



128th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2017

Legislative Document

No. 788

H.P. 568

House of Representatives, March 2, 2017

An Act To Require Motor Vehicles To Be Registered on a Biennial Basis

Reference to the Committee on Transportation suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "R B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative CEBRA of Naples.
Cosponsored by Senator BRAKEY of Androscoggin and
Representatives: HERRICK of Paris, LOCKMAN of Amherst, O'CONNOR of Berwick,
PARRY of Arundel, SANDERSON of Chelsea, STEWART of Presque Isle, WADSWORTH
of Hiram, WOOD of Greene.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 29-A MRSA §351, sub-§2, ¶C**, as amended by PL 1999, c. 68, §1, is
3 further amended to read:

4 C. The registration fee is the same as for a full ~~year's~~ registration period.

5 **Sec. 2. 29-A MRSA §405, sub-§1**, as amended by PL 2011, c. 167, §1 and
6 affected by §7, is further amended to read:

7 **1. Automobile, truck, truck tractor, motor home, moped, semitrailers not**
8 **exceeding a gross vehicle weight of 2,000 pounds, special mobile equipment, tractor**
9 **and camp trailer registration.** Registration for an automobile, truck, truck tractor,
10 motor home, moped, semitrailer not exceeding a gross vehicle weight of 2,000 pounds,
11 special mobile equipment, tractor and camp trailer is as follows.

12 A. ~~A~~ Except as provided in paragraph A-1, a registration expires on the last day of
13 the month one year from the month of issuance.

14 A-1. For a motor vehicle registered biennially under section 501, subsection 1, a
15 registration expires on the last day of the month 2 years from the date of issuance.

16 B. When an application is made after the registration for the previous ~~year~~
17 registration period has expired, the term of the renewal begins on the month of the
18 issuance of the previous registration.

19 C. A person who has a fleet of 5 or more motor vehicles may petition the Secretary
20 of State for a common expiration date of all vehicle registrations.

21 **Sec. 3. 29-A MRSA §453, sub-§2**, as amended by PL 2007, c. 647, §1 and
22 affected by §8, is further amended to read:

23 **2. Fee.** The ~~annual~~ service fee for a vanity registration plate is \$25 in addition to the
24 regular motor vehicle registration fee. The service fee must be credited to the General
25 Highway Fund, except that, beginning July 1, 2009, \$10 of the service fee must be
26 transferred on a quarterly basis by the Treasurer of State to the TransCap Trust Fund
27 established by Title 30-A, section 6006-G. A sum sufficient to defray the cost of this
28 program must be allocated annually from the General Highway Fund.

29 **Sec. 4. 29-A MRSA §455, sub-§4-A**, as enacted by PL 2007, c. 703, §2, is
30 amended to read:

31 **4-A. Renewal fee.** In addition to the regular motor vehicle registration fee
32 prescribed by law for the particular class of vehicle registered, the ~~annual~~ renewal
33 contribution for environmental registration plates is \$15, which must be deposited with
34 the Treasurer of State and credited as follows:

35 A. Fourteen dollars to the Maine Environmental Trust Fund established in Title 12,
36 section 10255; and

37 B. One dollar to the Specialty License Plate Fund established under section 469.

1 **Sec. 5. 29-A MRSA §456, sub-§5**, as amended by PL 2007, c. 703, §3, is further
2 amended to read:

3 **5. Renewal fee.** In addition to the regular motor vehicle registration fee prescribed
4 by law, the ~~annual~~ renewal contribution for University of Maine System registration
5 plates is \$15, which must be deposited with the Treasurer of State and credited as
6 follows:

7 A. Thirteen dollars to the University of Maine System Scholarship Fund established
8 in Title 20-A, section 10909;

9 B. One dollar to the Highway Fund; and

10 C. One dollar to the Specialty License Plate Fund established under section 469.

11 **Sec. 6. 29-A MRSA §456-A, sub-§1**, as amended by PL 2009, c. 435, §2, is
12 further amended to read:

13 **1. Lobster plates.** The Secretary of State, upon receiving an application and
14 evidence of payment of the excise tax required by Title 36, section 1482, the ~~annual~~
15 motor vehicle registration fee required by section 501 and the contribution provided for in
16 subsection 2, shall issue a registration certificate and a set of lobster special registration
17 plates to be used in lieu of regular registration plates. These plates must bear
18 identification numbers and letters. The Secretary of State may issue lobster plates to
19 certain state-owned vehicles in accordance with section 517.

20 **Sec. 7. 29-A MRSA §456-A, sub-§4**, as amended by PL 2007, c. 703, §4, is
21 further amended to read:

22 **4. Renewal fee.** In addition to the regular motor vehicle registration fee prescribed
23 by law, the ~~annual~~ renewal contribution for lobster special registration plates is \$15,
24 which must be deposited with the Treasurer of State and credited as follows:

25 A. Ten dollars to the Lobster Research, Education and Development Fund
26 established in Title 12, section 6465;

27 B. Four dollars to the Highway Fund for administrative and production costs; and

28 C. One dollar to the Specialty License Plate Fund established under section 469.

29 **Sec. 8. 29-A MRSA §456-B, sub-§1**, as enacted by PL 2001, c. 623, §4, is
30 amended to read:

31 **1. Maine Black Bears plates.** The Secretary of State, upon receiving an application
32 and evidence of payment of the excise tax required by Title 36, section 1482, the ~~annual~~
33 motor vehicle registration fee required by section 501 and the contribution provided for in
34 subsection 2, shall issue a registration certificate and a set of Maine Black Bears special
35 registration plates to be used in lieu of regular registration plates. These plates must bear
36 identification numbers and letters.

37 **Sec. 9. 29-A MRSA §456-B, sub-§4**, as amended by PL 2007, c. 703, §5, is
38 further amended to read:

1 **4. Renewal fee.** In addition to the regular motor vehicle registration fee prescribed
2 by law, the ~~annual~~ renewal contribution for Maine Black Bears special registration plates
3 is \$15, which must be deposited with the Treasurer of State and credited as follows:

4 A. Ten dollars to the Maine Black Bears Scholarship Fund established in Title 20-A,
5 section 10971;

6 B. Four dollars to the Highway Fund for administrative and production costs; and

7 C. One dollar to the Specialty License Plate Fund established under section 469.

8 **Sec. 10. 29-A MRSA §456-C, sub-§3,** as amended by PL 2011, c. 576, §7, is
9 further amended to read:

10 **3. Renewal fee.** In addition to the regular motor vehicle registration fee prescribed
11 by law, the ~~annual~~ renewal contribution for sportsman registration plates is \$20, which
12 must be deposited with the Treasurer of State and credited as follows:

13 A. Eighteen dollars credited as follows:

14 (1) Fifty percent to the fish hatchery maintenance fund established in Title 12,
15 section 10252;

16 (2) Fifteen percent to the Boat Launch Facilities Fund established in Title 12,
17 section 10261;

18 (3) Ten percent to the Maine Endangered and Nongame Wildlife Fund
19 established in Title 12, section 10253; and

20 (4) Twenty-five percent to the landowner relations program in Title 12, section
21 10108, subsection 4-A;

22 B. One dollar to the Highway Fund for administrative and production costs; and

23 C. One dollar to the Specialty License Plate Fund established under section 469.

24 **Sec. 11. 29-A MRSA §456-D, sub-§3,** as amended by PL 2009, c. 481, §3, is
25 further amended to read:

26 **3. Renewal fee.** In addition to the regular motor vehicle registration fee required
27 under section 501, the ~~annual~~ renewal contribution for We Support Our Troops plates is
28 \$15, which must be deposited with the Treasurer of State and credited as follows:

29 A. Ten dollars to the Maine Military Family Relief Fund as established in Title 37-B,
30 section 158;

31 B. Four dollars to the Highway Fund for administrative and production costs; and

32 C. One dollar to the Specialty License Plate Fund established under section 469.

33 **Sec. 12. 29-A MRSA §456-E, sub-§1,** as enacted by PL 2007, c. 547, §2, is
34 amended to read:

35 **1. Breast cancer support services plates.** The Secretary of State, upon receiving an
36 application and evidence of payment of the excise tax required by Title 36, section 1482,

1 the ~~annual~~ motor vehicle registration fee required by section 501 and the contribution
2 provided for in subsection 2, shall issue a registration certificate and a set of breast cancer
3 support services special registration plates to be used in lieu of regular registration plates.
4 These plates must bear identification numbers and letters.

5 **Sec. 13. 29-A MRSA §456-E, sub-§4**, as amended by PL 2007, c. 703, §9, is
6 further amended to read:

7 **4. Renewal fee.** In addition to the regular motor vehicle registration fee prescribed
8 by law, the ~~annual~~ renewal contribution for breast cancer support services special
9 registration plates is \$15, which must be deposited with the Treasurer of State and
10 credited as follows:

11 A. Ten dollars to the Breast Cancer Services Special Program Fund, as established in
12 Title 22, section 1408;

13 B. Four dollars to the Highway Fund for administrative and production costs; and

14 C. One dollar to the Specialty License Plate Fund established under section 469.

15 **Sec. 14. 29-A MRSA §456-F, sub-§1**, as amended by PL 2009, c. 435, §3, is
16 further amended to read:

17 **1. Agriculture education plates.** The Secretary of State, upon receiving an
18 application and evidence of payment of the excise tax required by Title 36, section 1482,
19 the ~~annual~~ motor vehicle registration fee required by section 501, section 504, subsection
20 1 or section 505 and the contribution provided for in subsection 2, shall issue a
21 registration certificate and a set of agriculture education special registration plates to be
22 used in lieu of regular registration plates. These plates must bear identification numbers
23 and letters. The Secretary of State may issue agricultural education plates to certain state-
24 owned vehicles in accordance with section 517.

25 **Sec. 15. 29-A MRSA §456-F, sub-§4**, as enacted by PL 2007, c. 703, §10, is
26 amended to read:

27 **4. Renewal fee.** In addition to the regular motor vehicle registration fee prescribed
28 by law, the ~~annual~~ renewal contribution for agriculture education special registration
29 plates is \$15, which must be deposited with the Treasurer of State and credited as
30 follows:

31 A. Ten dollars to the Maine Agriculture in the Classroom Council established in
32 Title 5, section 12004-G, subsection 4-C;

33 B. Four dollars to the Highway Fund for administrative and production costs; and

34 C. One dollar to the Specialty License Plate Fund established under section 469.

35 **Sec. 16. 29-A MRSA §456-G, sub-§1**, as enacted by PL 2009, c. 73, §1, is
36 amended to read:

37 **1. Support Animal Welfare plates.** The Secretary of State, upon receiving an
38 application and evidence of payment of the excise tax required by Title 36, section 1482,

1 the ~~annual~~ motor vehicle registration fee required by section 501 and the contribution
2 provided for in subsection 2, shall issue a registration certificate and a set of Support
3 Animal Welfare special registration plates to be used in lieu of regular registration plates.

4 **Sec. 17. 29-A MRSA §456-G, sub-§4**, as enacted by PL 2009, c. 73, §1, is
5 amended to read:

6 **4. Renewal fee.** In addition to the regular motor vehicle registration fee prescribed
7 by law, the ~~annual~~ renewal contribution for Support Animal Welfare special registration
8 plates is \$15, which must be deposited with the Treasurer of State and credited as
9 follows:

10 A. Five dollars to the animal welfare auxiliary fund pursuant to Title 7, section
11 3906-B, subsection 16;

12 B. Five dollars to the Companion Animal Sterilization Fund established in Title 7,
13 section 3910-B;

14 C. Four dollars to the Highway Fund for administrative and production costs;

15 D. One dollar to the Specialty License Plate Fund established under section 469.

16 **Sec. 18. 29-A MRSA §461**, as amended by PL 1999, c. 470, §4, is further
17 amended to read:

18 **§461. Reservation of same number**

19 **1. Plate issue year.** In a year in which new registration plates are issued, the
20 Secretary of State shall reserve until July 1st the same registration number for the
21 succeeding registration ~~year~~ period for a person who notifies in writing the Secretary of
22 State prior to May 1st of that person's desire to retain that registration number. The fee for
23 retention of the same registration number is \$15.

24 The Secretary of State may issue a facsimile plate that is valid for a 90-day period during
25 production of a reserved plate. A facsimile plate must be attached to the rear plate
26 bracket.

27 If a person does not have a vehicle to register on May 1st, a registration number may be
28 held for a maximum of 2 registration ~~years~~ periods by depositing with the Secretary of
29 State \$15 for each ~~year~~, ~~except that the~~ registration period. The registered owner of an
30 antique vehicle may reserve the antique registration assigned to that person for 4 years by
31 depositing the sum of \$15 for each registration year. These fees are not refundable and
32 may not be applied against the registration fee.

33 All numbers other than those reserved must be released and issued in rotation after July
34 1st.

35 A person wishing to select a number out of rotation may do so by paying the registration
36 fee and a reserved number fee of \$15.

37 A holder of vanity registration plates must pay the sum of \$15 to reserve those letters or
38 combination of letters and numbers, which is credited toward the renewal fee.

1 **2. Nonplate issue year.** In other than a plate issue year, when a person fails to
2 reregister and the registration remains expired for 6 consecutive months, the reservation
3 of the same number ceases and the number becomes available for reissuance.

4 For a maximum of 2 registration ~~years~~ periods, a person may reserve the registration
5 number assigned to that person by depositing with the Secretary of State the sum of \$15
6 for each ~~year; except that the~~ registration period. The registered owner of an antique
7 motor vehicle may reserve the antique registration assigned to that person for 4 years by
8 depositing with the Secretary of State the sum of \$15 for each year. A person wishing to
9 select a number out of rotation may do so by paying the registration fee and a reserved
10 number fee of \$15.

11 **Sec. 19. 29-A MRSA §501, first ¶**, as enacted by PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 and
12 affected by Pt. B, §5, is amended to read:

13 The ~~annual~~ fees for the registration of motor vehicles must accompany the
14 application for registration and are as follows.

15 **Sec. 20. 29-A MRSA §501, sub-§1**, as amended by PL 2015, c. 206, §4, is
16 further amended to read:

17 **1. Automobiles; pickup trucks.** The biennial fee for an automobile, a pickup truck
18 registered for 6,000 pounds or less or a sport utility vehicle used for the conveyance of
19 passengers or interchangeably for passengers or property is ~~\$35~~ \$50. The biennial fee for
20 a pickup truck registered for more than 6,000 pounds but no more than 10,000 pounds is
21 ~~\$37~~ \$50.

22 An automobile or sport utility vehicle used for the conveyance of passengers or property
23 is a "combination" vehicle and may be issued a special plate with the word "combination"
24 instead of "Vacationland." A passenger vehicle used under contract with the State, a
25 municipality or a school district to transport students must be designated as
26 "combination." A vehicle owned or operated by parents or legal guardians is exempt
27 from this subsection.

28 Commercial plates may not be issued for or displayed on an automobile.

29 A sport utility vehicle may be registered either as an automobile or a truck. A sport
30 utility vehicle with a gross vehicle weight or combined gross vehicle weight in excess of
31 10,000 pounds and used in the furtherance of a commercial enterprise must be registered
32 as a truck according to its actual gross weight as provided in section 504.

33 The gross weight of a pickup truck registered as provided by this subsection may not
34 exceed 10,000 pounds. An owner of a pickup truck who operates the pickup truck with a
35 gross weight in excess of 10,000 pounds or the pickup truck drawing a semitrailer with a
36 combined gross weight in excess of 10,000 pounds must register the truck as provided in
37 section 504.

38 A combination of vehicles consisting of a motor vehicle and a camp trailer is not required
39 to be registered for the gross weight of the combination.

40 Beginning July 1, 2009, \$10 of the fee must be transferred on a quarterly basis by the
41 Treasurer of State to the TransCap Trust Fund established by Title 30-A, section 6006-G.

1 **Sec. 21. 29-A MRSA §502**, as amended by PL 2009, c. 598, §2, is further
2 amended to read:

3 **§502. Transfer and return of registration; prorated registration fees**

4 **1. Transferring registration.** A person who transfers the ownership or discontinues
5 the use of a registered motor vehicle, trailer or semitrailer and applies for registration of
6 another motor vehicle, trailer or semitrailer in the same registration year period may use
7 the same number plates on payment of a transfer fee of \$8, as long as the registration fee
8 is the same as that of the former vehicle. If the fee for the vehicle to be registered is
9 greater than the fee for the vehicle first registered, that person must also pay the
10 difference. If application is made for a truck camper or a trailer with a gross weight of
11 2,000 pounds or less, the transfer fee is \$5.

12 **3. Refunds; credits.** No portion of a fee is refundable, but credits toward the
13 registration of another vehicle may be given. On registration by an owner or owner's
14 surviving spouse, a credit is allowed as follows.

15 A. For the first 8 months of a registration year, the full fee may be credited toward
16 the registration of another vehicle.

17 B. For the last 4 months of a registration year, an amount not to exceed 1/2 of the
18 original fee may be credited toward the registration of another vehicle.

19 C. For a motor vehicle registered biennially under section 501, subsection 1, for the
20 last 16 months of a registration biennium, the full fee may be credited toward the
21 registration of another vehicle.

22 D. For a motor vehicle registered biennially under section 501, subsection 1, for the
23 last 8 months of a registration biennium, an amount not to exceed 1/2 of the original
24 fee may be credited toward the registration of another vehicle.

25 **4. Prorated fee.** On any application for registration made during the last 4 months
26 of a registration year, the registration fee is 1/2 the annual registration fee. For a motor
27 vehicle registered biennially under section 501, subsection 1, on any application for
28 registration made during the last 8 months of a registration biennium, the registration fee
29 is 1/2 the biennial registration fee.

30 **Sec. 22. 29-A MRSA §524, sub-§4**, as amended by PL 2011, c. 356, §13, is
31 further amended to read:

32 **4. Purple Heart medal recipients; special license plates.** The Secretary of State,
33 on application and upon evidence of payment of the excise tax required by Title 36,
34 section 1482, shall issue, at no fee, a registration certificate and a set of Purple Heart
35 registration plates, to be used in lieu of regular registration plates, to a person who is a
36 Purple Heart medal recipient.

37 An application for Purple Heart plates must be accompanied by proof that the applicant
38 has been awarded the Purple Heart medal. The Secretary of State shall verify the
39 documentation presented by the applicant. Misrepresentation of documents is in violation
40 of section 2103, subsection 5.

1 The Secretary of State may issue Purple Heart plates for display only on an automobile or
2 truck registered for not more than 10,000 pounds. A Purple Heart recipient may be
3 issued Purple Heart plates for no more than 2 vehicles.

4 The surviving spouse of a Purple Heart recipient issued plates in accordance with this
5 subsection may retain and use the Purple Heart plates as long as the surviving spouse
6 remains unmarried. Upon remarriage, the surviving spouse may not use the Purple Heart
7 plates on a motor vehicle, but may retain them. Upon the death of the surviving spouse,
8 the family may retain the Purple Heart plates, but may not use them on a motor vehicle.

9 The Secretary of State shall determine the design of the Purple Heart plate. Upon request
10 and as provided by section 453, the Secretary of State shall issue Purple Heart plates that
11 are also vanity plates. Purple Heart vanity plates are issued in accordance with this
12 section and section 453. The ~~annual~~ service fee for vanity plates required in section 453
13 is credited to the Highway Fund.

14 A Purple Heart recipient or the surviving spouse of a Purple Heart recipient who does not
15 operate a motor vehicle or register a motor vehicle and who otherwise qualifies for the
16 issuance of special Purple Heart registration plates may apply to the Secretary of State for
17 a special single plate recognizing that award.

18 The Secretary of State shall design and identify these single plates for recognition
19 purposes only. Single Purple Heart plates may not be attached to a motor vehicle. Only
20 one plate may be issued to each recipient.

21 **Sec. 23. 29-A MRSA §524-B, sub-§1**, as amended by PL 2015, c. 17, §1 and
22 affected by §3, is further amended to read:

23 **1. Eligibility.** Notwithstanding the requirements in section 468-A, the Secretary of
24 State, upon application and upon evidence of payment of the excise tax required by Title
25 36, section 1482 and the ~~annual~~ motor vehicle registration fee required by section 501,
26 shall issue a registration certificate and a set of gold star family registration plates, to be
27 used in lieu of regular registration plates, to:

28 A. A person who is eligible to receive a gold star lapel button under 10 United States
29 Code, Section 1126 (2010);

30 B. A grandparent of a member of the United States Armed Forces, if that member
31 dies after March 28, 1973 as a result of:

32 (1) An international terrorist attack against the United States or a foreign nation
33 friendly to the United States, recognized as such an attack by the United States
34 Secretary of Defense; or

35 (2) Military operations while serving outside the United States, including the
36 commonwealths, territories and possessions of the United States, as a part of a
37 peacekeeping force;

38 C. A person who is not eligible to receive a gold star lapel button under 10 United
39 States Code, Section 1126 (2010) but who is eligible for a lapel button for next of kin
40 of deceased personnel under 32 Code of Federal Regulations, Section 578.63 (2006);
41 and

1 D. A grandparent of a member of the United States Armed Forces, if that member
2 dies while serving on active duty or while assigned in the reserve components of the
3 United States Armed Forces or Army National Guard unit in a drill status.

4 **SUMMARY**

5 This bill changes the annual registration requirement and fee for automobiles, pickup
6 trucks registered for 10,000 pounds or less and sport utility vehicles to a biennial
7 registration at a fee of \$50.