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## **An Act To Increase the Maximum Registered Gross Weight Allowed for Vehicles with Disabled Veterans or Special Veterans Registration Plates**

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

**Sec. 1. 29-A MRSA §523, sub-§2**, as amended by PL 2007, c. 383, §14, is further amended to read:

**2. Disabled veterans; special free license plates.** The Secretary of State, on application and upon evidence of payment of the excise tax required by Title 36, section 1482, shall issue a registration certificate and set of special designating plates to be used in lieu of regular registration plates for a vehicle with a registered gross weight of not more than ~~10,000~~26,000 pounds to any 100% disabled veteran when that application is accompanied by certification from the United States Veterans Administration or any branch of the United States Armed Forces as to the veteran's permanent disability and receipt of 100% service-connected benefits. A disability placard is issued in addition to the disabled veteran registration plate at no fee.

These special designating plates must bear the words "Disabled Veteran," which indicate that the vehicle is owned by a disabled veteran.

**Sec. 2. 29-A MRSA §523, sub-§3**, as amended by PL 2009, c. 80, §1, is further amended to read:

**3. Special veterans registration plates.** The Secretary of State, on application and evidence of payment of the excise tax required by Title 36, section 1482 and the registration fee required by section 501 or by section 504, subsection 1 for a vehicle with a registered gross weight over 10,000 pounds, shall issue a registration certificate and a set of special veterans registration plates to be used in lieu of regular registration plates for a vehicle with a registered gross weight of not more than ~~10,000~~26,000 pounds to any person who has served in the United States Armed Forces and who has been honorably discharged or to a person who has served in the United States Armed Forces for at least 3 years and continues to serve. If a person who qualifies for a special veterans registration plate under this subsection is the primary driver of 3 vehicles, the Secretary of State may issue in accordance with this section a set of special veterans registration plates for each vehicle.

Each application must be accompanied by the applicant's Armed Forces Report of Transfer or Discharge, DD Form 214, certification from the United States Veterans Administration or the appropriate branch of the United States Armed Forces verifying the applicant's military service and honorable discharge, or a letter from the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management, Bureau of Maine Veterans' Services verifying active duty military service and length of service.

The Secretary of State shall recall a special veterans registration plate of a recipient who has been less than honorably discharged from the United States Armed Forces.

All surplus revenue collected for issuance of the special registration plates is retained by the Secretary of State to maintain and support this program.

The surviving spouse of a special veteran plate recipient issued plates in accordance with this subsection may retain and display the special veteran plates as long as the surviving spouse remains unmarried. Upon remarriage, the surviving spouse may not use the special veteran plates on a motor vehicle, but may retain them as a keepsake. Upon the death of the surviving spouse, the family may retain the special veteran plates, but may not use them on a motor vehicle.

The Secretary of State may issue a special disability registration plate for veterans in accordance with section 521, subsections 1, 5, 7 and 9. The special disability registration plate for veterans must bear the International Symbol of Access.

The Secretary of State may issue a set of special veterans registration plates when the qualifying veteran is the primary driver of a company-owned vehicle if:

- A. The company is owned solely by a veteran who qualifies for a veteran plate under this section;
- B. The vehicle is leased by a veteran who qualifies for the veteran plate under this subsection; or
- C. The vehicle is leased by the employer of a veteran who qualifies for the veteran plate and the employer has assigned the vehicle exclusively to the veteran. The employer must attest in writing that the veteran will have exclusive use of the vehicle and agrees to the display of the special veteran plate.

## **SUMMARY**

This bill increases from 10,000 pounds to 26,000 pounds the upper registered gross weight limit of vehicles that may have disabled veteran or special veterans registration plates.