

2021 -- H 5782

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LC001910
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

A N A C T

RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES -- REGISTRATION OF VEHICLES

Introduced By: Representatives Caldwell, Phillips, Baginski, Azzinaro, and Vella-Wilkinson

Date Introduced: February 24, 2021

Referred To: House Special Legislation

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 31-3-53 of the General Laws in Chapter 31-3 entitled "Registration
2 of Vehicles" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **31-3-53. Veterans' plates.**

4 (a) The registrar of motor vehicles shall issue for any motor vehicle eligible for registration
5 as an automobile, or for any motorcycle eligible for registration as a motorcycle, or for a
6 commercial vehicle having a gross weight of twelve thousand pounds (12,000 lbs.) or less, plates
7 designated as "Veteran," "Purple Heart," and "Ex-POW" upon application on proper forms
8 furnished by the administrator of the division of motor vehicles to veterans.

9 (b) The special plate designated "Veteran" shall be designed as follows:

10 (1) Letters and numbers shall be blue in a white background with the words "Rhode Island"
11 clearly visible at the top center of the plate and the word "Veteran" visible at the bottom center of
12 the plate.

13 (2) The background will be a red, white, and blue waving American Flag.

14 (3) On the top right corner will be a decal with the military branch of the service in which
15 the Veteran served (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, and Merchant Marines).

16 (4) For war veterans, a white decal with blue letters with the words "War Veteran" placed
17 under the military branch decal on the right side of the plate above the validation sticker.

18 (c) The applicant shall not be required to pay a service charge or a transfer charge for each
19 plate.

1 (d) The applicant shall be entitled to a plate for each vehicle owned by the applicant.

2 (e) The owner of a motor vehicle eligible for registration as a commercial vehicle and
3 having a gross weight of twelve thousand pounds (12,000 lbs.) or less who is issued veteran plates
4 shall continue to pay the appropriate commercial registration fee for those plates. The owner of a
5 motor vehicle eligible for registration as a commercial vehicle having a gross weight of six
6 thousand three hundred pounds (6,300 lbs.), but not more than twelve thousand pounds (12,000
7 lbs.), shall sign an affidavit at the time of application for said plates stating that the vehicle is to be
8 used for personal use only.

9 (f)(1) For the purposes of this section, a "veteran" shall be defined as any person who has
10 served on active duty in the armed forces of the United States. The term "veteran" shall also include
11 members of the National Guard and Reserves: (i) Called to active duty authorized by the President
12 of the United States or the Secretary of Defense; or (ii) Who have twenty (20) years of service with
13 a letter and record of separation of service.

14 (2) For the purposes of this section, "War Veteran" shall be defined as any veteran of any
15 conflict or undeclared war who has earned a campaign ribbon or expeditionary medal for service
16 in either a declared or undeclared war as noted on the war veteran's DD-214. Upon the death of the
17 holder of any veteran plates, the plates shall be transferred to the surviving spouse for the spouse's
18 lifetime until he or she remarries.

19 (g) The "veteran" or "war veteran" described in subdivisions (f)(1)(i) or (ii) and (f)(2) must
20 have been honorably discharged from the armed forces of this nation in order to receive plates
21 pursuant to this section and, for purposes of this section, a medical discharge or a general discharge
22 shall be deemed an honorable discharge.

23 (h) Veterans who have served in multiple conflicts are entitled to be issued veterans' plates
24 equal to the number of conflicts he or she served in; provided, the plates are limited to the number
25 of vehicles owned by the veteran.

26 (i) A person shall be eligible for a veterans' plate if his or her deceased spouse was eligible
27 for a veterans' plate, notwithstanding the fact that the eligible, deceased spouse died prior to the
28 enactment of this section in 1988.

29 (j)(1) In addition to the decals listed in subsection (b) of this section, the applicant may
30 request that an additional decal be affixed on the top left corner indicating that the applicant is a
31 recipient of the following military honor:

32 (i) Congressional Medal of Honor;

33 (ii) Distinguished Flying Cross;

34 (iii) Navy/Army/Air Force Cross;

- 1 (iv) Silver Star medal; and
2 (v) Bronze Star medal.
3 (2) When making the request for such a decal, the applicant shall submit to the registrar a
4 copy of the military order awarding the medal or a DD 214 documenting issuance of the medal.
5 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

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1 This act would authorize the issuance of veteran plates with decals affixed to the top left
2 corner for veterans who are recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor, Distinguished Flying
3 Cross, Navy/Army/Air Force Cross, Silver Star and Bronze medal.

4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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