

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 2312

As Passed House:
February 8, 2012

Title: An act relating to military service award emblems.

Brief Description: Making military service award emblems available for purchase.

Sponsors: House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Zeiger, Clibborn, Armstrong, Ladenburg, Hargrove, Billig, Dammeier, Orwall, Bailey, Takko, Finn, Asay, Smith, Tharinger, Kelley, Pearson, Miloscia and Moscoso).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 1/18/12 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/8/12, 96-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Permits veterans discharged under honorable conditions and individuals serving on active duty in the United States armed forces to purchase a military service award emblem for display on license plates.
- Makes the following military service award emblems available:
Distinguished Service Cross, Navy Cross, Air Force Cross, Silver Star medal, and Bronze Star medal.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 21 members: Representatives Clibborn, Chair; Billig, Vice Chair; Liias, Vice Chair; Armstrong, Ranking Minority Member; Eddy, Fitzgibbon, Hansen, Jinkins, Johnson, Klippert, Kristiansen, McCune, Moeller, Moscoso, Overstreet, Reykdal, Rivers, Shea, Takko, Upthegrove and Zeiger.

Staff: Beth Redfield (786-7347).

Background:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Veterans discharged under honorable conditions and individuals serving on active duty in the United States armed forces may purchase a veterans remembrance emblem or campaign medal emblem for display on license plates. Veterans and active duty military personnel who served during periods of war or armed conflict may purchase a remembrance emblem depicting campaign ribbons which they were awarded.

Veterans or active duty military personnel requesting a veteran remembrance emblem or campaign medal emblem must pay a prescribed fee set by the Department of Licensing (Department), show proof of eligibility, and must be the legal or registered owner of the vehicle on which the emblem is to be displayed.

The Distinguished Service Cross is the second highest military decoration that can be awarded to a member of the United States Army, for extreme gallantry and risk of life in actual combat with an armed enemy force. Actions that merit the Distinguished Service Cross must be of such a high degree to be above those required for all other United States combat decorations but not meeting the criteria for the Medal of Honor. The Distinguished Service Cross is equivalent to the Navy Cross (Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard) and the Air Force Cross (Air Force).

The Silver Star is the third highest military decoration and is awarded for gallantry in action against an enemy of the United States. The Silver Star may be awarded to any person who, while serving in any capacity with the armed forces, distinguishes himself or herself by extraordinary heroism.

The Bronze Star is the fourth-highest combat award of the United States armed forces. It may be awarded for bravery, acts of merit, or meritorious service. As a medal it is awarded for merit, and with the "V" for valor device it is awarded for heroism.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Veterans discharged under honorable conditions and individuals serving on active duty in the United States armed forces may purchase a military service award emblem for display on license plates.

The following military service award emblems will be made available: Distinguished Service Cross, Navy Cross, Air Force Cross, Silver Star medal, and Bronze Star medal.

Veterans or active duty military personnel requesting a military service award emblem must pay a prescribed fee set by the Department, show proof of eligibility, and must be the legal or registered owner of the vehicle on which the emblem is to be displayed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on January 1, 2013.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill will enable our decorated veterans to add emblems for these special awards to their license plates and the proceeds will go to support the further honor of our veterans. This idea came from the fact that other states have Silver Star license plates and Washington only has a special license plate for the Medal of Honor. We originally wanted to offer license plates for all of the military awards immediately below the Medal of Honor. There were two downsides: the cost of issuing the plates is high and could reduce sales of the special service branch license plates. This bill represents the creative idea of making available military service emblems to attach to existing license plates, which could encourage additional sales of the special service branch license plates. Washington already has veterans remembrance and campaign emblems. The proceeds from the sale benefit veterans affairs programs. The Joint Committee on Veterans Affairs unanimously approved the original proposal to offer special license plates for military service award recipients.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Zeiger, prime sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.