

Committee on Infrastructure and Security

HB 1135 — License Plates

by Rep. Grant, J. and others (CS/CS/SB 412 by Appropriations Committee; Infrastructure and Security Committee; and Senators Bean, Harrell, and Broxson)

The bill authorizes the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) to issue specialty license plates (SLP) for fleet and motor vehicle dealer vehicles, and establishes a cap of 150 SLPs.

The bill increases the required number of voucher sales needed within 24 months before the DHSMV will manufacture a SLP, increasing the number from 1,000 to 3,000, and requires an out-of-state college or university SLP to meet a minimum sale of 4,000 vouchers.

The bill provides that new SLPs that have been approved by law but are awaiting issuance must be issued in the order they appear in statute as long as they have met the presale requirement and any other provisions of law. If the next awaiting SLP has not met the presale requirement, the DHSMV must proceed in the order provided in statute to identify the next qualified SLP that has met the presale requirement. The DHSMV must cycle through the list in statutory order.

The bill requires the DHSMV to discontinue the SLP with the fewest number of plates in circulation, including SLPs exempt from a statutory sales requirement on January 1 of each year. For the SLPs in the bottom ten percent of sales, the bill requires the DHSMV to mail a warning letter to the sponsoring organizations on December 1 of each year.

In addition to the above discontinuance, beginning July 1, 2023, the DHSMV must discontinue the issuance of an approved SLP if the number of valid registrations falls below 3,000 plates for 12 consecutive months. The threshold for out-of-state college or university SLPs is 4,000. The DHSMV must mail a warning letter to the sponsoring organization following the first month in which the total number of registrations is below 3,000, or 4,000 for out-of-state college or university SLPs. In addition to the existing exemption from the 3,000 plate sales requirement for in-state collegiate SLPs, the bill provides exceptions from the discontinuance requirement for SLPs:

- For institutions in and entities of the State University System;
- With statutory eligibility limitations for purchase;
- For which the annual use fees are distributed by a foundation for student and teacher leadership programs and teacher recruitment and retention; and
- For Florida Professional Sports Teams.

The bill revises provisions regarding license plate design or uses of annual use fees for the following existing license plates:

- Special Olympics Florida;
- Live the Dream;
- In God We Trust;
- Fallen Law Enforcement Officers;

- Blue Angels;
- U.S. Paratroopers; and
- Gold Star.

The bill updates the reference from “Prevent Blindness Florida” to “Preserve Vision Florida” to reflect the change in the organization’s name for the distribution of a portion of the motorcycle SLP annual use fees.

The bill repeals the following SLPs that have been discontinued:

- American Red Cross;
- Support Soccer;
- Donate Organs Pass It On;
- St. Johns River; and
- Hispanic Achievers.

The bill creates the following license plates and specifies the design and the distribution of the associated annual use fees;

- Independent College or University;
- Ducks Unlimited;
- Auburn University;
- Beat Childhood Cancer;
- Walt Disney World;
- Florida 4-H;
- Donate Life Florida;
- Florida State Beekeepers Association;
- Rotary;
- Highwaymen;
- Dan Marino Campus;
- Orlando City Soccer Club;
- Daughters of the American Revolution;
- Gadsden Flag;
- America the Beautiful;
- Explore Off Road Florida;
- American Eagle;
- Guardian Ad Litem;
- Jumbo Shrimp;
- Thank A Lineman;
- Best Buddies;
- University of Georgia;
- Divine Nine;
- Florida Bay Forever;
- Bonefish and Tarpon Trust;

- Coastal Conservation Association;
- Johnson and Wales University;
- Florida Stands With Israel;
- Give Kids The World;
- Marine Corps League;
- K9s United;
- Florida Native; and
- University of Alabama.

The bill provides the Divine Nine and Independent College or University SLPs will be based on a standard template with a unique logo or graphic for each eligible entity. Individual SLP sales will be combined for meeting that standard template SLP's minimum sales threshold and for determining the SLP limit. These SLPs must be order directly from the DHSMV.

The bill creates three special use plates:

- Purple Heart motorcycle special use plate;
- Veteran motorcycle special use plate; and
- Bronze Star automobile special use plate.

The bill revises the provision related to the eligible use of fees and interest from the sale of SLPs, and requires the DHSMV to audit any SLP revenue recipient every three years if the organization is not subject to the Florida Single Audit Act. The purpose of this audit is to ensure that SLP proceeds have been used in compliance with Florida Statutes.

The bill revises the eligibility criteria for special license plates for current and former state legislators, requiring they must have served at least two years as a state senator or a state representative prior to January 1, 2021, and revises the eligibility criteria for special license plates for current and former Senate Presidents and House Speakers, requiring that they must have served as President or Speaker prior to January 1, 2021. The bill also repeals special license plates for former members of Congress.

The bill creates a permanent registration period on for-hire vehicles under nine passengers, provided payment of license taxes and fees occurs annually. It also provides that validation stickers for vehicles for hire under nine passengers may be valid for the life of a license plate, and become void if the proper license taxes and fees are not paid annually.

The bill removes existing provisions from law that delineate the \$25 annual use fee for various SLPs. The bill is linked to HB 387, a fee bill, which establishes an annual use fee of \$25 for any SLP unless the amount is otherwise specified in law.

If approved by the Governor, except as otherwise expressly provided in the bill, the bill shall take effect October 1, 2020, but only if HB 387 or similar legislation takes effect, if such legislation is adopted in the same legislative session or an extension thereof and becomes a law.

Vote: Senate 39-0; House 112-0