

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2058

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to Purple Heart license plates.

Brief Description: Concerning Purple Heart license plates.

Sponsors: Representatives Callan, Dufault, Kilduff, Leavitt, Ramos, Goehner, Reeves, Rude, Boehnke, Entenman, Klippert, Corry, Mosbrucker and Davis.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 2/28/19 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/13/19, 95-0.

Passed Senate: 4/11/19, 47-0.

Passed Legislature.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires Purple Heart license plates to be issued to all eligible applicants without payment of any vehicle license fees, license plate fees, and motor vehicle excise taxes for one motor vehicle.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 30 members: Representatives Fey, Chair; Slatter, 2nd Vice Chair; Valdez, 2nd Vice Chair; Wylie, 1st Vice Chair; Barkis, Ranking Minority Member; Walsh, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Young, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Boehnke, Chambers, Chapman, Dent, Doglio, Dufault, Entenman, Eslick, Goehner, Gregerson, Irwin, Kloba, Lovick, McCaslin, Mead, Orcutt, Ortiz-Self, Pellicciotti, Ramos, Riccelli, Shea, Shewmake and Van Werven.

Staff: Patricia Hasan (786-7292).

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.

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 Purple Heart license plate, which may be issued to a registered owner of a vehicle who has been awarded a Purple Heart medal by any branch of the United States Armed Forces, including the Merchant Marines and the Women Air Force Service Pilots.

To qualify for a Purple Heart license plate, a registered vehicle owner must:

- be a resident of Washington;
- have been wounded during one of the United States' wars or conflicts;
- have received an honorable discharge from the United States Armed Forces;
- provide a copy of the Armed Forces document showing the recipient was awarded the Purple Heart medal;
- be recorded as the registered owner of the motor vehicle on which the Purple Heart license plate or plates will be displayed; and
- pay all fees and taxes required by law for registering the motor vehicle.

Purple Heart license plates are issued without payment of any special license plate fees for one motor vehicle. For other motor vehicles, qualified applicants may purchase Purple Heart license plates for the special license plate fee of \$40 for original issuance and \$30 for renewal.

Purple Heart license plates may be issued to the surviving spouse or domestic partner of a Purple Heart recipient who met the qualifications to receive the Purple Heart license plate. The surviving spouse or domestic partner must be a resident of Washington to receive the Purple Heart license plates. If the surviving spouse or the surviving domestic partner marries or enters into a new domestic partnership, he or she must return the special license plates to the DOL within 15 days and apply for regular license plates or another type of special license plate.

Purple Heart license plates may be transferred from one motor vehicle to another motor vehicle owned by the Purple Heart recipient or the surviving spouse or domestic partner 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 Purple Heart license plate must be issued the plates without payment of any vehicle license fees, license plate fees, and motor vehicle excise taxes, in addition to the current exemption from payment of special license plate fees, for one motor vehicle. For other motor vehicles, qualified applicants may purchase Purple Heart license plates and pay all fees and taxes required by law for registering a motor vehicle.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The Purple Heart is a medal that has been given to active duty military members or veterans who have been wounded or killed in combat or in an act of international terrorism. No one wants to receive this medal, but it is the most deserved medal for the sacrifice given for the United States. Washington already offers a Purple Heart special license plate, and there are approximately 2,484 currently issued. This special license plate should be made into a permanent license plate by eliminating the annual renewal fees for one set of plates. Men and women of Washington who have received a Purple Heart have given more and deserve more in return for their dedication, their service, and their tremendous sacrifice.

Purple Heart license plates connect military veterans to each other and provide an opening to talk about shared experiences in the United States military. This type of interaction can lead to sharing information, assistance, and services to other veterans.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Callan, prime sponsor; and Jim Curtis.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.