

SB 596 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Veterans, Emergency Management, Federal and World Affairs

Action Date: 04/08/25

Action: Do pass with amendments and requesting referral to Ways and Means. (Printed A-Engrossed.)

Vote: 4-0-1-0

Yeas: 4 - Manning Jr, Meek, Smith DB, Thatcher

Exc: 1 - Woods

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: Has minimal revenue impact

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Meeting Dates: 2/4, 4/8

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure requires the Department of Transportation to waive veterans' recognition vehicle registration plate surcharges for veterans providing proof they have a disability rating of at least 50 percent and is the result of an injury or illness incurred or aggravated during active military service. The measure appropriates an unspecified amount from the General Fund to the Department of Transportation for the 2025-2027 biennium, which may be expended for this purpose.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Existing fees for veterans' license plates
- Potential funding sources for the program
- Applicability of and eligibility for proposed waiver
- Recognition of veterans

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

The amendment allows requests to waive the surcharge on veterans' recognition registration plates that goes to the Oregon Veterans' Homes. It changes the waiver eligibility from anyone eligible for such plates to veterans who provide written proof to the Department of Transportation that they have a disability rating of at least 50 percent that is the result of an injury or illness incurred or aggravated during active military service.

BACKGROUND:

The current iteration of the veterans' recognition registration plate program began in 2008 as a joint effort between the Oregon Department of Transportation and the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs. Statute includes a surcharge of \$2.50 per plate for each year of registration, which is deposited in a trust fund paying for operations of Oregon Veterans' Homes.

Currently, only Gold Star Family members may request to waive the surcharge, which must be honored as long as the Legislative Assembly has appropriated funds for this purpose. Gold Star Family plates may only be granted to a parent, sibling, spouse, or dependent of a person killed in action during an armed conflict while serving in the United States Armed Forces. Standard passenger fees [currently apply](#) to veteran plates; additional fees do not apply to Gold Star Family plates but do apply to other veteran plates.

Senate Bill 596 A allows eligible veterans with disability ratings of 50 percent or more to request a waiver of the surcharge on a veterans' recognition registration plate and appropriates an unspecified amount for this purpose.