



## **Sub. H.B. 329**

125th General Assembly

(As Reported by H. Transportation and Public Safety)

**Reps. Schlichter, Wagner, Hoops, DeWine, C. Evans, Carano, Hughes, Allen, Husted, Fessler, Ujvagi, Price, Seitz, Clancy, Bocchieri, D. Evans, Key, S. Patton, Perry, Reinhard, Sferra**

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### **BILL SUMMARY**

- Authorizes the issuance of "National Defense" license plates bearing the words "National Defense" and a reproduction of the National Defense Service Ribbon.
- Creates a "U.S. Armed Forces Active Duty" license plate that can be obtained by persons who are on active duty in any branch of the U.S. armed forces.
- Creates a special motorcycle license plate for retired and honorably discharged veterans either containing an inscription or symbol representing veterans or the word "veteran," or designed to display a sticker bearing the word "veteran."
- Exempts all these new license plates from the minimum registration requirements and termination and revival provisions of current law that generally apply to new special license plates.

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### **CONTENT AND OPERATION**

#### **"National Defense" license plates**

(R.C. 4503.541)

Under the bill, any person who has been awarded the National Defense Service Medal may apply to the Registrar of Motor Vehicles for the registration of any passenger car, noncommercial motor vehicle, motor home, or other vehicle of a class approved by the Registrar that the person owns or leases. Any documentary evidence in support of the award as the Registrar may require must

accompany the application, and it may be combined with a request for a special reserved license plate provided in current law.

Upon receipt of a motor vehicle registration application and the required taxes and fees and upon presentation of the required supporting evidence of the award of the National Defense Service Medal, the Registrar is required to issue to the applicant the appropriate motor vehicle registration and a set of license plates and a validation sticker or a validation sticker alone in the case of renewal of the plates.

In addition to the letters and numbers ordinarily inscribed on license plates, those issued under the bill must bear the words "National Defense" and a reproduction of the National Defense Service Ribbon. The license plates must bear county identification stickers that identify the county of registration by name or number.

The license plates and validation sticker or, when applicable, a validation sticker alone are issued upon payment of the regular license tax prescribed in current law, any applicable local motor vehicle license tax, any applicable additional special reserved license plate fee, and compliance with all other applicable laws relating to the registration of motor vehicles.

The bill prohibits (1) any person who is not a recipient of the National Defense Service Medal from willfully and falsely representing that the person is a recipient of that medal for the purpose of obtaining license plates under the bill, and (2) any person from owning a motor vehicle bearing license plates issued under the bill unless the person is eligible to be issued those license plates.<sup>1</sup>

### **U.S. Armed Forces Active Duty license plates**

(R.C. 4503.54)

Current law provides for a special license plate that may be obtained by a person who is a retired or honorably discharged veteran of any branch of the United States armed forces. The application for the special license plate must be accompanied by acceptable written evidence that the applicant is a retired or honorably discharged veteran. In addition to the letters and numbers ordinarily inscribed on license plates, these special license plates have either "U.S. ARMED FORCES RETIRED--(BRANCH OF SERVICE)" or "U.S. ARMED FORCES

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<sup>1</sup> *The bill does not contain a specific penalty for a violation of its prohibitions, but the general falsification statute (R.C. 2921.13) would apply. Such a violation would be a first degree misdemeanor, punishable by a term of imprisonment of not more than six months, a fine of not more than \$1,000, or both.*

VETERAN--(BRANCH OF SERVICE)" inscribed on them. The license plates are issued in the same manner as any other license plate.

The bill permits persons who are on active duty in any branch of the U.S. armed forces to obtain a new "U.S. Armed Forces Active Duty" license plate in the same manner as retired and honorably discharged veterans, except that such a person must present satisfactory written evidence proving that the person is on active duty. The new license plate would have the inscription "U.S. ARMED FORCES ACTIVE DUTY--(BRANCH OF SERVICE)."

**Special veterans motorcycle license plate**

(R.C. 4503.541)

The bill permits any person who is a retired or honorably discharged veteran of any branch of the armed forces of the United States to apply to the Registrar for the registration of any motorcycle that the person owns or leases. The application must be accompanied by such written evidence that the applicant is a retired or honorably discharged veteran of a branch of the armed forces of the United States as the Registrar requires by rule. The license plate is issued in the same manner as any other license plate. (R.C. 4503.541(A).)

Special veterans motorcycle license plates must be inscribed with the letters and numbers ordinarily inscribed on motorcycle license plates, except that the Registrar must provide for one of the following:

- (1) The license plates to contain an inscription or symbol representing U.S. veterans;
- (2) The plates to include the word "veteran"; or
- (3) The plates to be designed to display a sticker bearing the word "veteran." (R.C. 4503.541(B).)

**Exemption from the minimum registration requirements and termination provisions generally applicable to special license plates**

Under current law, certain enumerated special license plates and generally all special license plates created since October 21, 1997, are subject to a minimum registration requirement and to termination and revival procedures. For example, the Registrar is not required to implement any legislation that creates a new license plate until the Registrar receives written statements from at least 1,000 persons indicating that they intend to apply for and obtain the special license plate. (R.C. 4503.78, not in the bill.) If, during any calendar year, the total number of new and renewal motor vehicle registrations involving a particular type of

nonstandard special license plate totals less than 1,000, the issuance of that special license plate may cease as of December 31 of the following year. A special license plate whose issuance is so ended may be revived if certain conditions are met. (R.C. 4503.77, not in the bill.)

The bill exempts all the new special license plates it creates from both the minimum registration requirement and the termination and revival procedures (R.C. 4503.541(C)). This is consistent with current law in which this requirement and the procedures are not applicable to the military-related special license plates that existed at the time of the enactment of the special license plate minimum requirement and the termination and revival procedures.

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## HISTORY

ACTION	DATE	JOURNAL ENTRY
Introduced	11-13-03	p. 1058
Reported, H. Transportation & Public Safety	05-11-04	p. 1878

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