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Senate Bill 463 (as passed by the Senate)
Sponsor: Senator Bruce Caswell
Committee: Transportation

(enrolled version)

Date Completed: 11-19-13

RATIONALE

Reportedly, there has been an increased interest in collecting historic military vehicles. National and local organizations of collectors are present throughout the country. Hobbyists collect and preserve these vehicles, which are often displayed during organizational conventions and public events, such as parades. Evidently, authenticity is important to many collectors. Some older vehicles were not manufactured with provisions for attaching a registration plate. Therefore, it has been suggested that a historic military vehicle owner should not be required to attach a registration plate to the vehicle if it was not originally manufactured with plate mounting and lighting provisions.

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Michigan Vehicle Code to exclude some historic military vehicles from the requirement to attach a registration plate to a vehicle.

The Code requires a registration plate issued for a vehicle to be attached to the rear of the vehicle, although a plate issued for a truck tractor or road tractor must be attached to the front of the vehicle.

Under the bill, if a historic military vehicle that was authorized to be operated on the roads of the State had not been originally manufactured with lighting and mounting provisions for a registration plate, a registration plate would not be required to be attached to the rear or front of the vehicle. In that case, the registration plate would have to be present in the vehicle that it covered, and would have to be made available upon a police officer's demand.

"Historic military vehicle" would mean a vehicle, including a trailer, regardless of the vehicle's size, weight, or year of manufacture, that was manufactured for use in any country's military forces and is maintained to represent its military design and markings accurately.

MCL 257.225

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

The owner of a preserved and authentic historic military vehicle should not have to modify it in order to mount a registration plate on the vehicle. This impairs the authenticity of the vehicle and can take away from the historical and nostalgic effects of displaying it.

An increasing number of people are interested in collecting historic military vehicles. For example, the Military Vehicle Preservation Association began in 1978 with fewer than 100

members, but now boasts approximately 8,000 members and 100 affiliate groups. Many groups and members enjoy participating in community activities, such as parades, and displaying their vehicles for the public. The law should accommodate and encourage these hobbyists by allowing them to keep their vehicles in an authentic condition while driving the vehicles on public roads.

The bills would provide flexibility for owners of historic military vehicles that do not have provisions for registration plates, and strike a balance between these hobbyist's interests and public interests. Since these vehicles are easily recognizable, registration plates are less crucial in identifying them than plates are for other types of vehicles. An owner still would be required to carry a plate in the vehicle and present it upon a police officer's request.

In addition, in order to qualify under the bill, a vehicle would have to be authorized to operate on the public streets, which means that the bill would not apply to tanks.

Legislative Analyst: Glenn Steffens

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have no fiscal impact on State or local government. The Department of State does not anticipate that there would be any effect on the amount of revenue received from registrations of historic military vehicles as those vehicles still would be required to be registered and the registration plates would have to be carried in the vehicles.

Fiscal Analyst: Joe Carrasco

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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.