

SUBJECT: Extra armed forces specialty license plates

COMMITTEE: Transportation — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 5 ayes — Alexander, Bosse, Alonzo, Clemons, Siebert
0 nays
0 absent — Edwards, Moreno, Price, Uher

WITNESSES: None

BACKGROUND: State law provides for issuance of one set of specialty license plates to personnel in the armed forces, civil air patrol and the Coast Guard Auxiliary and to survivors of the attack on Pearl Harbor, veterans of World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and Operation Desert Storm and Purple Heart recipients. Surviving spouses also may be eligible for Pearl Harbor and Purple Heart plates.

The fees for the Purple Heart and Pearl Harbor plates are \$3 per year; all other plate fees are \$10 a year. Pearl Harbor and Purple Heart license plate holders are exempt from the state motor vehicle registration fee on the vehicle with the special plate, which averages about \$50 per vehicle, and the fees some counties impose, of up to \$10.

DIGEST: HB 247 would amend VACS art. 6675a-5k to allow issuance of more than one set of special license plates to military license plate holders. Each set of these specialty license plates after the first would cost \$15. Purple Heart and Pearl harbor plate holders would be entitled to an exemption from motor vehicle registration and county fees on the first set of plates only. The bill would take effect immediately if approved by a two-thirds vote of the membership of each house.

SUPPORTERS SAY: The state policy of honoring military personnel and service veterans with special plates should be expanded to recognize that many of these individuals drive more than one vehicle. Veterans who own more than one car should have the option to purchase the extra sets of plates for their cars at a modest additional fee to cover the extra cost. The fiscal note shows

that the extra armed forces specialty plates are a user-funded privilege that would be totally self-funded beginning in fiscal 1997.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

No apparent opposition.

NOTES:

The substitute established the fee of \$15 for additional sets of armed forces specialty plates and would allow an exemption from motor vehicle registration and county fees for the first set of plates only. The original bill specified that only one additional specialty plate could be issued.

The original bill would have changed the requirements for holding Pearl Harbor plates to include anyone on the Hawaiian Islands on December 7, 1941.

The Legislative Budget Board estimates a probable net loss of \$21,533 to the State Highway Fund 006 in fiscal 1996. From fiscal 1997 to 2000, the LBB estimates a net gain of \$5,991 per year to State Highway Fund 006. One additional employee would be needed by TxDOT to process and examine documents related to the specialty plates certification.