

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

FILE NUMBER: S.F. 2340 (H.F. 2730)

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Subject: Veterans; Authorizing Combat Wounded (Purple Heart) License Plates for certain serving members of the military

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This bill makes two changes related to special military license plates. First, it would amend motor vehicle license plate law by authorizing the issuance of “*Combat-Wounded Plates*” to a recipient of the *purple heart medal* 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).

It also 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).

Second, in section 2 the bill broadens eligibility for gold start plates to include children of persons who died in active military service.

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.

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).