

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6225

As of January 23, 2020

Title: An act relating to creating Washington law enforcement officer health and wellness special license plates.

Brief Description: Creating Washington law enforcement officer health and wellness special license plates.

Sponsors: Senators Wagoner and Dhingra.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 1/22/20.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates a new health and wellness of Washington's law enforcement officers special license plate.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Bryon Moore (786-7726)

Background: The Department of Licensing (DOL) issues special vehicle license plates that may be used in lieu of standard plates. A governmental or nonprofit sponsoring organization seeking to sponsor a special plate either submits an application to DOL or requests legislation to create the special plate.

Under the DOL application method, the application packet must include the design of the special license plate, proof of 3500 signatures supporting the special license plate, and a start-up fee of \$6,300. For special license plates enacted by the Legislature, a sponsoring organization must submit prepayment of all start-up costs to DOL within 30 days of enactment.

The sponsoring organization seeking to sponsor the special plate must reimburse DOL for the costs of establishing the new special plate. If the sponsoring organization is not able to meet the prepayment requirement, revenues generated from the sale of the special license plate are first used to pay off any costs associated with establishing the new plate. The sponsoring

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.

organization must provide a proposed license plate design to DOL. The sponsoring organization must submit an annual financial report to DOL detailing actual revenues generated from the sale of the special license plate. The reports are reviewed, approved, and presented to the Joint Transportation Committee.

DOL collects special license plate fees, and for administrative expenses, deducts an amount not to exceed \$12 for new plate issuance and \$2 for renewal. After these expenses are paid, the state treasurer deposits the proceeds into the motor vehicle account until DOL determines the start-up costs for a special license plate are paid. After that point, all remaining proceeds go to the sponsoring organization.

Summary of Bill: A new special license plate is created that recognizes the health and wellness of Washington's law enforcement officers. The net proceeds are directed towards the Washington State Fraternal Order of Police Memorial Foundation to support the health and wellness of law enforcement officers and their families with a special focus on mental health. This includes sponsored programming and services to be offered throughout the state to current and former law enforcement professionals, including professionals who experience and risk exposure to sustained amounts of stress and trauma. A \$40 fee will be charged for an initial health and wellness of Washington's law enforcement officers special license plate, and \$30 for an annual renewal.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on October 1, 2020.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: There has been a dramatic increase in law enforcement officer suicides and the state has not provided the resources to address the problem. This bill will provide some of those needed resource and will first be used for critical response teams throughout the state. The comprehensive peer support program which continues training will make a difference in officers' lives. This will not diminish the revenue to other organizations. This bill will help all law enforcement officers regardless of fraternal organization. The current training programs are inadequate to meet the need. The peer-to-peer programs are proven and scientifically based to deal with mental health issue needs of the law enforcement community. This is a small part of providing the needed support.

CON: This will decrease the revenue to the law enforcement memorial funds and the Behind the Badge family support programs funded with the existing special license plate. While the bill addresses an important problem, it robs Peter to pay Paul. The behind the badge organization is already involved in many of these efforts to address officer trauma. The lost revenue will impact the ability to maintain the law enforcement memorial and provide services to address emergent needs of the law enforcement community. There needs to be a more comprehensive approach around law enforcement mental health and wellness needs and this can not wait for a new special license plate to start coming in.

OTHER: The needs are widespread for law enforcement, but the peer support is not enough. These problems need to be addressed more comprehensively.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Keith Wagoner, Prime Sponsor; Lynnette Buffington, Washington Fraternal Order of Police; Cheryl Hart, Mental Health Provider; Jim Pugel, citizen; Sherri Martin, Director, National Fraternal Order of Police of Wellness; Allen Jenkins, West Richland Police Officer; Susan Peterschick, citizen.

CON: Teresa Taylor, Executive Director, Washington Council of Police and Sheriffs; Renee Maher, Council of Metropolitan Police and Sheriffs; Jennifer Ziegler, Behind the Badge Foundation; Gayle Frink-Schulz, Behind the Badge Foundation; Brian Johnston, Behind the Badge Foundation.

OTHER: Jeremy Wade, citizen.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.