

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2020

A N A C T

RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES -- REGISTRATION OF VEHICLES

Introduced By: Senators Raptakis, Felag, McKenney, Paolino, and Algiere

Date Introduced: February 04, 2020

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

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  
5 registration as an automobile, or for any motorcycle eligible for registration as a motorcycle, or  
6 for a commercial vehicle having a gross weight of twelve thousand pounds (12,000 lbs.) or less,  
7 plates 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  
11 Island" clearly visible at the top center of the plate and the word "Veteran" visible at the bottom  
12 center of 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  
19 each plate.

1 (d) The applicant shall be entitled to a plate for each vehicle owned by the applicant and  
2 for each vehicle owned by an entity which the applicant owns and is registered and authorized to  
3 conduct business in the state of Rhode Island.

4 (e) The owner of a motor vehicle eligible for registration as a commercial vehicle and  
5 having a gross weight of twelve thousand pounds (12,000 lbs.) or less who is issued veteran  
6 plates shall continue to pay the appropriate commercial registration fee for those plates. ~~The~~  
7 ~~owner of a motor vehicle eligible for registration as a commercial vehicle having a gross weight~~  
8 ~~of six thousand three hundred pounds (6,300 lbs.), but not more than twelve thousand pounds~~  
9 ~~(12,000 lbs.), shall sign an affidavit at the time of application for said plates stating that the~~  
10 ~~vehicle is to be used for personal use only.~~

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

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

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

25 (h) Veterans who have served in multiple conflicts are entitled to be issued veterans'  
26 plates equal to the number of conflicts he or she served in; provided, the plates are limited to the  
27 number of vehicles owned by the veteran, or vehicles owned by an entity which the veteran owns  
28 and is registered and authorized to conduct business in the state of Rhode Island.

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

32 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 allow business vehicles which are owned by an entity which a veteran  
2 owns, and is registered and authorized to conduct business in the state of Rhode Island, to register  
3 such business vehicles with veteran plates.

4           This act would take effect upon passage.

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