

Date of Hearing: April 30, 2013

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS

Al Muratsuchi, Chair

AB 244 (Bonilla) – As Amended: April 24, 2013

SUBJECT: Vehicles: license plates: veterans

SUMMARY: Directs the Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) to apply for a veteran license plate. Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Directs CalVet to apply to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to sponsor a veterans specialized license plate program, and DMV shall issue license plates for that program if CalVet meets the requirements prescribed in statute for all specialized plate applicants.
- 2) Specifies that the design of the veterans specialized license plate shall be identical to the design of the veterans special interest license plate issued pursuant to Vehicle Code section 5068 on or before January 1, 2010.
- 3) Mandates that revenue derived from the additional fees prescribed by Vehicle Code section 5157 for the issuance, renewal, or transfer of the veterans specialized license plates shall be deposited, after the department deducts its administrative costs, in the Veterans Service Office Funds (CVSO Fund), created by Section 972.2 of the Military and Veterans Code.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Authorizes a state agency to apply to DMV to sponsor a special interest license plate program and requires DMV to issue the special interest license plates for the program if the state agency complies with specified requirements.
- 2) Establishes DMV to, among other duties and responsibilities, register vehicles for operation or non-operation in the state.
- 3) Allows any registered owner of a vehicle to apply to DMV for veterans' organization license plates for his or her vehicle.
- 4) Establishes special interest license plate procedures for veteran organizations and allows a veterans' organization to apply for a veterans' special interest license plate, the proceeds of which are deposited into the CVSO Fund, less the DMV costs. Applicants for the special interest license plates pay fees for issuance, renewal, or personalization that is additional to those required for nonspecialized license plates.
- 5) Requires money in the CVSO Fund to be available, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to CalVet for allocation and disbursement to counties for the operation of CVSOs.
- 6) Allows CalVet to modify the distinctive design or decal for veterans' organization special interest license plates, consistent with existing statutory design criteria.

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown at this time.

COMMENTS: According to the author:

The enactment of AB 1908 in 2010 transitioned the old Veterans license plate to a new Honoring Veterans license plate. The Honoring Veterans plate can be purchased by any member of the public who wishes to support veterans. This change was made to increase the appeal of the plate to the public and as a result, boost sales.

Prior to 2010, the Department only offered a Veterans specialty license plate. Unfortunately, transitioning to an Honoring Veterans plate has prevented veterans from purchasing a license plate which specifically identifies them as a veteran. Ever since this change occurred, veterans and veterans groups have been asking for its return.

Currently there are seven different license plate designs to honor veterans and the Gold Star plate in honor of the sacrifice of military families that have lost someone in military service. Therefore a general "Veteran" plate is aligned with existing policy and practice. However, the bill in its current form does not require any documentation of veteran status, so it will not necessarily accomplish the goal of specifically identifying veterans.

CalVet must still apply for and meet the requirements of the statutory process for the plate. If there is sufficient demand, and the plate is issued, sale of these plates will provide enhanced revenue for the County Veteran Service Office.

Previous Committee: Assembly Transportation

Ayes: 16      Noes: 0

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

American Legion, Department of California  
AMVETS, Department of California  
California Association of County Veterans Service Officers  
California Mental Health Directors Association  
Rural County Representatives of California  
VFW, Department of California  
Vietnam Veterans of America, California State Council

Opposition

None on File.

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