

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 Appropriations Committee on Transportation, Tourism, and Economic Development

BILL: CS/SB 1024

INTRODUCER: Transportation Committee and Senator Burgess

SUBJECT: Specialty License Plates/United States Naval Academy and United States Military Academy

DATE: April 9, 2025

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Shutes</u>	<u>Vickers</u>	<u>TR</u>	<u>Fav/CS</u>
2.	<u>Wells</u>	<u>Nortelus</u>	<u>ATD</u>	<u>Pre-meeting</u>
3.	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u>FP</u>	<u> </u>

Please see Section IX. for Additional Information:

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE - Substantial Changes

I. Summary:

CS/SB 1024 authorizes the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) to create two new specialty license plates: United States Naval Academy and United States Military Academy. The annual use fee for each plate is \$25.

Proceeds of the sale of the United States Naval Academy specialty license plate will be distributed to the Blue Angels Foundation, Inc., which may use up to 10 percent of the fees for administrative costs related to the promotion and marketing of the plate. The balance of the fees must be used by the Blue Angels Foundation, Inc., to provide funding to wounded veterans for critical services, with a focus on transitional housing, post-traumatic stress treatment, and suicide prevention.

Proceeds of the sale of the United States Military Academy specialty license plate will be distributed to the Home Base Florida Foundation, which may use up to 10 percent of the fees for administrative costs related to the promotion and the marketing of the plate. The balance of the fees must be used by the Home Base Florida Foundation, to assist in world-class clinical care, wellness, education, and research, for veterans, service members, and their families who need more complex care.

The estimated fiscal impact associated with the implementation of two new specialty license plates is \$16,560. **See Section V., Fiscal Impact Statement.**

The bill takes effect October 1, 2025.

II. Present Situation:

Blue Angels Foundation, Inc.

The Blue Angels Foundation, Inc., is a Florida not-for-profit corporation registered with the Florida Department of State.¹ The mission of the foundation is to support wounded veterans by providing funding for critical services and access to the best care available in the nation as they transition back to the civilian community.² The foundation's focus is on transitional housing, post-traumatic stress treatment, and suicide prevention.³

Home Base Florida Foundation

Home Base Florida is a Florida chapter of a Massachusetts-based national organization that is dedicated to healing the invisible wounds of war – such as post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, anxiety, depression, and co-occurring substance use – for veterans, service members, and their families through world-class clinical care, wellness, education, and research.⁴ Through key partnerships and philanthropic support, they help eliminate the financial barrier to accessing high-quality care. All services are provided at no cost to the participant.⁵

Specialty License Plates

According to the DHSMV, as of February 2025, there are 133 specialty license plates authorized by the Legislature. Of these plates, 113 are available for immediate purchase and 20 are in the presale process. Specialty license plates are available to an owner or lessee of a motor vehicle who is willing to pay an annual use fee, ranging from \$15 to \$25, paid in addition to required license taxes and service fees.⁶ The annual use fees are distributed to organizations in support of a particular cause or charity signified on the plate's design and designated in statute.⁷

In order to establish a specialty license plate (after the plate is approved by law) s. 320.08053, F.S., requires the following actions within certain timelines:

- Within 60 days, the organization must submit an art design for the plate, in a medium prescribed by the DHSMV;
- Within 120 days, the DHSMV must establish a method to issue presale vouchers for the specialty license plate; and

¹ Florida Department of State: Division of Corporations, *Blue Angels Foundation, Inc.* Sunbiz.org, Document number N11000005457 (March 18, 2025).

² Blue Angels Foundation, [Mission Statement - Blue Angels Foundation of Pensacola, FL](#) (last visited March 18, 2025)

³ *Id.*

⁴ Home Base Florida, [Home Base Florida | Home Base](#) (last visited March 18, 2025)

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ Section 320.08056(3)(d), F.S., provides that except if specifically provided in s. 320.08056(4), the annual use fee for a specialty license plate is \$25.

⁷ Section 320.08058, F.S.

- Within 24 months after the presale vouchers are established, the organization must obtain a minimum of 3,000 voucher sales before manufacturing of the plate may begin.⁸

If the minimum sales requirement has not been met by the end of the 24-month presale period, then the DHSMV will discontinue the plate and issuance of presale vouchers.⁹ Upon discontinuation, a purchaser of a presale voucher may use the annual use fee as a credit towards any other specialty license plate or apply for a refund with the DHSMV.¹⁰

New specialty license plates that have been approved by law but are awaiting issuance will be issued in the order they appear in s. 320.08058, F.S., provided that presale requirements have been met. If the next listed specialty license plate has not met the presale requirement, the DHSMV will proceed in the order provided in s. 320.08058, F.S., to identify the next qualified specialty license plate that has met the presale requirement.¹¹

If the Legislature has approved 135 or more specialty license plates, the DHSMV may not make any new specialty license plates available for design or issuance until a sufficient number of plates are discontinued so that the number of plates being issued does not exceed 135.¹²

Use of Specialty License Plate Fees

The annual use fees collected by an organization and any interest earned from the fees may be expended only for use in this state unless the annual use fee is derived from the sale of specified United States Armed Forces and veterans-related specialty plates.¹³ Additionally, organizations must adhere to certain accountability requirements, including an annual audit or attestation document affirming that funds received have been spent in accordance with applicable statutes.¹⁴

The annual use fees collected by an organization and the interest earned from those fees may not be used for commercial or for-profit activities, or general or administrative expenses, unless authorized by s. 320.08058, F.S.¹⁵ Additionally, the annual use fees and interest earned from those fees may not be used for the purpose of marketing to, or lobbying, entertaining, or rewarding, any employee of a governmental agency that is responsible for the sale and distribution of specialty license plates, or any elected member or employee of the Legislature.¹⁶

⁸ Chapter 2022-189, Laws of Fla., extended the presale requirement by an additional 24 months for an approved specialty license plate organization that, as of June 15, 2022, is in the presale period but had not recorded at least 3,000 voucher sales.

⁹ Section 320.08058(3), F.S., provides that any collegiate plate established after October 1, 2002, must comply with the requirements of s. 320.08053, F.S., other than the presale voucher requirements in s. 320.08053(2)(b), F.S., and be specifically authorized by the Legislature.

¹⁰ Section 320.08053(2)(b), F.S.

¹¹ Section 320.08053(3)(a), F.S.

¹² Section 320.08053(3)(b), F.S.

¹³ Section 320.08056(10)(a), F.S.

¹⁴ Section 320.08062, F.S.; Such fees may be used to pay for the cost of this required audit or report. See s. 320.08056(10)(a), F.S.

¹⁵ Section 320.08056(10)(a), F.S.

¹⁶ Section 320.08056(11), F.S.

Discontinuance of Specialty Plates

Prior to June 30, 2023, the DHSMV was required to discontinue the issuance of an approved specialty license plate if the number of valid registrations falls below 1,000 plates for at least 12 consecutive months. A warning letter was mailed to the sponsoring organization following the first month in which the total number of valid specialty license plate registrations fell below 1,000 plates. Collegiate plates for Florida universities were exempt from the minimum specialty license plate requirement.¹⁷ In addition, the DHSMV was authorized to discontinue any specialty license plate if the organization ceased to exist, stopped providing services that are funded from the annual use fee proceeds, or pursuant to an organizational recipient's request.¹⁸

However, effective July 1, 2023, the requirement increased so that the DHSMV must discontinue the issuance of an approved specialty license plate if the number of valid registrations falls below 3,000, or in the case of an out-of-state college or university license plate, 4,000, for at least 12 consecutive months. The DHSMV must mail a warning letter to the sponsoring organization following the first month in which the total number of valid specialty plate registrations is below 3,000, or in the case of an out-of-state college or university license plate, 4,000. This does not apply to in-state collegiate license plates established under s. 320.08058(3), F.S., license plates of institutions in and entities of the State University System, specialty license plates that have statutory eligibility limitations for purchase, specialty license plates for which annual use fees are distributed by a foundation for student and teacher leadership programs and teacher recruitment and retention, or Florida professional sports team license plates established under s. 320.08058(9), F.S.¹⁹

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill amends s. 320.08058, F.S., to authorize the DHSMV to create two new specialty license plates: United States Naval Academy and United States Military Academy. The annual use fee for each plate is \$25. The plates must bear the colors and design approved by the department, with the word "Florida" at the top of the plate and the words "Go Navy, Beat Army" and "Go Army, Beat Navy" at the bottom of the respective plates.

The DHSMV is directed to retain annual use fees from the sale of each plate until all startup costs associated with the development and issuance of the plate have been recovered. Thereafter; annual use fees from the sale of the plate will be distributed as follows:

- Proceeds of the sale of the United States Naval Academy specialty license plate will be distributed to the Blue Angels Foundation, Inc. The organization may use up to 10 percent of the proceeds for marketing and promotion of the plate. Thereafter, the annual use fees from the sale of the plate will be distributed to the Blue Angels Foundation, Inc., to provide funding to wounded veterans for critical services, with a focus on transitional housing, post-traumatic stress treatment, and suicide prevention.
- Proceeds of the sale of the United States Military Academy specialty license plate will be distributed to the Home Base Florida Foundation, which may use up to 10 percent of the fees for administrative costs related to the promotion and the marketing of the plate. The balance

¹⁷ Section 320.08056(8)(a), F.S.

¹⁸ Section 320.08056(8)(b), F.S.

¹⁹ Chapter 2020-181, s. 7, Laws of Fla.

of the fees must be used by the Home Base Florida Foundation, to assist in world-class clinical care, wellness, education, and research, for veterans, service members, and their families who need more complex care.

The bill takes effect October 1, 2025.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

If the specialty license plates are produced, the Blue Angels Foundation, Inc., and the Home Base Florida Foundation will receive annual use fees associated with sales of the plates.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The estimated fiscal impact associated with the implementation two new specialty license plates is \$16,560.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill amends section 320.08058 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.)

CS by Transportation on March 18, 2025:

The committee substitute:

- Changes the recipient organization for the United States Naval Academy specialty license plate from the Jacksonville Chapter of the Naval Academy Alumni Association to the Blue Angels Foundation, Inc.
- Directs the DHSMV to develop a United States Military Academy license plate. The annual use fees from the plate must be distributed to the Home Base Florida Foundation.

B. Amendments:

None.