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## Transportation Committee

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### HB 1197

**Brief Description:** Concerning gold star license plates.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Riccelli, Irwin, Lovick, Barkis, Reeves, Blake, Ortiz-Self, Ormsby, Valdez, Bergquist, Mead, Fey, Volz, Chapman, Pellicciotti, Kilduff, Dolan, Sells, Maycumber, Shea, Griffey, Leavitt and Stanford.

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| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Brief Summary of Bill</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Requires Gold Star license plates to be issued to all eligible applicants without payment of any vehicle license fees and motor vehicle excise taxes.</li></ul> |
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**Hearing Date:** 2/4/19

**Staff:** Patricia Hasan (786-7292).

**Background:**

The Department of Licensing (DOL) issues special vehicle license plates that may be used in lieu of standard license plates. Generally, special license plates are sponsored by a governmental or nonprofit organization and are available to all Washington residents for an additional fee that is due annually upon vehicle registration renewal. Other special license plates are available to individuals who meet certain requirements. One such special license plate is the Gold Star license plate, which may be issued to an eligible family member of a member of the United States Armed Forces who died while in service to his or her country, or as a result of his or her service.

To qualify for a Gold Star license plate, a registered vehicle owner must:

- be a resident of Washington;
- provide proof to the satisfaction of the DOL that they are an eligible family member to the deceased service member;
- provide certification from the Department of Veterans Affairs that they qualify for a Gold Star license plate;

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- be recorded as the registered owner of the motor vehicle on which the Gold Star license plates will be displayed; and
- pay all fees and taxes required by law for registering the motor vehicle.

Eligible family members include:

- widows and widowers;
- biological and adoptive parents;
- stepparents;
- adults in loco parentis and foster parents;
- biological and adopted children; and
- siblings.

Gold Star license plates are issued without payment of any license plate fees and are replaced free of charge if a plate is lost, stolen, damaged, defaced, or destroyed. Widow and widower recipients of Gold Star license plates are exempt from annual vehicle registration fees for one personal use motor vehicle. Additionally, in lieu of a Gold Star license plate, a qualifying widow or widower may apply for a standard issue license plate or any qualifying special license plate for one personal use motor vehicle and be exempt from both annual vehicle registration fees and license plate fees for that vehicle.

Gold Star license plates may be transferred from one motor vehicle to another motor vehicle owned by the eligible family member upon application to the DOL, county auditor or other agent, or subagent appointed by the Director of the DOL.

**Summary of Bill:**

All qualifying applicants of the Gold Star license plate must be issued the plates without payment of any vehicle license fees and motor vehicle excise taxes in addition to the current exemption from payment of license plate fees.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.