WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION, 1997

ENROLLED

HOUSE BILL No. 2598

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Kiss, and Ashley
(By Delegate [By Request of the Executive] )

Passed __________________________ April 12, __________________________ 1997

In Effect Ninety Days From Passage
AN ACT to amend and reenact section fourteen, article three, chapter seventeen-a of the code of West Virginia, one thousand nine hundred thirty-one, as amended, relating to the issuance of specialized registration plates to members of certain military organizations and members of the silver haired legislature; and requiring the issuance of specialized registration plates displaying a species of nongame wildlife native to West Virginia; design of insignia; application for plates; requirements for issuance; fees for issuance; and disposition of fees; proposal of legislative rules.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

That section fourteen, article three, chapter seventeen-a of the code of West Virginia, one thousand nine hundred thirty-one, as amended, be amended and reenacted to read as follows:

ARTICLE 3. ORIGINAL AND RENEWAL OF REGISTRATION; ISSUANCE OF CERTIFICATES OF TITLE.

§17A-3-14. Registration plates generally; description of plates; issuance of special numbers and plates; registration fees; special application
fees; exemptions; commissioner to promulgate forms; suspension and nonrenewal.

(a) The division upon registering a vehicle shall issue to the owner one registration plate for a motorcycle, trailer, semitrailer or other motor vehicle.

(b) Registration plates issued by the division shall meet the following requirements:

(1) Every registration plate shall be of reflectorized material and have displayed upon it the registration number assigned to the vehicle for which it is issued; the name of this state, which may be abbreviated; and the year number for which it is issued or the date of expiration of the plate.

(2) Every registration plate and the required letters and numerals on the plate shall be of sufficient size to be plainly readable from a distance of one hundred feet during daylight: Provided, That the requirements of this subdivision shall not apply to the year number for which the plate is issued or the date of expiration.

(3) Registration numbering for registration plates shall begin with number two.

(c) The division may not issue, permit to be issued or distribute any special registration plates except as follows:

(1) The governor shall be issued two registration plates, on one of which shall be imprinted the numeral one and on the other the word one.

(2) State officials and judges may be issued special registration plates as follows:

(A) Upon appropriate application, there shall be issued to the secretary of state, state superintendent of schools, auditor, treasurer, commissioner of agriculture and the attorney general, the members of both houses of the Legislature, including the elected officials thereof, the justices of the supreme court of appeals of West Virginia, the representatives and senators of the state in the Congress of the United States, the judges of the United States district courts for the state of West Virginia and the
judges of the United States court of appeals for the fourth circuit, if any of the judges are residents of West Virginia, a special registration plate for a Class A motor vehicle owned by the official or his or her spouse: Provided, That the division may not issue more than two plates for each official.

(B) Each plate issued pursuant to this subdivision shall bear any combination of letters and numbers not to exceed an amount determined by the commissioner and a designation of the office. Each plate shall supersede the regular numbered plate assigned to the official or his or her spouse during the official’s term of office and while the motor vehicle is owned by the official or his or her spouse.

(C) An annual fee of fifteen dollars shall be charged for every registration plate issued pursuant to this subdivision, which is in addition to all other fees required by this chapter.

(3) Members of the national guard forces may be issued special registration plates as follows:

(A) Upon receipt of an application on a form prescribed by the division and receipt of written evidence from the chief executive officer of the army national guard or air national guard, as appropriate, or the commanding officer of any United States armed forces reserve unit that the applicant is a member thereof, the division shall issue to any member of the national guard of this state or a member of any reserve unit of the United States armed forces a special registration plate designed by the commissioner for any number of Class A motor vehicles owned by the member.

(B) An initial application fee of ten dollars shall be charged for each special registration plate issued pursuant to this subdivision, which is in addition to all other fees required by this chapter. All initial application fees collected by the division shall be deposited into a special revolving fund to be used in the administration of this section.
(C) A surviving spouse may continue to use his or her deceased spouse’s national guard forces license plate until the surviving spouse dies, remarries or does not renew the license plate.

(4) Specially arranged registration plates may be issued as follows:

(A) Upon appropriate application, any owner of a motor vehicle subject to Class A registration, or a motorcycle subject to Class G registration, as defined by this article, may request that the division issue a registration plate bearing specially arranged letters or numbers with the maximum number of letters or numbers to be determined by the commissioner. The division shall attempt to comply with the request wherever possible.

(B) The commissioner shall propose rules for legislative approval in accordance with the provisions of chapter twenty-nine-a of this code regarding the orderly distribution of the plates: Provided, That for purposes of this subdivision, the registration plates requested and issued shall include all plates bearing the numbers two through two thousand.

(C) An annual fee of fifteen dollars shall be charged for each special registration plate issued pursuant to this subdivision, which is in addition to all other fees required by this chapter.

(5) Honorably discharged veterans may be issued special registration plates as follows:

(A) Upon appropriate application, there shall be issued to any honorably discharged veteran, of any branch of the armed services of the United States, a special registration plate for any number of vehicles titled in the name of the qualified applicant with an insignia designed by the commissioner of the division of motor vehicles.

(B) A special initial application fee of ten dollars shall be charged in addition to all other fees required by law. This special fee is to compensate the division of motor vehicles for additional costs and services required in the issuing of the special registration and shall be collected by
the division and deposited in a special revolving fund to be used for the administration of this section: Provided, That nothing in this section may be construed to exempt any veteran from any other provision of this chapter.

(C) A surviving spouse may continue to use his or her deceased spouse’s honorably discharged veterans license plate until the surviving spouse dies, remarries or does not renew the license plate.

(6) Disabled veterans may be issued special registration plates as follows:

(A) Upon appropriate application, there shall be issued to any disabled veteran, who is exempt from the payment of registration fees under the provisions of this chapter, a registration plate for a vehicle titled in the name of the qualified applicant which bears the letters “DV” in red and also the regular identification numerals in red.

(B) A surviving spouse may continue to use his or her deceased spouse’s disabled veterans license plate until the surviving spouse dies, remarries or does not renew the license plate.

(C) A qualified disabled veteran may obtain a second disabled veteran license plate as described in this section for use on a passenger vehicle titled in the name of the qualified applicant. An annual fee of fifteen dollars, in addition to all other fees required by this chapter, shall be charged for the second plate.

(7) Recipients of the distinguished purple heart medal may be issued special registration plates as follows:

(A) Upon appropriate application, there shall be issued to any armed service person holding the distinguished purple heart medal for persons wounded in combat a registration plate for a vehicle titled in the name of the qualified applicant bearing letters or numbers. The registration plate shall be designed by the commissioner of motor vehicles and shall denote that those individuals who are granted this special registration plate are
recipients of the purple heart. All letterings shall be in purple where practical.

(B) Registration plates issued pursuant to this subdivision are exempt from all registration fees otherwise required by the provisions of this chapter.

(C) A surviving spouse may continue to use his or her deceased spouse’s purple heart medal license plate until the surviving spouse dies, remarries or does not renew the license plate.

(D) A recipient of the purple heart medal may obtain a second purple heart medal license plate as described in this section for use on a passenger vehicle titled in the name of the qualified applicant. An annual fee of fifteen dollars, in addition to all other fees required by this chapter, shall be charged for the second plate.

(8) Survivors of the attack on Pearl Harbor may be issued special registration plates as follows:

(A) Upon appropriate application, the owner of a motor vehicle who was enlisted in any branch of the armed services that participated in and survived the attack on Pearl Harbor on the seventh day of December, one thousand nine hundred forty-one, shall be issued a special registration plate for a vehicle titled in the name of the qualified applicant. The registration plate shall be designed by the commissioner of motor vehicles.

(B) Registration plates issued pursuant to this subdivision are exempt from the payment of all registration fees otherwise required by the provisions of this chapter.

(C) A surviving spouse may continue to use his or her deceased spouse’s survivors of the attack on Pearl Harbor license plate until the surviving spouse dies, remarries or does not renew the license plate.

(D) A survivor of the attack on Pearl Harbor may obtain a second survivors of the attack on Pearl Harbor license plate as described in this section for use on a passenger vehicle titled in the name of the qualified
applicant. An annual fee of fifteen dollars, in addition to all other fees required by this chapter, shall be charged for the second plate.

(9) Nonprofit charitable and educational organizations may be issued special registration plates as follows:

(A) Nonprofit charitable and educational organizations may design a logo or emblem for inclusion on a special registration plate and submit the logo or emblem to the commissioner for approval and authorization. Upon the approval and authorization, the nonprofit charitable and educational organizations may market the special registration plate to organization members and the general public.

(B) Approved nonprofit charitable and educational organizations may accept and collect applications for special registration plates from owners of Class A motor vehicles together with a special annual fee of fifteen dollars, which is in addition to all other fees required by this chapter. The applications and fees shall be submitted to the division of motor vehicles with the request that the division issue a registration plate bearing a combination of letters or numbers with the organizations’ logo or emblem, with the maximum number of letters or numbers to be determined by the commissioner.

(C) The commissioner shall propose rules for legislative approval in accordance with the provisions of chapter twenty-nine-a of this code regarding the procedures for and approval of special registration plates issued pursuant to this subdivision.

(D) The commissioner shall set an appropriate fee to defray the administrative costs associated with designing and manufacturing special registration plates for a nonprofit charitable or educational organization. The nonprofit charitable or educational organization shall collect this fee and forward it to the division for deposit in a special revolving fund to pay the administrative costs. The nonprofit charitable or educational organization may also collect a fee for marketing the special registration plates.
Specified emergency or volunteer registration plates may be issued as follows:

(A) Any owner of a motor vehicle who is a resident of the state of West Virginia and who is a certified paramedic or emergency medical technician, a member of a volunteer fire company or a paid fire department, a member of the state fire commission, the state fire marshal, the state fire marshal's assistants, the state fire administrator and voluntary rescue squad members may apply for a special license plate for any number of Class A vehicles titled in the name of the qualified applicant which bears the insignia of the profession, group or commission. Any insignia shall be designed by the commissioner. License plates issued pursuant to this subdivision shall bear the requested insignia in addition to the registration number issued to the applicant pursuant to the provisions of this article.

(B) Each application submitted pursuant to this subdivision shall be accompanied by an affidavit signed by the fire chief or department head of the applicant stating that the applicant is justified in having a registration with the requested insignia; proof of compliance with all laws of this state regarding registration and licensure of motor vehicles; and payment of all required fees.

(C) Each application submitted pursuant to this subdivision shall be accompanied by payment of a special initial application fee of ten dollars, which is in addition to any other registration or license fee required by this chapter. All special fees shall be collected by the division and deposited into a special revolving fund to be used for the purpose of compensating the division of motor vehicles for additional costs and services required in the issuing of the special registration and for the administration of this section.

(11) Special scenic registration plates:

(A) Upon appropriate application, the commissioner shall issue a special registration plate displaying a scenic design of West Virginia no later than the first day of
January, one thousand nine hundred ninety-six. This special plate shall display the words “Wild Wonderful” as a slogan.

(B) A special one-time initial application fee of ten dollars shall be charged in addition to all other fees required by this chapter. All initial application fees collected by the division shall be deposited into a special revolving fund to be used in the administration of this chapter.

(12) Honorably discharged marine corps league members may be issued special registration plates as follows:

(A) Upon appropriate application, there shall be issued to any honorably discharged marine corps league member, a special registration plate for any number of vehicles titled in the name of the qualified applicant with an insignia designed by the commissioner of the division of motor vehicles.

(B) A special one-time initial application fee of ten dollars shall be charged in addition to all other fees required by this chapter. This special fee is to compensate the division of motor vehicles for additional costs and services required in the issuing of the special registration and shall be collected by the division and deposited in a special revolving fund to be used for the administration of this section: Provided, That nothing in this section may be construed to exempt any veteran from any other provision of this chapter.

(C) A surviving spouse may continue to use his or her deceased spouse’s honorably discharged marine corps league license plate until the surviving spouse dies, remarries or does not renew the license plate.

(13) Military organization registration plates:

(A) The division may issue a special registration plate for the members of any military organization chartered by the United States Congress upon receipt of a guarantee from such organization of a minimum of one hundred
applicants. The insignia on the plate shall be designed by
the commissioner.

(B) Upon appropriate application, members of the
chartered organization in good standing, as determined by
the governing body of the chartered organization, may be
issued a special registration plate for any number of
vehicles titled in the name of the qualified applicant.

(C) A special one-time initial application fee of ten
dollars shall be charged for each special licence plate in
addition to all other fees required by this chapter. All
initial application fees collected by the division shall be
deposited into a special revolving fund to be used in the
administration of this chapter: Provided, That nothing in
this section may be construed to exempt any veteran from
any other provision of this chapter.

(D) A surviving spouse may continue to use his or her
deceased spouse's military organization registration plate
until the surviving spouse dies, remarries or does not
renew the special military organization registration plate.

(14) Special nongame wildlife registration plates:

(A) Upon appropriate application, the division shall
issue a special registration plate displaying a species of
West Virginia nongame wildlife no later than the first day
of January, one thousand nine hundred ninety-eight. This
special plate shall display a species of nongame wildlife
native to West Virginia as prescribed and designated by
the commissioner and the director of the division of
natural resources.

(B) An annual fee of fifteen dollars shall be charged
for each special nongame wildlife registration plate in
addition to all other fees required by this chapter. All
annual fees collected for nongame wildlife registration
plates shall be deposited in a special revenue account
designated the nongame wildlife fund and credited to the
division of natural resources.

(C) A special one-time initial application fee of ten
dollars shall be charged in addition to all other fees
required by this chapter. All initial application fees
(15) Members of the silver haired legislature may be issued special registration plates as follows:

(A) Upon appropriate application, there shall be issued to any person who is a duly qualified member of the silver haired legislature a specialized registration plate which bears recognition of the applicant as a member of the silver haired legislature.

(B) A qualified member of the silver haired legislature may obtain one registration plate described in this subdivision for use on a passenger vehicle titled in the name of the qualified applicant. An annual fee of fifteen dollars, in addition to all other fees required by this chapter, shall be charged for the plate. All annual fees collected by the division shall be deposited in a special revolving fund to be used in the administration of this chapter.

(d) The commissioner shall propose rules for legislative approval in accordance with the provisions of chapter twenty-nine-a of this code regarding the proper forms to be used in making application for the special license plates authorized by this section.

(e) (1) Nothing in this section may be construed to require a charge for a free prisoner of war license plate or a free recipient of the congressional medal of honor license plate for a vehicle titled in the name of the qualified applicant as authorized by other provisions of this code.

(2) A surviving spouse may continue to use his or her deceased spouse's prisoner of war or congressional medal of honor license plate until the surviving spouse dies, remarries or does not renew the license plate.

(3) Qualified former prisoners of war and recipients of the congressional medal of honor may obtain a second special registration plate for use on a passenger vehicle titled in the name of the qualified applicant. An annual
fee of fifteen dollars, in addition to all other fees required
by this chapter, shall be charged for the second special
plate.

(f) Special ten-year registration plates may be issued
as follows:

(1) The commissioner may issue or renew for a period
of no more than ten years any registration plate exempted
from registration fees pursuant to any provision of this
code or any restricted use antique motor vehicle license
plate authorized by section three-a, article ten of this
chapter: Provided, That the provisions of this subsection
do not apply to any person who has had a special
registration suspended for failure to maintain motor
vehicle liability insurance as required by section three,
article two-a, chapter seventeen-d of this code or failure to
pay personal property taxes as required by section three-a
of this article.

(2) An initial nonrefundable fee shall be charged for
each special registration plate issued pursuant to this
subsection, which is the total amount of fees required by
section fifteen, article ten of this chapter, section three,
article three of this chapter or section three-a, article ten of
this chapter for the period requested.

(g) The provisions of this section may not be
construed to exempt any registrant from maintaining
motor vehicle liability insurance as required by section
three, article two-a, chapter seventeen-d of this code or
from paying personal property taxes on any motor vehicle
as required by section three-a of this article.

(h) The commissioner may, in his or her discretion,
issue a registration plate of reflectorized material suitable
for permanent use on motor vehicles, trailers and
semitrailers, together with appropriate devices to be
attached thereto to indicate the year for which the vehicles
have been properly registered or the date of expiration of
the registration. The design and expiration of the plates
shall be determined by the commissioner.
(i) Any license plate issued or renewed pursuant to this chapter, which is paid for by a check that is returned for nonsufficient funds, is void without further notice to the applicant. The applicant may not reinstate the registration until the returned check is paid by the applicant in cash, money order or certified check and all applicable fees assessed as a result thereof have been paid.
The Joint Committee on Enrolled Bills hereby certifies that the foregoing bill is correctly enrolled.

Chairman Senate Committee

Chairman House Committee

Originating in the House.

Takes effect ninety days from passage.

Clerk of the Senate

Clerk of the House of Delegates

President of the Senate

Speaker of the House of Delegates

The within is approved this the 18th day of May, 1997.

Governor