

Senate Fiscal Agency
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SFA**BILL ANALYSIS**

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Senate Bill 737 (Substitute S-2 as reported)
Sponsor: Senator Bill Schuette
Committee: Transportation and Tourism

Date Completed: 11-23-99

RATIONALE

The Congressional Medal of Honor is the most distinguished decoration for military valor that a person in the military service can receive. As the nation's highest award for bravery, the Medal of Honor is bestowed only for extraordinary acts of heroism or self-sacrifice. In recognition of this honor, the Michigan Vehicle Code requires the Secretary of State to design a special Congressional Medal of Honor registration plate for State residents who received the Medal of Honor. A person who applies for the special plate is required to pay a vehicle registration fee, as provided in the Code. It has been suggested that, in further recognition of their service to the country, the Code should exempt recipients of the Medal of Honor from having to pay the registration fee.

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Michigan Vehicle Code to:

- **Exempt from payment of the vehicle registration fee a person who was issued a Medal of Honor specialty plate.**
- **Require an application for the specialty plate to include a \$5 service fee and proof that the person received the Congressional Medal.**
- **Provide for the issuance of a tab for persons with disabilities who applied for a Medal of Honor specialty plate.**

Currently, the Secretary of State (SOS) is required to design a special Congressional Medal of Honor registration plate for State residents who received the Congressional Medal. A special registration plate may be issued only for one vehicle intended for personal use by the applicant.

Under the bill, a person who received a Congressional Medal of Honor could apply to the Secretary of State for a special registration plate on a form prescribed by the SOS, which would have to be accompanied by any proof that the applicant had

been a Medal of Honor recipient that the SOS could require. A \$5 service fee would have to accompany the application. A person who qualified to be issued a Medal of Honor special registration plate would be entitled to only one plate that would be exempt from payment of the Code's registration fees.

A person with disabilities who applied for a Medal of Honor special registration plate would have to be issued a tab for persons with disabilities, as provided in the Code, for his or her special registration plate. The SOS would have to require the same proof that the applicant was disabled as is required under the Code for issuance of a permanent windshield placard.

A Medal of Honor special registration plate would expire on the vehicle owner's birthday in a year in which new plates were issued by the Secretary of State.

MCL 257.217d

ARGUMENTS

(Please note: The arguments contained in this analysis originate from sources outside the Senate Fiscal Agency. The Senate Fiscal Agency neither supports nor opposes legislation.)

Supporting Argument

Currently, persons who are former prisoners of war (POWs), and those who are totally disabled veterans of war, are exempt from payment of vehicle registration fees for special registration plates. The bill would extend the same exemption to recipients of the Medal of Honor. Apparently there are two Medal of Honor recipients who reside in Michigan and were honored for their acts of self-sacrifice during the Korean War. Further, as a token of appreciation for their extraordinary service, the State should exempt Medal of Honor recipients, just as former POWs and totally disabled veterans, from vehicle registration fees when they obtain a special registration plate issued in their honor.

Legislative Analyst: L. Arasim

FISCAL IMPACT

There are very few living Congressional Medal of Honor recipients in the State. The provisions of this bill would have a minimal fiscal impact on the State.

Fiscal Analyst: E. Limbs
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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.