

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 Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security

BILL: SB 112

INTRODUCER: Senator Hays

SUBJECT: Special License Plates

DATE: January 20, 2015 REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Sanders	Ryon	MS	Pre-meeting
2.			TR	
3.			ATD	
4.			FP	

I. Summary:

SB 112 creates a special use license plate for recipients of the Distinguished Flying Cross medal. Revenue generated from the sale of the Distinguished Flying Cross license plate will be deposited into the Grants and Donations Trust Fund and the State Homes for Veterans Trust Fund to support the State Veterans' Homes Program.

II. Present Situation:

Special Use License Plates

Current law provides for several types of license plates. In addition to plates issued for governmental or business purposes, the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) offers four basic types of plates to the general public:

- Standard plates;
- Specialty license plates;
- Personalized prestige license plates;
- Special use license plates.

Certain members of the general public may be eligible to apply for special use license plates if they are able to document their eligibility pursuant to various sections of ch. 320, F.S. Special use license plates primarily include special use military license plates as well as plates for the handicapped.

Currently, there are 15 special use license plates authorized in s. 320.089, F.S., available to military service members or veterans for the following types of service:¹

¹ s. 320.089, F.S.

- Veteran of the United States Armed Forces;
- Active or retired member of the Florida National Guard;
- Survivor of the attack on Pearl Harbor;
- Recipient of the Purple Heart Medal;
- Active or retired member of any branch of the United States Armed Forces Reserve;
- Recipient of the Combat Infantry Badge;
- Recipient of the Combat Medical Badge;
- Recipient of the Combat Action Badge;
- Former Prisoner of War;
- Veteran of the Korean War;
- Veteran of the Vietnam War;
- Service member or veteran of Operation Desert Shield;
- Service member or veteran of Operation Desert Storm;
- Service member or veteran of Operation Enduring Freedom;
- Service member or veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Special use license plates authorized under s. 320.089, F.S., are each stamped with words consistent with the type of special use plate issued. For example, a special use plate issued to a current or former member of the Florida National Guard is stamped with the words “National Guard.” Additionally, a likeness of the related campaign medal or badge appears on the plate followed by the serial number.

Applicants for special use license plates in s. 320.089, F.S., are required to pay the annual license tax in s. 320.08, F.S., with the exception of certain disabled veterans who qualify for the Pearl Harbor, Purple Heart, or Prisoner of War plate, to whom such plates are issued at no cost.² The first \$100,000 of the general revenue generated annually from the issuance of special use plates is deposited into the Grants and Donations Trust Fund under the Veterans’ Nursing Homes of Florida Act, as described in s. 296.38(2), F.S.³ Any additional general revenue is deposited into the State Homes for Veterans Trust Fund and used to construct, operate, and maintain domiciliary and nursing homes for veterans.⁴ For fiscal year 2013-2014 the total revenue from these plates was \$2,087,743.⁵

Distinguished Flying Cross

America’s oldest military aviation award, the Distinguished Flying Cross, was created in the Air Corps Act by the United States Congress on July 2, 1926. It is a U.S. military decoration awarded to an individual recipient, an aviator, who distinguished himself by heroism or extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight.⁶ It is unknown exactly how many Distinguished Flying Cross medals have been awarded. Eligibility is dependent on service after April 6, 1917 in an Air Corps of either the United States Armed Forces or Armed Forces Reserves. The medal is not limited to combat operations and may be awarded for achievement

² s. 320.089(2)(a), F.S.

³ s. 320.089(1)(b), F.S.

⁴ Id.

⁵ Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs, 2015 Agency Bill Analysis: SB 112

⁶ Pub. L. No. 446, (1926).

during times of peace. The Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps are authorized to use the “V” device, or “Combat V”, which denotes that the medal was awarded for heroism.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill amends s. 320.089, F.S., to create a special use license plate for recipients of the Distinguished Flying Cross to purchase. The plate will be stamped with the words “Distinguished Flying Cross” with an image of the medal, followed by the serial number. Revenue generated from the sale of the Distinguished Flying Cross license plate will be administered in the same manner as the existing special use license plates in s. 320.089, F.S., and deposited into the Grants and Donations Trust Fund and the State Homes for Veterans Trust Fund to support the State Veterans’ Homes Program.

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2015.

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:

A special use license plate would be available to a new group of registrants who are recipients of the Distinguished Flying Cross. The cost for an eligible individual to purchase the Distinguished Flying Cross plate will range from \$45-\$75.⁷

C. Government Sector Impact:

According to the DHSMV, the initial startup cost to create and manufacture the Distinguished Flying Cross special use license plate would be \$6,204. An initial order of 2,200 license plates would be made ($2,200 \times \$2.82 = \$6,204$) and distributed to Tax

⁷ E-mail correspondence with DHSMV on January 16, 2015. On file with Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security Committee.

Collector offices statewide to meet public demand. DHSMV also estimates 130 non-recurring programming hours will be needed to create the plate at an estimated cost of \$5,200. According to DHSMV, this cost can be absorbed with existing resources.⁸

Additionally, the bill could have a positive impact on the State Homes for Veteran's Trust Fund with the sale of the new Distinguished Flying Cross special use plate.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill amends section 320.089 of the Florida Statutes.

IX. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of 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.

⁸ Id.