

Chapter 24

(House Bill 231)

AN ACT concerning

Vehicle Laws – Special Registration Plates – Gold Star and Next of Kin Families

FOR the purpose of authorizing the recipient of a U.S. Department of Defense Next of Kin lapel button to apply for special registration plates; waiving the initial vehicle registration fee associated with, ~~and requiring the name and rank of the deceased service member to be included on,~~ special registration plates issued to the recipient of a Gold Star or a Next of Kin lapel button; and generally relating to special registration plates for recipients of Gold Stars and Next of Kin lapel buttons.

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

Article – Transportation

Section 13–619.1(a)(1)

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2020 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article – Transportation

Section 13–619.1(a)(4), (b), and (c)(2)(iii)

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2020 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Transportation

13–619.1.

(a) (1) The owner of a motor vehicle, or a lessee of the vehicle under a lease not intended as security, or a director, officer, employee, or partner of a business entity that owns the vehicle may apply to the Administration for the assignment of a special registration number and special registration plates under this section for a vehicle included in one of the following classes:

- (i) A Class A (passenger) vehicle;
- (ii) A Class E (truck) vehicle with a one ton or less manufacturer's rated capacity;
- (iii) A Class M (multipurpose) vehicle; or

(iv) A Class D (motorcycle) vehicle.

(4) To be eligible for a special registration described under subsection (c)(2)(iii) of this section, an applicant shall provide proof that is satisfactory to the Administration that the applicant is a recipient of the U.S. Department of Defense Gold Star **OR NEXT OF KIN LAPEL BUTTON** for surviving spouses, parents, and next of kin of members of the armed forces who lost their lives [in combat] **WHILE SERVING ON ACTIVE DUTY OR WHILE ASSIGNED TO A RESERVE OR NATIONAL GUARD UNIT IN A DRILL STATUS**.

(b) (1) **[In] EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH (4) OF THIS SUBSECTION,** IN addition to the annual registration fee otherwise required under this title, an owner of a vehicle assigned a special registration under this section shall pay a fee as determined by the Administration each time new registration plates are issued for the vehicle.

(2) The fee shall be calculated to:

(i) Recover the costs incurred by the Administration in carrying out the provisions of this section; and

(ii) Result in a surplus of at least \$10 for each issuance of new registration plates under this section.

(3) (i) The portion of the additional fee charged under paragraph (2)(i) of this subsection shall be retained by the Administration for the purpose of recovering the Administration's costs under this section.

(ii) The portion of the additional fee charged under paragraph (2)(ii) of this subsection:

1. May not be retained by or transferred to any agency of the State for any purpose; and

2. Shall be credited to the Maryland Veterans Trust Fund established under § 9–913 of the State Government Article.

(iii) No portion of the additional fee charged under this subsection may be credited to the Gasoline and Motor Vehicle Revenue Account for distribution under § 8–403 or § 8–404 of this article.

(4) A FEE UNDER THIS SUBSECTION MAY NOT BE CHARGED FOR THE ISSUANCE OF NEW SPECIAL REGISTRATION PLATES DESCRIBED UNDER SUBSECTION (C)(2)(III) OF THIS SECTION.

(c) Special registration plates issued under this section:

(2) Shall include:

(iii) An emblem or logo indicating that the registration plate holder is the recipient of the U.S. Department of Defense Gold Star **OR NEXT OF KIN LAPEL BUTTON** ~~AND THE GIVEN NAME AND RANK OF THE DECEASED SERVICE MEMBER.~~

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2024.

Approved by the Governor, April 9, 2024.