

HOUSE BILL REPORT

EHB 1132

As Passed House:
March 13, 2013

Title: An act relating to gold star license plates.

Brief Description: Authorizing certain family members of United States armed forces members who died while in service or as a result of service to apply for gold star license plates.

Sponsors: Representatives Hayes, Seaquist, Smith, Van De Wege, Kristiansen, Takko, Haler, Rodne, Sells, McCoy, Dunshee, Moscoso, Tharinger, Ryu, Zeiger, Green, Wilcox, Jinkins, Riccelli, Hurst, Morrell, Scott, Freeman, Dahlquist, Bergquist, Hargrove and Parker.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 1/29/13 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/13/13, 98-0.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill

- Authorizes widows or widowers, biological parents, adoptive parents, stepparents, adults in loco parentis or foster parents, biological children, or adopted children of United States armed forces members who died while in service or as a result of service to apply for Gold Star license plates.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 28 members: Representatives Clibborn, Chair; Fey, Vice Chair; Liias, Vice Chair; Orcutt, Ranking Minority Member; Hargrove, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Overstreet, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Angel, Bergquist, Farrell, Fitzgibbon, Habib, Hayes, Johnson, Klippert, Kochmar, Kristiansen, Moeller, Morris, O'Ban, Riccelli, Rodne, Ryu, Sells, Shea, Takko, Tarleton, Upthegrove and Zeiger.

Staff: Paul Ingiosi (786-7114).

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.

In the 2008 session, the Legislature passed Substitute Senate Bill 6678, the armed forces license plate bill, which authorized the Department of Licensing (DOL) to issue special license plates denoting the recipient of the plate was the parent of a member of the United States armed forces who died while in service to his or her country or as a result of their service. The DOL was prohibited from setting or charging an additional fee for these plates but all other license fees still applied. Applicants had to be a resident of Washington and a mother or father of the member of the United States armed forces. The Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) would certify those who were eligible.

For purposes of eligibility the term "parent" was defined by the DVA to include:

- birth mother;
- birth father;
- stepmother;
- stepfather;
- mother through adoption;
- father through adoption; and
- adults who fulfilled the parental role including foster parents and kinship care provider or caretaker relative.

In 2010 the "Vehicle and Vessel Title and Registration Statutes - Reorganization" bill passed by the Legislature codified the Gold Star license plate.

Under current law, only the parents of a member of the United States armed forces who died in service or as a result of service may apply for Gold Star license plates.

Summary of Engrossed Bill:

Eligibility for Gold Star license plates is expanded to include eligible family members of a member of the United States armed forces who died in service or as a result of service.

Family members are eligible to apply for Gold Star license plates after meeting certain conditions:

- be a resident of the state;
- provide proof to the satisfaction of the DOL that the registered owner is one of the following eligible family members:
 - widow;
 - widower;
 - biological parent;
 - adoptive parent;
 - stepparent;
 - adult in loco parentis or foster parent;
 - biological child; or
 - adopted child;
- provide certification from the DVA that the registered owner qualifies for the special license plate;
- be recorded as the registered owner of the motor vehicle on which the Gold Star license plate will be displayed; and
- pay all fees and taxes required by law for registering the motor vehicle.

Eligible family members would also be able to transfer the Gold Star plate from one motor vehicle to another motor vehicle they own upon application to the DOL, county auditor or other agent, or subagent appointed by the Director of the DOL.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill honors fallen service members and their surviving spouses for their collective sacrifices and service. The Gold Star license plate represents a way for surviving spouses and family members to identify persons with whom they share a kinship as well as show pride in their loved ones who gave their life in service of their country. Nearly all states have a version of a Gold Star license plate, and in most states the widow, widower, or spouse is first on the list of eligibility.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Hayes, prime sponsor; and Gail DeBolt Hall, Gold Star Wives of America.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.