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WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

SECOND REGULAR SESSION, 2000

ENROLLED

House Bill No. 4806

(By Delegates Staton, Faircloth, Hunt, Wills, Linch, Hines and Mahan)

Passed March 11, 2000

In Effect Ninety Days from Passage

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Personal Parts

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ENROLLED

H. B. 4806

(By Delegates Staton, Faircloth, Hunt, Wills, Linch, Hines and Mahan)

[Passed March 11, 2000; in effect ninety days from passage.]

AN ACT to amend and reenact sections fourteen and twenty-three, article three, chapter seventeen-a of the code of West Virginia, one thousand nine hundred thirty-one, as amended, relating to registration plates generally; types of plates; issuance of special registration plates for certain state officials; class G motorcycle plates; limitations; issuance of license plates for use on state vehicles; and authorizing the commissioner of motor vehicles to issue an unlimited number of Class A license plates to the commission on special investigations for state-owned vehicles used for official undercover work.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

That section fourteen and twenty-three, 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.
 - 1 (a) The division upon registering a vehicle shall issue to the 2 owner one registration plate for a motorcycle, trailer, 3 semitrailer or other motor vehicle.
 - 4 (b) Registration plates issued by the division shall meet the 5 following requirements:
- 6 (1) Every registration plate shall be of reflectorized material 7 and have displayed upon it the registration number assigned to 8 the vehicle for which it is issued; the name of this state, which 9 may be abbreviated; and the year number for which it is issued 10 or the date of expiration of the plate.
- 12 (2) Every registration plate and the required letters and 12 numerals on the plate shall be of sufficient size to be plainly 13 readable from a distance of one hundred feet during daylight: 14 *Provided*, That the requirements of this subdivision shall not 15 apply to the year number for which the plate is issued or the 16 date of expiration.
- 17 (3) Registration numbering for registration plates shall begin with number two.
- 19 (c) The division may not issue, permit to be issued or 20 distribute any special registration plates except as follows:
- 21 (1) The governor shall be issued two registration plates, on 22 one of which shall be imprinted the numeral one and on the 23 other the word one.

- (2) State officials and judges may be issued special registra tion plates as follows:
- 26 (A) Upon appropriate application, there shall be issued to 27 the secretary of state, state superintendent of schools, auditor, 28 treasurer, commissioner of agriculture and the attorney general, 29 the members of both houses of the Legislature, including the 30 elected officials thereof, the justices of the supreme court of 31 appeals of West Virginia, the representatives and senators of the 32 state in the Congress of the United States, the judges of the 33 United States district courts for the state of West Virginia and 34 the judges of the United States court of appeals for the fourth 35 circuit, if any of the judges are residents of West Virginia, a 36 special registration plate for a Class A motor vehicle and a 37 special registration plate for a Class G motorcycle owned by the 38 official or his or her spouse: *Provided*, That the division may 39 not issue more than two Class A special registration plates and two Class G special registration plates for each official. 40
 - (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.

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- 48 (C) An annual fee of fifteen dollars shall be charged for 49 every registration plate issued pursuant to this subdivision, 50 which is in addition to all other fees required by this chapter.
- 51 (3) Members of the national guard forces may be issued 52 special registration plates as follows:
- 53 (A) Upon receipt of an application on a form prescribed by 54 the division and receipt of written evidence from the chief 55 executive officer of the army national guard or air national

- 56 guard, as appropriate, or the commanding officer of any United
- 57 States armed forces reserve unit that the applicant is a member
- 58 thereof, the division shall issue to any member of the national
- 59 guard of this state or a member of any reserve unit of the United
- 60 States armed forces a special registration plate designed by the
- 61 commissioner for any number of Class A motor vehicles owned
- 62 by the member.
- 63 (B) An initial application fee of ten dollars shall be charged 64 for each special registration plate issued pursuant to this 65 subdivision, which is in addition to all other fees required by 66 this chapter. All initial application fees collected by the division 67 shall be deposited into a special revolving fund to be used in the 68 administration of this section.
- 69 (C) A surviving spouse may continue to use his or her 70 deceased spouse's national guard forces license plate until the 71 surviving spouse dies, remarries or does not renew the license 72 plate.
- 73 (4) Specially arranged registration plates may be issued as 74 follows:
- 75 (A) Upon appropriate application, any owner of a motor 76 vehicle subject to Class A registration, or a motorcycle subject 77 to Class G registration, as defined by this article, may request 78 that the division issue a registration plate bearing specially 79 arranged letters or numbers with the maximum number of 80 letters or numbers to be determined by the commissioner. The 81 division shall attempt to comply with the request wherever 82 possible.
- 83 (B) The commissioner shall propose rules for legislative 84 approval in accordance with the provisions of chapter 85 twenty-nine-a of this code regarding the orderly distribution of 86 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.
- 89 (C) An annual fee of fifteen dollars shall be charged for 90 each special registration plate issued pursuant to this subdivi-91 sion, which is in addition to all other fees required by this 92 chapter.
- 93 (5) Honorably discharged veterans may be issued special registration plates as follows:

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- (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.
- 110 (C) A surviving spouse may continue to use his or her 111 deceased spouse's honorably discharged veterans license plate 112 until the surviving spouse dies, remarries or does not renew the 113 license plate.
- 114 (6) Disabled veterans may be issued special registration 115 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.
- 122 (B) A surviving spouse may continue to use his or her 123 deceased spouse's disabled veterans license plate until the 124 surviving spouse dies, remarries or does not renew the license 125 plate.
- 126 (C) A qualified disabled veteran may obtain a second 127 disabled veteran license plate as described in this section for 128 use on a passenger vehicle titled in the name of the qualified 129 applicant. An annual fee of fifteen dollars, in addition to all 130 other fees required by this chapter, shall be charged for the 131 second plate.
- 132 (7) Recipients of the distinguished purple heart medal may 133 be issued special registration plates as follows:
- 134 (A) Upon appropriate application, there shall be issued to 135 any armed service person holding the distinguished purple heart 136 medal for persons wounded in combat a registration plate for a 137 vehicle titled in the name of the qualified applicant bearing 138 letters or numbers. The registration plate shall be designed by 139 the commissioner of motor vehicles and shall denote that those 140 individuals who are granted this special registration plate are 141 recipients of the purple heart. All letterings shall be in purple 142 where practical.
- 143 (B) Registration plates issued pursuant to this subdivision 144 are exempt from all registration fees otherwise required by the 145 provisions of this chapter.

146 (C) A surviving spouse may continue to use his or her 147 deceased spouse's purple heart medal license plate until the 148 surviving spouse dies, remarries or does not renew the license 149 plate.

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- 150 (D) A recipient of the purple heart medal may obtain a second purple heart medal license plate as described in this 152 section for use on a passenger vehicle titled in the name of the qualified applicant. An annual fee of fifteen dollars, in addition 154 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 fortyone, 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.
- 165 (B) Registration plates issued pursuant to this subdivision 166 are exempt from the payment of all registration fees otherwise required by the provisions of this chapter.
- 168 (C) A surviving spouse may continue to use his or her 169 deceased spouse's survivors of the attack on Pearl Harbor 170 license plate until the surviving spouse dies, remarries or does 171 not renew the license plate.
- 172 (D) A survivor of the attack on Pearl Harbor may obtain a 173 second survivors of the attack on Pearl Harbor license plate as 174 described in this section for use on a passenger vehicle titled in 175 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.
- 178 (9) Nonprofit charitable and educational organizations 179 previously authorized may be issued special registration plates 180 as follows:
- (A) Nonprofit charitable and educational organizations authorized under the program established under the prior enactment of this subdivision may continue to market the special registration plate previously approved to organization members and the general public. However, after the effective date of the reenactment of this section, the commissioner shall not approve or authorize any additional nonprofit charitable and educational organizations to design or market registration license plates.
 - (B) Approved nonprofit charitable and educational organizations authorized under the prior enactment of this subdivision 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 manufac-

- turing 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.
- 215 (10) Specified emergency or volunteer registration plates 216 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.
- 238 (C) Each application submitted pursuant to this subdivision 239 shall be accompanied by payment of a special initial application

- 240 fee of ten dollars, which is in addition to any other registration
- 241 or license fee required by this chapter. All special fees shall be
- 242 collected by the division and deposited into a special revolving
- 243 fund to be used for the purpose of compensating the division of
- 244 motor vehicles for additional costs and services required in the
- 245 issuing of the special registration and for the administration of
- 246 this section.
- 247 (11) Special scenic registration plates:
- 248 (A) Upon appropriate application, the commissioner shall
- 249 issue a special registration plate displaying a scenic design of
- 250 West Virginia no later than the first day of January, one
- 251 thousand nine hundred ninety-six. This special plate shall
- 252 display the words "Wild Wonderful" as a slogan.
- 253 (B) A special one-time initial application fee of ten dollars
- 254 shall be charged in addition to all other fees required by this
- 255 chapter. All initial application fees collected by the division
- 256 shall be deposited into a special revolving fund to be used in the
- 257 administration of this chapter.
- 258 (12) Honorably discharged marine corps league members
- 259 may be issued special registration plates as follows:
- 260 (A) Upon appropriate application, there shall be issued to
- 261 any honorably discharged marine corps league member a
- special registration plate for any number of vehicles titled in the
- 263 name of the qualified applicant with an insignia designed by the
- 264 commissioner of the division of motor vehicles.
- 265 (B) A special one-time initial application fee of ten dollars
- shall be charged in addition to all other fees required by this
- 267 chapter. This special fee is to compensate the division of motor
- 268 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.
- 278 (13) Military organization registration plates:

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- (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 license 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.
- 296 (D) A surviving spouse may continue to use his or her 297 deceased spouse's military organization registration plate until 298 the surviving spouse dies, remarries or does not renew the 299 special military organization registration plate.
 - (14) Special nongame wildlife registration plates:

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- 301 (A) Upon appropriate application, the division shall issue a special registration plate displaying a species of West Virginia 303 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 306 as prescribed and designated by the commissioner and the director of the division of natural resources.
- 308 (B) An annual fee of fifteen dollars shall be charged for 309 each special nongame wildlife registration plate in addition to 310 all other fees required by this chapter. All annual fees collected 311 for nongame wildlife registration plates shall be deposited in a 312 special revenue account designated the nongame wildlife fund 313 and credited to the division of natural resources.
- 314 (C) A special one-time initial application fee of ten dollars 315 shall be charged in addition to all other fees required by this 316 chapter. All initial application fees collected by the division 317 shall be deposited in a special revolving fund to be used in the 318 administration of this chapter.
- 319 (15) Members of the silver haired legislature may be issued 320 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.
- 326 (B) A qualified member of the silver haired legislature may 327 obtain one registration plate described in this subdivision for 328 use on a passenger vehicle titled in the name of the qualified 329 applicant. An annual fee of fifteen dollars, in addition to all 330 other fees required by this chapter, shall be charged for the 331 plate. All annual fees collected by the division shall be depos-

- ited in a special revolving fund to be used in the administrationof this chapter.
- 334 (d) The commissioner shall propose rules for legislative 335 approval in accordance with the provisions of chapter 336 twenty-nine-a of this code regarding the proper forms to be 337 used in making application for the special license plates 338 authorized by this section.
- 339 (e)(1) Nothing in this section may be construed to require 340 a charge for a free prisoner of war license plate or a free 341 recipient of the congressional medal of honor license plate for 342 a vehicle titled in the name of the qualified applicant as 343 authorized by other provisions of this code.
- 344 (2) A surviving spouse may continue to use his or her 345 deceased spouse's prisoner of war or congressional medal of 346 honor license plate until the surviving spouse dies, remarries or 347 does not renew the license plate.
- 348 (3) Qualified former prisoners of war and recipients of the 349 congressional medal of honor may obtain a second special 350 registration plate for use on a passenger vehicle titled in the 351 name of the qualified applicant. An annual fee of fifteen dollars, 352 in addition to all other fees required by this chapter, shall be 353 charged for the second special plate.
- 354 (f) Special ten-year registration plates may be issued as 355 follows:
- 356 (1) The commissioner may issue or renew for a period of no 357 more than ten years any registration plate exempted from 358 registration fees pursuant to any provision of this code or any 359 restricted use antique motor vehicle license plate authorized by 360 section three-a, article ten of this chapter: *Provided,* That the 361 provisions of this subsection do not apply to any person who 362 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.
- 367 (2) An initial nonrefundable fee shall be charged for each special registration plate issued pursuant to this subsection, 369 which is the total amount of fees required by section fifteen, 370 article ten of this chapter, section three, article three of this chapter or section three-a, article ten of this chapter for the 372 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.
- 386 (i) Any license plate issued or renewed pursuant to this
 387 chapter, which is paid for by a check that is returned for
 388 nonsufficient funds, is void without further notice to the
 389 applicant. The applicant may not reinstate the registration until
 390 the returned check is paid by the applicant in cash, money order
 391 or certified check and all applicable fees assessed as a result
 392 thereof have been paid.

§17A-3-23. Registration plates to state, county, municipal and other governmental vehicles; use for undercover activities.

1 Any motor vehicle designed to carry passengers, owned or leased by the state of West Virginia, or any of its departments, bureaus, commissions or institutions, except vehicles used by 4 the governor, treasurer, three plates per elected office of the 5 board of public works, vehicles operated by the state police, 6 vehicles operated by conservation officers of the division of natural resources, not to exceed ten vehicles operated by the 8 arson investigators of the office of state fire marshal and not to exceed sixteen vehicles operated by inspectors of the office of 10 the alcohol beverage control commissioner, may not be 11 operated or driven by any person unless it has displayed and 12 attached to the front thereof, in the same manner as regular 13 motor vehicle registration plates are attached, a plate of the 14 same size as the regular registration plate, with white lettering 15 on a green background bearing the words "West Virginia" in 16 one line and the words "State Car" in another line, and the 17 lettering for the words "State Car" shall be of sufficient size to 18 be plainly readable from a distance of one hundred feet during 19 daylight.

The vehicle shall also have attached to the rear a plate bearing a number and any other words and figures as the commissioner of motor vehicles shall prescribe. The rear plate shall also be green with the number in white.

On registration plates issued to vehicles owned by counties, the color shall be white on red with the word "County" on top of the plate and the words "West Virginia" on the bottom. On any registration plates issued to a city or municipality, the color shall be white on blue with the word "City" on top, and the words "West Virginia" on the bottom. The colors may not be reversed and shall be of reflectorized material. The registration

- 31 plates issued to counties, municipalities and other governmental
- 32 agencies authorized to receive colored plates hereunder shall be
- 33 affixed to both the front and rear of the vehicles.
- The commissioner is authorized to designate the colors and design of any other registration plates that are issued without charge to any other agency in accordance with the motor
- 37 vehicle laws.
- Upon application and payment of fees, the commissioner is authorized to issue a maximum of five Class A license plates per applicant to be used by county sheriffs and municipalities on law-enforcement vehicles while engaged in undercover
- 42 investigations.
- 43 The commissioner is authorized to issue an unlimited 44 number of license plates per applicant to authorized drug and 45 violent crime task forces in the state of West Virginia when the 46 chairperson of the control group of a drug and violent crime 47 task force signs a written affidavit stating that the vehicle or 48 vehicles for which the plates are being requested will be used 49 only for official undercover work conducted by a drug and 50 violent crime task force.
- The commissioner is authorized to issue twenty Class A license plates to the criminal investigation division of the department of tax and revenue for use by its investigators.
- The commissioner may issue a maximum of ten Class A license plates to the division of natural resources for use by conservation officers. The commissioner shall designate the color and design of the registration plates to be displayed on the front and the rear of all other state-owned vehicles owned by the division of natural resources and operated by conservation officers.

- The commissioner is authorized to issue an unlimited number of Class A license plates to the commission on special investigations for state-owned vehicles used for official undercover work conducted by the commission on special investigations.
- No other registration plate may be issued for, or attached to, any state-owned vehicle.
- The commissioner of motor vehicles shall have a sufficient number of both front and rear plates produced to attach to all state-owned cars. The numbered registration plates for the vehicles shall start with the number "five hundred" and the commissioner shall issue consecutive numbers for all state-owned cars.
- It is the duty of each office, department, bureau, commission or institution furnished any vehicle to have plates as described herein affixed thereto prior to the operation of the vehicle by any official or employee.
- Any person who violates the provisions of this section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not less than fifty dollars nor more than one hundred dollars.
- Magistrates shall have concurrent jurisdiction with circuit and criminal courts for the enforcement of this section.

That Joint Committee on Enrolled Dills hereby certifies that the
foregoing bill is correctly enrolled.
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