

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 1197

C 210 L 19

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Concerning gold star license plates.

Sponsors: House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by 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).

House Committee on Transportation
Senate Committee on Transportation

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;
- 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;

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- 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:

Qualified Gold Star license plate applicants who are a widow, widower, biological parent, adoptive parent, stepparent, or an adult in loco parentis or foster parent must be issued the license plates without any vehicle license fees or motor vehicle excise taxes in addition to the exemption from payment of license plate fees. The exemption from all the vehicle license fees and motor vehicle excise taxes is limited to one motor vehicle. Biological children, adopted children, and sibling Gold Star applicants are exempt from license plate fees but are not exempt from other vehicle license fees or motor vehicle excise taxes for the Gold Star license plate.

Widows and widowers who are eligible to receive the Gold Star license plates but choose instead to receive a standard license plate or any other qualifying special license plate are exempt from payment of motor vehicle excise taxes in addition to the exemption from payment of license plate fees and vehicle registration fees.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	95	0	
Senate	47	0	(Senate amended)
House	95	0	(House concurred)

Effective: July 28, 2019