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Overview

This bill makes various changes to the requirements governing new special plates being proposed and recently enacted, and expands eligibility for a special purple heart plate.

Under this bill, a purple heart recipient who is still serving in the military would be eligible for and could acquire the *Combat Wounded License Plate* (provided that the person has registered the motor vehicle in Minnesota and pays the associated registration and license fees).

Section

- 1 **Special plates.** Defines “special plates” in the chapter on vehicle registration and plates.
- 2 **Eligibility; combat wounded plate.** Authorizes issuance of “*combat wounded plates*” to a recipient of the *purple heart medal* whose service qualifies the person to be a *veteran* but who continues to serve in active military service and thus, technically, is not yet a *veteran* (pending discharge from the military, or separation from active duty). Directs the commissioner of public safety to distribute information to deputy registrars on how to determine proof of eligibility required of an applicant who is a serving member of the military (since a service member in active duty status generally would not yet have been issued a DD-214 discharge paper).
- 3 **Certain special plates; authorization, discontinuance.** Makes various changes and clarifications to the requirements governing new special plates being proposed and recently enacted.

Subd. 1. Definition. Defines terms. “New special plate” or “proposed special plate” is a special plate that does not yet exist in law and is proposed to the legislature in a bill or amendment.

Subd. 1a. Establishment of plate. Clarifies that special plates can only be established under law, except in the case of additional or alternative designs for an existing plate.

Subd. 2. Submissions to commissioner. Clarifies that certain procedures for requesting or proposing a new special plate apply to all proponents of the plate. Waives the \$20,000 application fee if the proposed special plate legislation contains a mechanism for Driver and Vehicle Services (DVS) to recoup its administrative costs in implementing the plate.

Subd. 2a. Information for legislature. Requires that DVS provide a briefing to the legislature on all special plate bills covering whether the application requirements have been met, and that DVS seek to provide testimony on the special plate application when the plate is discussed at a legislative hearing.

Subd. 3. Design; redesign. Makes conforming changes.

Subd. 4. Refund of fee. Makes conforming changes.

Subd. 5. Discontinuance of plate. Applies discontinuance provisions to all future special plates that are established, which directs DVS to (1) discontinue special plates if there are fewer than 1,000 issued in its first six years or in any subsequent two-year period, and (2) discontinue special plates for various reasons related to any required donation associated with the plate. Clarifies that the discontinuance applies to future issuances of plates and duplicates, so that people already having a discontinued plate can keep it on their vehicle for the remaining normal length of time (typically seven years total).

Subd. 6. Use of contributions. Applies a contributions provision to all future special plates that are established, so that contributions made in association with a special plate can not be spent for commercial or for-profit purposes.

Subd. 7. Deposit of fee; appropriations. No changes made.

Background

The DD-214 is the standard Department of Defense form indicating a person's identity and home state at time of entry into any branch of the military, as well as the person's dates and locations of military service and all service awards, medals and ribbons that the person has officially been awarded during that service. The DD-214 is cumulative across all stints of a person's military career, lifetime.

A member of the military receives an updated DD-214 each time the person *separates from active military duty*, and upon the person's *final discharge from the military*. In most cases, a veteran's DD-214 will indicate which medals, ribbons and other awards the veteran has earned during military service. In practical terms, a person who is still serving in active military service and, thus, has not yet been issued a DD-214, can request a formal letter of acknowledgement of such awards from the person's commanding officer.

For some veterans, the DD-214 is incomplete or inaccurate, as when final action on the award of a medal to the person happens following completion of the person's military service. In such cases, the veteran may petition the Board of Corrections for the appropriate military branch for correction or updating of the DD-214, via a form DD-215. (Such process can take months or years of delay.)