

**SENATE  
STATE OF MINNESOTA  
NINETY-FOURTH SESSION**

**S.F. No. 977**

(SENATE AUTHORS: DORNINK, Howe, Kupec, Gustafson and Putnam)

DATE  
02/03/2025

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Introduction and first reading  
Referred to Transportation

OFFICIAL STATUS

1.1 A bill for an act  
1.2 relating to transportation; providing fee exemptions for motor vehicles bearing  
1.3 Purple Heart medal special plates; amending Minnesota Statutes 2024, sections  
1.4 168.12, subdivision 2a; 168.123, subdivision 2; 168.1293, subdivision 5; proposing  
1.5 coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 168.

1.6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.7 Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 168.12, subdivision 2a, is amended to read:

1.8 Subd. 2a. **Personalized plates; rules.** (a) The commissioner may issue personalized  
1.9 plates or, if requested for special plates issued under section 168.123 for veterans, 168.124  
1.10 for medal of honor recipients, 168.1245 for Purple Heart medal recipients, or 168.125 for  
1.11 former prisoners of war, applicable personalized special veterans plates, to an applicant  
1.12 who:

1.13 (1) is an owner of a passenger automobile including a passenger automobile registered  
1.14 as a classic car, pioneer car, collector car, or street rod; any truck with a manufacturer's  
1.15 nominal rated capacity of one ton or less and resembling a pickup truck; a motorcycle,  
1.16 including a classic motorcycle; a motorized bicycle; a commuter van as defined in section  
1.17 168.126; or a recreational vehicle;

1.18 (2) pays a onetime fee of \$100 and any other fees required by this chapter;

1.19 (3) pays the registration tax required by this chapter for the motor vehicle; and

1.20 (4) complies with this chapter and rules governing registration of motor vehicles and  
1.21 licensing of drivers.

2.1 (b) The commissioner shall charge a replacement fee for personalized license plates and  
2.2 personalized special veterans plates issued under section 168.123 as specified in subdivision  
2.3 5. This fee must be paid by the applicant whenever the personalized plates are required to  
2.4 be replaced by law, except that as provided in ~~section~~ sections 168.124, subdivision 3,  
2.5 168.1245, subdivision 3, and 168.125, subdivision 1b, no fee may be charged to replace  
2.6 plates issued under those sections.

2.7 (c) In lieu of the registration number assigned as provided in subdivision 1, personalized  
2.8 plates and personalized special veterans plates must have imprinted on them a series of not  
2.9 more than seven numbers and letters, or five numbers and letters for personalized special  
2.10 veterans plates, in any combination and, as applicable, satisfy the design requirements of  
2.11 section 168.123, 168.124, 168.1245, or 168.125. When an applicant has once obtained  
2.12 personalized plates or personalized special veterans plates, the applicant shall have a prior  
2.13 claim for similar personalized plates or personalized special veterans plates in the next  
2.14 succeeding year as long as current motor vehicle registration is maintained.

2.15 (d) The commissioner shall adopt rules in the manner provided by chapter 14, regulating  
2.16 the issuance and transfer of personalized plates and personalized special veterans plates.  
2.17 No words or combination of letters placed on these plates may be used for commercial  
2.18 advertising, be of an obscene, indecent, or immoral nature, or be of a nature that would  
2.19 offend public morals or decency. The call signals or letters of a radio or television station  
2.20 are not commercial advertising for the purposes of this subdivision.

2.21 (e) Despite the provisions of subdivision 1, personalized plates and personalized special  
2.22 veterans plates issued under this subdivision may be transferred to another motor vehicle  
2.23 listed in paragraph (a) and owned by the applicant, upon the payment of a fee of \$5.

2.24 (f) The commissioner may by rule specify the format for notification.

2.25 (g) A personalized plate or personalized special veterans plate issued for a classic car,  
2.26 pioneer car, collector car, street rod, or classic motorcycle may not be transferred to a vehicle  
2.27 not eligible for such a plate.

2.28 (h) Despite any law to the contrary, if the personalized license plates are lost, stolen, or  
2.29 destroyed, the applicant may apply and must be issued duplicate license plates bearing the  
2.30 same combination of letters and numbers and the same design as (1) the former personalized  
2.31 plates or personalized special veterans plates under section 168.123 upon the payment of  
2.32 the fee required by section 168.29 or (2) the former personalized special veterans plates  
2.33 issued under section 168.124, 168.1245, or 168.125, without charge.

3.1 (i) A personalized vertical motorcycle plate may be issued upon payment of an additional  
3.2 payment of \$100. The vertical plate must have not more than four identification characters,  
3.3 cannot be a duplication of any current or reserved license plate, and must meet the  
3.4 requirements in paragraph (d).

3.5 Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 168.123, subdivision 2, is amended to read:

3.6 Subd. 2. **Design.** The commissioner of veterans affairs shall design the emblem for the  
3.7 veterans' special plates, subject to the approval of the commissioner, that satisfy the following  
3.8 requirements:

3.9 (a) For a Vietnam veteran who served after July 1, 1961, and before July 1, 1978, in the  
3.10 active military service in a branch of the armed forces of the United States or a nation or  
3.11 society allied with the United States the special plates must bear the inscription "VIETNAM  
3.12 VET."

3.13 (b) For a veteran stationed on the island of Oahu, Hawaii, or offshore, during the attack  
3.14 on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the special plates must bear the inscription "PEARL  
3.15 HARBOR SURVIVOR."

3.16 (c) For a veteran who served during World War II, the plates must bear the inscription  
3.17 "WORLD WAR VET."

3.18 (d) For a veteran who served during the Korean Conflict, the special plates must bear  
3.19 the inscription "KOREAN VET."

3.20 ~~(e) For a combat wounded veteran who is a recipient of the Purple Heart medal, the~~  
3.21 ~~plates must bear the inscription "COMBAT WOUNDED VET" and have a facsimile or an~~  
3.22 ~~emblem of the official Purple Heart medal.~~

3.23 ~~A member of the United States armed forces who is serving actively in the military and~~  
3.24 ~~who is a recipient of the Purple Heart medal is also eligible for this license plate. The~~  
3.25 ~~commissioner of public safety shall ensure that information regarding the required proof of~~  
3.26 ~~eligibility for any applicant under this paragraph who has not yet been issued military~~  
3.27 ~~discharge papers is distributed to the public officials responsible for administering this~~  
3.28 ~~section.~~

3.29 ~~(f)~~ (e) For a Persian Gulf War veteran, the plates must bear the inscription "GULF WAR  
3.30 VET." For the purposes of this section, "Persian Gulf War veteran" means a person who  
3.31 served on active duty after August 1, 1990, in a branch of the armed forces of the United  
3.32 States or a nation or society allied with the United States or the United Nations during  
3.33 Operation Desert Shield, Operation Desert Storm, or other military operation in the Persian

4.1 Gulf area combat zone as designated in United States Presidential Executive Order No.  
4.2 12744, dated January 21, 1991.

4.3 ~~(g)~~ (f) For a veteran who served in the Laos War after July 1, 1961, and before July 1,  
4.4 1978, the special plates must bear the inscription "LAOS WAR VET."

4.5 ~~(h)~~ (g) For a veteran who is the recipient of:

4.6 (1) the Iraq Campaign Medal, the special plates must be inscribed with a facsimile of  
4.7 that medal and must bear the inscription "IRAQ WAR VET" directly below the special  
4.8 plate number;

4.9 (2) the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the special plates must be inscribed with a facsimile  
4.10 of that medal and must bear the inscription "AFGHAN WAR VET" directly below the  
4.11 special plate number;

4.12 (3) the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the special plates must be  
4.13 inscribed with a facsimile of that medal and must bear the inscription "GWOT VETERAN"  
4.14 directly below the special plate number; or

4.15 (4) the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, the special plates must bear an appropriate  
4.16 inscription that includes a facsimile of that medal.

4.17 ~~(i)~~ (h) For a veteran who is the recipient of the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal,  
4.18 the special plates must be inscribed with a facsimile of that medal and must bear the  
4.19 inscription "GWOT VETERAN" directly below the special plate number. In addition, any  
4.20 member of the National Guard or other military reserves who has been ordered to federally  
4.21 funded state active service under United States Code, title 32, as defined in section 190.05,  
4.22 subdivision 5b, and who is the recipient of the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, is  
4.23 eligible for the license plate described in this paragraph, irrespective of whether that person  
4.24 qualifies as a veteran under section 197.447.

4.25 ~~(j)~~ (i) For a veteran who is the recipient of the Korean Defense Service Medal, the special  
4.26 plates must be inscribed with a facsimile of that medal and must bear the inscription  
4.27 "KOREAN DEFENSE SERVICE" directly below the special plate number.

4.28 ~~(k)~~ (j) For a veteran who is a recipient of the Bronze Star medal, the plates must bear  
4.29 the inscription "BRONZE STAR VET" and have a facsimile or an emblem of the official  
4.30 Bronze Star medal.

4.31 ~~(l)~~ (k) For a veteran who is a recipient of the Silver Star medal, the plates must bear the  
4.32 inscription "SILVER STAR VET" and have a facsimile or an emblem of the official Silver  
4.33 Star medal.

5.1 ~~(m)~~ (1) For a woman veteran, the plates must bear the inscription "WOMAN VETERAN"  
 5.2 and have a facsimile or an emblem as designated by the commissioners of veterans affairs  
 5.3 and public safety.

5.4 Sec. 3. [168.1245] SPECIAL PLATES FOR PURPLE HEART RECIPIENTS.

5.5 Subdivision 1. Issuance and design. (a) The commissioner must issue special plates  
 5.6 bearing the inscription "COMBAT WOUNDED VET" to an applicant who:

5.7 (1) is a recipient of the Purple Heart medal;

5.8 (2) is a registered owner of a passenger automobile, motorcycle, or recreational motor  
 5.9 vehicle; and

5.10 (3) complies with this chapter and rules governing the registration of motor vehicles and  
 5.11 licensing of drivers.

5.12 (b) The special plates must be of a design and size determined by the commissioner but  
 5.13 must have a facsimile or an emblem of the official Purple Heart medal. Only one set of  
 5.14 plates, or a single plate in the case of a motorcycle, bearing the inscription "COMBAT  
 5.15 WOUNDED VET" may be issued for each qualified applicant.

5.16 Subd. 2. Application. Application for issuance of these plates may be made only at the  
 5.17 time of renewal or first application for registration. The commissioner of public safety must  
 5.18 ensure that information regarding the required proof of eligibility for any applicant under  
 5.19 this section who has not yet been issued military discharge papers is distributed to the public  
 5.20 officials responsible for administering section 168.123.

5.21 Subd. 3. No fee. The commissioner must issue a set of Purple Heart plates to qualified  
 5.22 applicants free of charge, and the plates must be replaced without charge if they become  
 5.23 damaged. In addition, no fee may be charged for a subsequent year when stickers are issued  
 5.24 for a motor vehicle listed in subdivision 1 on which the Purple Heart plates are placed. The  
 5.25 motor vehicle must be for personal use, not commercial purposes.

5.26 Subd. 4. Plates transfer. Notwithstanding section 168.12, subdivision 1, on application  
 5.27 to the commissioner, special plates issued under this section may be transferred to another  
 5.28 motor vehicle if the subsequent vehicle is:

5.29 (1) qualified under subdivision 1, paragraph (a), clause (2), to bear the special plates;  
 5.30 and

5.31 (2) registered to the same individual to whom the special plates were originally issued.

5.32 The commissioner must not charge a fee for a transfer under this subdivision.

6.1 Subd. 5. **Exemption.** Special plates issued under this section are not subject to section  
6.2 168.1293, subdivision 2.

6.3 Sec. 4. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 168.1293, subdivision 5, is amended to read:

6.4 Subd. 5. **Discontinuance of plate.** (a) The commissioner shall discontinue the issuance  
6.5 or renewal of any proximate special plate if (1) fewer than 1,000 sets of those plates are  
6.6 currently registered at the end of the first six years during which the plates are available, or  
6.7 (2) fewer than 1,000 sets of those plates are currently registered at the end of any subsequent  
6.8 two-year period following the first six years of availability.

6.9 (b) The commissioner shall discontinue the issuance or renewal of any proximate special  
6.10 plate, and distribution of any contributions resulting from that plate, if the commissioner  
6.11 determines that (1) the fund or requester receiving the contributions no longer exists, (2)  
6.12 the requester has stopped providing services that are authorized to be funded from the  
6.13 contribution proceeds, (3) the requester has requested discontinuance, or (4) contributions  
6.14 have been used in violation of subdivision 6.

6.15 (c) Nothing in this subdivision applies to plates issued under section 168.123, 168.124,  
6.16 168.1245, 168.125, or 168.1255.

6.17 (d) Upon commencing discontinuance of a proximate special plate under this subdivision,  
6.18 the commissioner (1) shall not issue the plate, including as a duplicate; and (2) shall allow  
6.19 retention of any existing plate for the regular period. For purposes of this paragraph, "regular  
6.20 period" may be, as appropriate, the period specified under section 168.12, subdivision 1;  
6.21 the time until issuance of a duplicate plate for that vehicle; or as otherwise provided by law.