Motor Vehicles	TF - Revenue Loss	Less than 15,000	Less than 20,000
Policy & Mgmt., Off.	"Support Our Troops!" commemorative account (Non-lapsing GF) - Revenue Loss	Approximately 975	Approximately 1,300

Note: TF=Transportation Fund

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill makes several changes, beginning October 1, 2023, to the fees collected by the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) for different veterans' specialty plate, resulting in a Special Transportation Revenue loss of less than \$20,000 annually.

Among the changes is a 50% reduction to the "Support Our Troops!" plate fee for veteran applicants, including the portion of the fee that is directed to the "Support Our Troops!" commemorative account. The fee reduction in the bill is expected to result in an annual revenue loss of approximately \$1,300 to this account.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to the number of veterans' specialty license plates issued.

OLR Bill Analysis**sHB 5048*****AN ACT CONCERNING THE FEES FOR VETERANS' SPECIALTY LICENSE PLATES.*****SUMMARY**

This bill makes the following changes to fees for veteran and military special license plates:

1. reduces, from 100% to 50%, the amount of production costs that must be covered by the fee the motor vehicles commissioner sets for veteran (including specific wartime service) plates (§§ 1 & 2);
2. reduces the fee for Support Our Troops! plates by 50%, from \$60 to \$30, for veterans and armed forces members (§ 3); and
3. requires that the fee charged to veterans and armed forces members by the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) for specified, administratively created veterans and military organization plates be 50% of the fee set by regulation (§ 4).

The bill's changes apply to the standard fee for the plates, with numbers and letters selected by DMV. These fees are in addition to registration fees, and higher fees still apply for plate remakes and vanity plates, among other things.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2023

VETERANS LICENSE PLATES

Under current law, DMV sets a fee (currently \$27.50) for veteran license plates that must cover the entire cost of making any veteran or wartime service plate. Under the bill, DMV must set a fee that covers half the cost of making the plates.

SUPPORT OUR TROOPS! PLATE

Under current law, the fee for Support Our Troops! plates is \$60, of which \$15 is allocated to DMV for the cost of producing, issuing, renewing, and replacing these plates and \$45 is allocated to Connecticut Support Our Troops, Inc. for programs to help troops, families of troops, and veterans. The bill reduces the fee for veterans and armed forces members to \$30, and the allocation to DMV and Support Our Troops, Inc. to \$7.50 and \$22.50, respectively.

VETERAN ORGANIZATION PLATES

By law, DMV has general authority to issue license plates on behalf of certain qualifying nonprofit organizations, including military and veteran organizations. An applicant must (1) apply for these plates through the applicable organization, which sets the eligibility criteria and verifies the applicant’s eligibility and (2) pay a special fee, which the commissioner sets by regulation, for the initial plate (Conn. Agency Regs. § 14-19a-1 et seq.).

The bill limits the standard fee DMV may charge veterans and active-duty armed forces members for specified, administratively created organization plates to 50% of the amount set in regulation (see table below). Currently, the fee in regulations for bona fide members of the Purple Heart Association, Pearl Harbor Veteran’s Association, or any veterans’ organization is \$10 (Conn. Agencies Regs. § 14-19a-8).

Organization eligibility requirements for these plates may include paying a membership fee or a donation to the organization, the amount of which is determined by the organization and not within DMV’s purview.

Table: Organization License Plates Eligible for Reduced Fee

Connecticut Army National Guard Aviation	Marine Corps League
Disabled American Veterans	Military Order of the Purple Heart
First Company Governor’s Foot Guard	National Guard Association of Connecticut (active)

First Company Governor's Horse Guard	National Guard Association of Connecticut (retired)
Greater Hartford Chapter of the Eighty-Second Airborne	Pearl Harbor 1941 Survivor
Iwo Jima Survivor	Second Company Governor's Foot Guard
Korean War Veterans Association	United States Submarine Veterans
Laos Veterans of America	

BACKGROUND

Definition of Veteran

Under state law, a veteran is anyone who was honorably discharged, or released under honorable conditions, from active service in the United States armed forces. This also includes anyone who was released from active service with an other than honorable (OTH) discharge based on a "qualifying condition."

A qualifying condition is a (1) post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury diagnosis by a licensed health care professional at a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs facility, (2) military sexual trauma disclosed to such health care professional, or (3) determination by the Eligibility Qualifying Review Board that sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression was more likely than not the primary reason for the OTH discharge (CGS § 27-103).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Veterans' and Military Affairs Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 20 Nay 0 (03/07/2023)