



130th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2021

Legislative Document

No. 1618

S.P. 511

In Senate, April 28, 2021

**Resolve, To Place a Temporary Moratorium on the Approval of Any
New Motor Vehicle Registration Plates and Initiate a Registration
Plate Working Group**

(AFTER DEADLINE)

(EMERGENCY)

Submitted by the Secretary of State and approved for introduction by a majority of the
Legislative Council pursuant to Joint Rule 205.

Reference to the Committee on Transportation suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D M Grant'.

DAREK M. GRANT
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator DIAMOND of Cumberland.
Cosponsored by Representative MARTIN of Sinclair and
Senator: FARRIN of Somerset, Representative: PERKINS of Oakland.

1 **Emergency preamble. Whereas,** acts and resolves of the Legislature do not
2 become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

3 **Whereas,** the continued increase in the variety of available registration plates has
4 created logistical complications in the manufacture, storage and administration of
5 registration plates and imposed a considerable administrative burden on municipalities and
6 other political subdivisions of the State performing registrations; and

7 **Whereas,** there is an absence of a strategic plan for the growth and usage of
8 registration plates; and

9 **Whereas,** there is an immediate need to clearly define the role of specialty registration
10 plates used for fund-raising by government and private entities under the Maine Revised
11 Statutes, Title 29-A, section 468; and

12 **Whereas,** specialty registration plates could convey messages that are considered
13 controversial, unfair or not uniformly representative of other points of view; and

14 **Whereas,** in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within
15 the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as
16 immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now,
17 therefore, be it

18 **Sec. 1. Temporary moratorium. Resolved:** That the Department of the
19 Secretary of State, Bureau of Motor Vehicles, notwithstanding the Maine Revised Statutes
20 Title 29-A, sections 468 and 468-A, may not approve any specialty or recognition plate
21 sponsor to begin the specialty or recognition plate signature gathering process, bring forth
22 enabling legislation or otherwise initiate any new designs, redesigns or additional
23 registration plates other than already approved and enacted for a period of 2 years from the
24 effective date of this resolve. The joint standing committee of the Legislature having
25 jurisdiction over transportation matters may not consider or review any additional
26 registration plate designs during this same period.

27 **Sec. 2. Registration plate working group. Resolved:** That the Department of
28 the Secretary of State, Bureau of Motor Vehicles shall convene a working group to study
29 the proliferation of registration plates in accordance with this section, referred to in this
30 section as "the working group."

31 **1. Membership.** The chairs of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation shall
32 appoint to the working group:

33 A. The Secretary of State or a designee of the Secretary of State;

34 B. Two members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation;

35 C. The deputy secretary of state for the Bureau of Motor Vehicles or a designee of the
36 deputy secretary;

37 D. A representative of the Secretary of State's technology and information services
38 staff;

39 E. A representative of the motor vehicle inspection unit of the Maine State Police;

40 F. A representative of a state agency that is a recipient of funds from the Specialty
41 License Plate Fund under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 29-A, section 469;

1 G. A representative of a municipality or other political subdivision of the State engaged
2 in the registration of motor vehicles on behalf of the State; and

3 H. A representative of the State Prison who is responsible for overseeing the
4 manufacture of registration plates pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 29-A,
5 section 451, subsection 6.

6 **2. Compensation.** Members of the working group may not be compensated for their
7 work on the working group.

8 **3. Duties.** Duties of the working group include:

9 A. Identifying and documenting the roles and functions of the State's registration
10 plates;

11 B. Exploring and documenting challenges with the registration plate manufacturing
12 process;

13 C. Exploring the challenges of storing and securing registration plate inventories in
14 municipalities and other political subdivisions of the State and in branch offices of the
15 Bureau of Motor Vehicles;

16 D. Examining the benefits, detriments and legal issues arising from specialty
17 registration plates;

18 E. Examining competing interests with specialty registration plates;

19 F. Examining standards and systems developed by national and industry experts and
20 exploring ways in which the State can adopt such standards and systems; and

21 G. Making recommendations based on the findings of the working group.

22 **4. Report.** The Bureau of Motor Vehicles shall provide a report by February 1, 2022
23 containing the findings and recommendations of the working group to the Joint Standing
24 Committee on Transportation, and the joint standing committee may introduce legislation
25 based on those recommendations during the Second Regular Session of the 130th
26 Legislature.

27 **Emergency clause.** In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation
28 takes effect when approved.

29 SUMMARY

30 This resolve halts for a period of 2 years the commencement, review and approval of
31 any new registration plates by the Department of the Secretary of State, Bureau of Motor
32 Vehicles and the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over
33 transportation matters. The resolve directs the Bureau of Motor Vehicles to convene a
34 working group to study the proliferation of registration plates and resulting challenges and
35 concerns and to make a report to the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation and
36 authorizes the joint standing committee to introduce legislation based on the report.