



Senate Fiscal Agency  
P. O. Box 30036  
Lansing, Michigan 48909-7536

BILL



ANALYSIS

Telephone: (517) 373-5383  
Fax: (517) 373-1986  
TDD: (517) 373-0543

House Bill 4330 (as reported without amendment)  
Sponsor: Representative Gary Woronchak  
House Committee: Transportation  
Senate Committee: Transportation

Date Completed: 6-11-03

### **RATIONALE**

Currently, a former prisoner of war may obtain a special registration plate from the Secretary of State (SOS) by providing proof that he or she was a prisoner of war and paying a \$5 service fee. When an ex-POW dies, usually the surviving spouse takes over the title to the ex-POW's vehicle. The law, however, does not allow anyone but an ex-POW to apply for the specialty plate. Some people believe that the surviving spouse of an ex-POW should be able to retain the specialty plate.

### **CONTENT**

**The bill would amend the Michigan Vehicle Code to allow the spouse of a former prisoner of war to obtain a special registration plate; and limit the number of EX-POW registration plates to one person in any household.**

Under the Code, a person who has been a prisoner of war may apply to the SOS for a special registration plate that is inscribed with special identification numbers preceded by the letters "EX-POW", and has the words "ex-prisoner of war" beneath the registration number. Under the bill, the spouse of a person who had been a prisoner of war also could apply for the special plate.

Section 801 of the Code establishes a schedule of taxes based on empty weights that a person must pay to the SOS upon registration of a vehicle. Currently, a person is entitled to one EX-POW registration plate that is exempt from payment of the tax. Under the bill, the limit would apply to one person in any household.

MCL 257.803e

### **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**

Upon returning from the horrifying conditions of captivity, former prisoners of war must try to re-establish stable relationships with their families while struggling with the psychological stress caused by their experiences. Allowing the surviving spouse of an ex-POW to retain the specialty plate would be an appropriate way to show gratitude toward not only the military personnel who faced torture, starvation, unsanitary living conditions, and death, but also their families who supported them and may have been profoundly affected by their ordeal. The SOS would not be giving out additional tax-exempt plates, but simply allowing a surviving spouse to retain a former POW's plate.

Legislative Analyst: Julie Koval

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The bill could result in a loss in State revenue credited to the Michigan Transportation Fund (MTF) associated with the provision allowing the spouse of person who had been a prisoner of war to apply for a tax-exempt registration plate. The loss of State revenue would be contingent on the number of individuals who applied for and received a tax-exempt registration plate. The bill would limit the number of tax-exempt EX-POW plates to one per household. Currently, the Department of State reports that approximately 1,000 of these tax-exempt plates are issued annually. Each additional tax-exempt plate would reduce revenue to the MTF by \$73 (average annual passenger registration tax). Revenue in the

MTF is statutorily allocated to the Comprehensive Transportation Fund (10%), State Trunkline Fund (35%), county road commissions (35%), and cities and villages (20%). The loss in MTF revenue would be distributed based on the same percentages.

Fiscal Analyst: Craig Thiel

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