



**House  
Legislative  
Analysis  
Section**

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JUN 24 1987

**SPECIAL LICENSE PLATES**

House Bill 4594 with committee amendments  
First Analysis (6-3-87)

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Sponsor: Rep. Joseph Young, Jr.  
Committee: State Affairs

**THE APPARENT PROBLEM:**

A number of organizations have requested that the Secretary of State sell official Michigan commemorative vehicle license plates to be used in connection with various civic events across the state. Also, in the past Michigan representatives to Congress have requested special registration plates for the state delegation. The Secretary of State has suggested legislation to address these issues.

**THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:**

The bill would amend the Vehicle Code to allow the Secretary of State to issue commemorative plates for civic events and special registration plates for members of Congress from Michigan. The commemorative plates would not be used as registration plates and could be used only on the front of a motor vehicle; the Congressional plates would be registration plates.

Applicants for official commemorative civic event plates would have to provide the department with any information it deemed necessary, including a description of the nature, date, and duration of the civic event in question; the names, addresses, and business telephone numbers of the sponsors of the event, the number of plates desired; and a proposed plate design. The department would review the proposed design (which could not be offensive to good taste and decency), and could modify it. The department would determine how much it would cost to produce the plate(s), and charge the applicant 50 percent of the costs before proceeding to have the plates made. The department could contract with prisons or private industry to have the plates made. The remaining 50 percent of the costs would have to be paid by the applicant before the plates would be delivered.

Fees for the special congressional registration plates would be the same as regular registration fees, and the registration would expire on January 31 rather than on the birthday of the registrant.

MCL 257.1 et al.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

A bill similar to House Bill 4594 passed the House last session.

**FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:**

According to the House Fiscal Agency, the bill would have no fiscal implications to the state. (6-2-87)

**ARGUMENTS:**

**For:**

There are a number of organizations which have requested the Secretary of State to sell an official Michigan commemorative plate to be used in connection with various civic events across the state. The Secretary of State presently does not have the authority to sell commemorative plates which will be used for recognition purposes and not as a vehicle registration.

**For:**

The bill would authorize the Secretary of State to issue a special registration to be purchased by members of Michigan's delegation in Congress. Most other states presently have authority to issue such special registrations to their Congresspeople. Michigan should keep up with this national trend.

**Against:**

Currently, commemorative plates are readily available through the private sector, and without the restrictions proposed in the bill. This bill could decrease business for private firms while adding to the workload of the Secretary of State without even generating revenues over and above the costs of producing and distributing these plates.

**Response:** Since the Secretary of State could contract with private industry to manufacture the commemorative civic event plates, it is not necessarily true that the bill would have a negative effect on Michigan businesses producing commemorative plates.

**Against:**

This year Michigan is celebrating its 150th year of statehood. Many other states have sold official state plates commemorating their sesquicentennials, and Michigan residents should also be able to purchase such plates as part of the activities celebrating Michigan's 150th birthday.

**Response:** It is not feasible to include a provision in the bill for sesquicentennial plates because it would take too long to manufacture them. By the time that the plates became available the celebration would be over.

**POSITIONS:**

The Department of State supports the bill. (6-2-87)

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