
OLR Bill Analysis

HB 6734

AN ACT REDUCING FOR VETERANS AND MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES THE FEE FOR CERTAIN SPECIALTY MOTOR VEHICLE NUMBER PLATES TO NOT MORE THAN THE COST TO MAKE SUCH PLATES.

SUMMARY

This bill allows the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to charge veterans and members of the armed forces who apply for veterans license plates, wartime service plates, and certain military-related specialty motor vehicle license plates a fee of less than the cost to make the plates, and the cost of registration.

Under the bill, military-related specialty motor vehicle plates include:

1. Disabled American Veterans,
2. Greater Hartford Chapter of the Eighty-Second Airborne,
3. Iwo Jima Survivor,
4. Korean War Veterans Association,
5. Laos Veterans of America,
6. Marine Corps League,
7. Military Order of the Purple Heart,
8. National Guard Association of Connecticut (active),
9. National Guard Association of Connecticut (retired),
10. Pearl Harbor 1941 Survivor, and
11. United States Submarine Veterans.

Under current law, the fee for these plates must cover the entire cost of making the plates. DMV sets a fee (currently \$27.50) for a veterans or wartime service plate. 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).

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.

The bill also makes technical changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

BACKGROUND

Definition of a Veteran

A "veteran" is anyone honorably discharged or released under honorable conditions, or released with an other-than-honorable (OTH) discharge based on a qualifying condition, from active service in the armed forces (the U.S. Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Space Force, Air Force, and any of their reserve components, including the Connecticut National Guard when under federal service) (CGS § 27-103).

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 a health care professional; or (3) determination by the 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).

Veteran Organization Plates

By law, DMV has general authority to issue license plates on behalf of certain qualifying nonprofit organizations, including military and veterans' 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.).

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.

Related Bills

sHB 5074, favorably reported by the Veterans' and Military Affairs Committee, requires the motor vehicles commissioner, at the request of a woman who is a veteran or member of the armed forces, to register a motor vehicle and issue a special certificate of registration and a set of license plates commemorating the woman's service.

HB 5787 (File 40), favorably reported by the Veterans' and Military Affairs Committee, allows veterans and members of the armed forces who get a license plate recognizing the Military Order of the Purple Heart to apply for reimbursement of the cost of joining a chapter of the Military Order of the Purple Heart in order to get the license plate.

HB 6724, favorably reported by the Veterans' and Military Affairs Committee, authorizes commemorative license plates in recognition of "The Borinqueneers" (the primarily Puerto Rican members of the 65th Infantry Regiment of the U.S. Army who served with distinction). A portion of the fee for the license plates must be used by Hispanic-American Veterans of Connecticut, Inc. to provide bilingual services and assistance to Connecticut veterans and members of the armed forces.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Veterans' and Military Affairs Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 20 Nay 0 (03/11/2025)