

Enrolled Senate Bill 159

Sponsored by Senators MEEK, SMITH DB; Representative BOICE (Presession filed.)

CHAPTER

AN ACT

Relating to veterans' recognition plates; amending ORS 805.105.

Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:

SECTION 1. ORS 805.105 is amended to read:

805.105. (1) The Department of Transportation shall establish a veterans' recognition registration plate program to issue registration plates called "veterans' recognition registration plates" upon request to an owner of any motor vehicle registered under ORS 803.420 (6)(a) **or** (c) if the owner of the motor vehicle qualifies for the plates. Rules adopted under this section shall include, but need not be limited to, rules that:

(a) Describe general qualifications to be met by any veterans' group in order to be eligible for a veterans' recognition registration plate issued under this section.

(b) Specify circumstances under which the department may cease to issue veterans' recognition registration plates.

(c) Specify what constitutes proof of veteran status for issuance of a veterans' recognition registration plate, if such proof is required by a veterans' group or by the Director of Veterans' Affairs.

(d) Specify what constitutes proof that a person is a surviving family member of a person who was killed in action during an armed conflict while serving in the Armed Forces of the United States. The department may only issue a veterans' recognition registration plate displaying a gold star decal and the words "Gold Star Family" to a person who is a parent, sibling, spouse or dependent of a person who was killed in action during an armed conflict while serving in the Armed Forces of the United States.

(2)(a) In addition to any other fee authorized by law, upon issuance of a veterans' recognition registration plate under this section and upon renewal of registration for a vehicle that has plates issued under this section, the department shall collect a surcharge of \$2.50 per plate for each year of the registration period for the vehicle as described under ORS 803.415.

(b) Except as otherwise provided in paragraph (c) of this subsection, net proceeds of the surcharge collected by the department for the veterans' recognition registration plate shall be deposited in the trust fund established under ORS 406.050 for paying the expenses of operating the Oregon Veterans' Homes identified in ORS 408.362.

(c) If the department issues a veterans' recognition registration plate that names, describes or represents a veterans' group, that veterans' group may designate an account into which the net proceeds of the surcharge collected by the department under this section are to be deposited. The department shall keep accurate records of the number of plates issued under this paragraph for each veterans' group and, after payment of administrative expenses of the department, shall deposit moneys collected under this subsection into the specified account.

(d) The department shall waive the surcharge required under paragraph (a) of this subsection and transfer the amount otherwise paid by the person to the trust fund established under ORS 406.050 if:

(A) A request to waive the surcharge is submitted by a Gold Star Family member; and

(B) Funds are appropriated by the Legislative Assembly or otherwise made available to the department for the purpose of paying the surcharge.

(e) Deposits under this subsection shall be made quarterly.

(3)(a) In consultation with the Department of Transportation, the Director of Veterans' Affairs shall design the veterans' recognition registration plate.

(b) If the department issues a veterans' recognition registration plate to recognize a veterans' group, the department shall, in consultation with the requesting veterans' group, add words or a military-related decal to the veterans' recognition registration plate that names, describes or represents the veterans' group.

(c) The department shall add a gold star decal and the words "Gold Star Family" to a veterans' recognition registration plate background to recognize surviving family members of persons killed in action during an armed conflict while serving in the Armed Forces of the United States.

(d) Except as otherwise required by the design, veterans' recognition registration plates must comply with the requirements of ORS 803.535.

(4) The department shall determine how many sets of veterans' recognition registration plates will be manufactured. If the department does not sell or issue renewal for 500 sets of veterans' recognition registration plates in any one year, the department shall cease production of veterans' recognition registration plates. For the purposes of this section, veterans' recognition registration plates that name, describe or represent a veterans' group are included in the total number of veterans' recognition registration plates issued.

(5) For the purposes of this section, "sibling" includes siblings of the whole or half blood and siblings by adoption, marriage or domestic partnership.

Passed by Senate April 10, 2025

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Obadiah Rutledge, Secretary of Senate

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Rob Wagner, President of Senate

Passed by House May 19, 2025

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Julie Fahey, Speaker of House

Received by Governor:

.....M.,....., 2025

Approved:

.....M.,....., 2025

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Tina Kotek, Governor

Filed in Office of Secretary of State:

.....M.,....., 2025

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Tobias Read, Secretary of State