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House Bill 6008 as introduced
First Analysis (9-26-90)

Sponsor: Rep. Kirk A. Profit
Committee: Military and Veterans Affairs

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

Since 1982, Michigan has allowed U.S. veterans who are former prisoners of war to obtain specially inscribed license plates. In 1988 the legislature extended this privilege to veterans of World War I, recipients of the purple heart, and survivors of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, and in 1989 to current and former members of the Michigan National Guard, and veterans of World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. A bill that would include current and former military reservists passed the House of Representatives in June of this year.

Reportedly, when the 1989 set of acts was being discussed some veterans who had fought in more than one war asked that provision be made for their special circumstances. However, no action was taken at the time on their request, and when a veteran tried to get two decals for his special plate indicating that he had been in two wars reportedly the secretary of state's office refused to issue multiple decals despite the fact that the applicant had proof that he had participated in both wars. As the result of this incident, the constituent requested legislation that would allow veterans who have fought in more than one war to obtain special license plates indicating that fact.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

The bill would amend the Michigan Vehicle Code to allow someone who had served in one or more of the U.S. 20th-century wars (World War I, World War II, Korea, or Vietnam) to get a special license plate with a decal for each of the wars the veteran had participated in and the word "veteran." The plate would carry a \$5 service charge in addition to the usual registration fee, and provisions would be made for handicappers to be issued handicapper issues for these plates.

MCL 257.803n

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

Fiscal information is not available.

ARGUMENTS:

For:

Someone who has served his or her country in more than one of this century's major wars should not have to choose which war to have represented on his or her special license plate. The bill would honor those veterans who have served their country in war more than once, which is only fitting.

Against:

The proliferation of special military license plates has gone far enough. If this bill were to pass, what is to prevent veterans of a number of famous (or even not so famous) battles to request multiple decal plates (since Pearl Harbor survivors already have a special plate), or what about people who are veterans of a war but also current or former

military reservists or national guard members or ex-prisoners-of-war? The possible combinations and permutations of only the existing special plates are already too numerous to reasonably expect special plates for each, and veterans of multiple wars should no more be singled out for special treatment than any of these other possible combinations. Besides, if a veteran of two wars, say, wished to note his or her participation by special license plates, what now is to prevent him or her from getting one plate each for two different vehicles? Or alternating special plates upon the plate's expiration date?

Against:

A person who was 18 years old at the beginning of World War I would be 94 years old today. Although many people remain vigorous throughout their lives, it may be that including them in this proposal for a special "multiple war" license plate would be a particularly inappropriate way to recognize a group whose members likely are driving very little today, if at all.

POSITIONS:

There are no positions on the bill.