



## Department of the Secretary of State Bureau of Motor Vehicles

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### JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

#### **L.D. 1156 “An Act to Allow Military Surplus Vehicles to Be Collected and Used in Patriotic Exhibitions and Parades.”**

Testimony of Shenna Bellows, Secretary of State and  
Cathie Curtis, Deputy Secretary for the Bureau of Motor Vehicles,  
Department of the Secretary of State

April 1, 2025

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation, I am providing testimony in opposition of L.D. 1156 “An Act to Allow Military Surplus Vehicles to Be Collected and Used in Patriotic Exhibitions and Parades”.

Historically, Maine has adopted the philosophy that all vehicles designated for use on Maine roadways must meet the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards at the time of manufacture, the United States Environmental Protection Agency's pollutant requirements or the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration's crash testing standards. This is reflected in current Maine law, 29-A MRSA §101, sub-§47-A, which states that vehicles that do not meet these standards and were not originally manufactured to meet Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards are considered “Off-road Vehicles.”

This bill would allow military surplus vehicles that are lawfully purchased for civilian use to be registered and operated for participate in parades and other events, club activities and other activities; for transportation to and from these events and activities; and for maintenance, repair, sale and occasional pleasure driving.

It allows for the registration of military surplus vehicles upon application and evidence of the transfer of title from the United States Government to the registrant and an affidavit that the vehicle is garaged or maintained in the State. The registration must indicate that the vehicle is a military surplus vehicle.

It also requires the Secretary of State to create and issue a new license plate specifically for military surplus vehicles in a 3-number and 3-letter combination and to issue the new plate as vanity plates. The proposal sets a weight limit for military surplus vehicles not to exceed 10,000 pounds and requires these vehicles to be inspected except that the Chief of the State Police may provide certain exemptions.

We oppose this bill for five reasons.

1. It requires vehicles that were not manufactured for on-road use, to be operated on Maine's roadways, therefore creating a potential unsafe vehicle traveling at speeds that it may not be designed for. We must all be concerned for the safety of not just the owner or operator of the vehicle but for everyone else with whom they are sharing the road. They do not have restraint systems, or airbags, and are not designed with other occupant protection interior features to prevent serious injury or death. These vehicles are not manufactured to operate at high speeds,

which is common for general U.S. roadway traffic. They have heavier component parts which prevent damage and injury to the occupant in combat situations, but also increase the likelihood of injury or death to the occupant of another vehicle in the event of a crash. This heavier structure may cause the vehicle to be unstable. In a crash it may cause, significant damage to another vehicle and possible injury or death to the occupants in the other vehicle.

2. It restricts operation of the vehicles to exhibitions, parades, off-road events, and club activities and further states the vehicles cannot be used for general transportation purposes. We know from experience with antique vehicles, which are also restricted to use for exhibitions, parades, and club activities. This restriction is often and routinely ignored because it very difficult to enforce.
3. It requires a new plate to be issued and as you know, there is currently a moratorium on new plates.
4. There will be a significant fiscal note to create a new plate and to modify computer systems to distinguish the vehicle as a military surplus vehicle on registration documents.
5. We are also concerned that obtaining insurance for these vehicles will be problematic.

It is for these reasons we respectfully oppose this bill. Thank you for your time today and I will be happy to answer any questions.