

**The Florida Senate**  
**BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Military Affairs and Domestic Security Committee

BILL: SB 1606

INTRODUCER: Senator Baker

SUBJECT: Veterans Special License Plates

DATE: March 7, 2008                      REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Pardue	McElroy	MS	<b>Favorable</b>
2.			TR	
3.			FT	
4.			TA	
5.				
6.				

**I. Summary:**

This bill annually redirects up to \$100,000 from the Department of Transportation to the State Homes for Veterans Trust Fund. Such funds are to be used in support of the construction, operation, and maintenance of state veterans' domiciliary and nursing homes.

The bill adds the Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom special license plates to the group of plates that will be used to generate funds under this bill.

The bill also provides for applicants registering or renewing registration of a motor vehicle to make a voluntary contribution of \$1 to the state homes for veterans.

This bill substantially amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes (F.S.): 320.089 and 320.02.

**II. Present Situation:**

The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA) administers a system of veterans' homes including one domiciliary and five nursing homes. These facilities provide assisted living and skilled nursing home care to Florida military service veterans. The system has a maximum capacity of 600 nursing home beds and 150 domiciliary beds. Planning is underway for a sixth FDVA nursing home to be located in St. John's County that will provide an additional 120 beds.

These six facilities are supported by a combination of federal funds, general revenue and state trust fund appropriations, and fees charged to residents. Federal funds cover more than 28

percent of the cost of operating the homes. Total operating expenses for the facilities during FY 2006-2007 were \$44,207,148.<sup>1</sup>

There are two categories of license plates issued by the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles that have similar names but separate purposes. They are “Specialty License Plates” and “Special License Plates or Stamped Plates.”

Specialty license plates are available to any owner or lessee of a motor vehicle who is willing to pay an annual use fee for the privilege. Annual use fees ranging from \$15 to \$25, paid in addition to required license taxes and service fees, are distributed to an organization or organizations in support of a particular cause or charity signified in the plate’s design and designated in statute. The State Homes for Veterans Trust Fund receives proceeds from the sales of specialty license plates that support the construction, operation, and maintenance of state veterans domiciliary and nursing homes.<sup>2</sup>

**State Homes for Veterans Trust Fund  
FY 2006-2007 Specialty License Fee Distributions**

Air Force	\$ 223,725
Army	\$ 259,875
Coast Guard	\$ 86,550
Florida Salutes Veterans	\$ 401,130
Navy	\$ 215,850
U. S. Paratrooper	\$ 91,620
U. S. Marine Corps	\$ 188,920*
Support Our Troops	\$ 0**

Source: Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles except as otherwise noted.

\*Note – The U. S. Marine Corps specialty license plate fee proceeds distribution formula was revised during the 2007 Legislative Session effective July 1, 2007. This figure represents a projected distribution for FY 2007-2008 prepared by Senate committee staff and is not an actual distribution for FY 2006-2007.

\*\*Note – The Support Our Troops specialty license plate was newly authorized during the 2007 Legislative Session. An estimate of the distribution to the trust fund is not available at this time.

Special license plates or stamped plates are issued by the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles based on certain qualifying criteria. The Governor, members of Congress and the Legislature<sup>3</sup>, members of the National Guard and U. S. Armed Forces Reserve, Pearl Harbor survivors, combat wounded veterans awarded the Purple Heart, and veterans of service in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom qualify for special license plates. License taxes for these special plates are the same as any other motor vehicle plate as prescribed in s. 320.08, F.S.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs Annual Report July 1, 2006—June 30, 2007 dated December 31, 2007, [http://www.floridavets.org/pdf/ann\\_rprt\\_07.pdf](http://www.floridavets.org/pdf/ann_rprt_07.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Sections 320.08058 and 320.0891, F.S.

<sup>3</sup> Note – Special license plates issued the Governor and federal and state legislators under s. 320.0807, F.S., are also subject to the personalized prestige license plate fee of \$10 under s. 320.0805, F.S.

<sup>4</sup> Sections 320.089 and 320.087, F.S.

The first \$100,000 in general revenue raised each year from the sale of National Guard, U. S. Reserve, Pearl Harbor Survivor, and Combat Wounded Veteran special license plates is distributed to the Grants and Donations Trust Fund as described in s. 296.38 (2), F.S., the Veterans' Home of Florida Act.<sup>5</sup> The Florida Department of Transportation is the primary recipient of the remaining proceeds from these and all other special license plates.

Section 320.02, F.S., provides a means for persons wishing to make a designated voluntary contribution in support of certain organization or purposes when registering or renewing registration of a motor vehicle. Contributions range from \$1 to \$5 per registration or renewal depending on the organization or purpose. Recipients of the contributions include the following:

- The Nongame Wildlife Trust Fund;
- The Election Campaign Financing Trust Fund;
- The Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund;
- Prevent Blindness Florida;
- Florida Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Inc.;
- Southeastern Guide Dogs, Inc.;
- The Miami Research Institute, Inc., Stop Heart Disease; and
- The Children's Hearing Help Fund.

### **III. Effect of Proposed Changes:**

This bill substantially amends s. 320.089, F.S. Under this bill, there will be no change to the distribution of the first \$100,000 in general revenue to the Grants and Donations Trust Fund. The bill redirects up to \$100,000 of additional proceeds from the sales of National Guard, U. S. Reserve, Pearl Harbor Survivor, Combat Wounded Veteran, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation Enduring Freedom special license plates from general revenue from the Department of Transportation to the State Homes for Veterans Trust Fund. Such funds are to be used solely for the construction, operation, and maintenance of state domiciliary and nursing homes for veterans.

The bill deletes a reference to the National Guard, Pearl Harbor Survivor, Combat Wounded Veteran, and U. S. Reserve special license plates in s. 320.089 (1) (b), F.S. The effect of this deletion is to include the Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom special license plates to the group of plates generating proceeds which will be subject to the bill's proposed redirection.

The bill also amends s. 320.02, F.S. to permit applicants registering or renewing registration of a motor vehicle to make a voluntary contribution of \$1 to the state homes for veterans. Such contributions are to be distributed quarterly to the State Homes for Veterans Trust Fund and administered by the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

The bill provides for an effective date of July 1, 2008.

---

<sup>5</sup> Section 320.089, F.S.

**IV. Constitutional Issues:**

## A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

## B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

## C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

**V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**

## A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

## B. Private Sector Impact:

Persons registering or renewing registration for motor vehicles may voluntarily make an additional \$1 contribution to support state homes for veterans. The total anticipated proceeds for such contributions is unknown at this time.

## C. Government Sector Impact:

The effect of this bill will be to reduce revenues to the Department of Transportation by up to \$100,000 annually and redirect that amount to the State Homes for Veterans Trust Fund.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Additional Information:**

## A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.

---

This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.

---