

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5085

As Passed House - Amended:
April 8, 2015

Title: An act relating to gold star license plates.

Brief Description: Authorizing siblings 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: Senators Rolfes, Dammeier, Conway, Benton, Chase, Billig, Ranker, Hobbs, Fraser, McAuliffe and Pearson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 3/12/15, 3/30/15 [DPA].

Floor Activity:

Passed House - Amended: 4/8/15, 97-0.

**Brief Summary of Bill
(As Amended by House)**

- Authorizes siblings of United States Armed Forces members who died while in service or as a result of service to apply for Gold Star license plates.
- Exempts a widow or widower with Gold Star license plates from annual vehicle registration fees for one personal-use motor vehicle.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 25 members: Representatives Clibborn, Chair; Farrell, Vice Chair; Fey, Vice Chair; Moscoso, Vice Chair; Orcutt, Ranking Minority Member; Hargrove, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Gregerson, Harmsworth, Hayes, Kochmar, McBride, Moeller, Morris, Ortiz-Self, Pike, Riccelli, Rodne, Sells, Shea, Takko, Tarleton, Wilson, Young 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. An applicant 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.

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

Most recently, in 2013 the Legislature unanimously passed Senate Bill 5161 expanding the list of individuals who are eligible to receive a Gold Star license plate to include a widow or widower, a biological or adopted child, an adoptive parent, a stepparent, and a foster parent or other adult that is legally responsible for the member of the United States Armed Forces.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The eligibility for Gold Star license plates is expanded to include siblings of a member of the United States Armed Forces who died while in service or as a result of service.

Additionally, widows or widowers with Gold Star license plates are exempt from annual vehicle registration fees for one personal-use motor vehicle.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: 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 bill would align state eligibility for Gold Star awards with the federal law. The Gold Star program was established by an Act of Congress in order to provide an appropriate identification for those relatives of members of the Armed Forces who lost their lives in conflicts, and that list includes siblings. The state's RCW should be updated to include siblings.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Rolfes, prime sponsor; and David Ellingson.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.