

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Transportation Committee

BILL: CS/SB 222

INTRODUCER: Transportation Committee and Senator Wise

SUBJECT: License Plates/County/State Motto/Sunshine State

DATE: March 18, 2008

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Davis	Meyer	TR	Fav/CS
2.			CA	
3.			TA	
4.				
5.				
6.				

Please see Section VIII. for Additional Information:

A. COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE.....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Statement of Substantial Changes
B. AMENDMENTS.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Technical amendments were recommended
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Amendments were recommended
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Significant amendments were recommended

I. Summary:

This bill allows county tax collectors, as agents of the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV), to issue a new state license plate that includes the state motto ("In God We Trust"). This bill would allow drivers the choice of having the official state motto at the bottom of their license plate rather than the county name or state nickname ("Sunshine State"). This optional plate would be a standard plate, not a specialty plate. Drivers would not be required to pay any additional fees, and standard license plate fees would apply.

Current Florida law requires the license plate be imprinted with the word "Florida" at the top and the name of the county in which it is sold, or the state nickname, "Sunshine State" at the bottom. Counties may, upon majority vote of the county commission, elect to have the county name removed from the license plates sold within that county. The words "Sunshine State" appear on license plates in counties where the county names have been removed. In counties where the county name has been removed from license plates, this bill would give drivers an additional option of the state motto ("In God We Trust") appearing on their standard license plates.

Although there would be an initial stocking cost for the new plates with the "In God We Trust" graphic, there should also be a corresponding decrease in the sale of current license plates to

eventually negate the cost of the new plates. The \$30,000 contracted cost for programming would be the only permanent fiscal impact.

This bill substantially amends s. 320.06 of the Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

Currently, s. 320.06(3)(a), F.S., specifies standard license plates are to be printed with the phrase “Sunshine State” or the issuing county name on the license plate. Counties may, upon majority vote of the county commission, elect to have the county name removed from the license plates sold within that county. The words “Sunshine State” appear on license plates in counties where the county names have been removed. In those counties where the county commission has not removed the county name from the license plate, the tax collector may, in addition to issuing license plates with the county name printed on the license plate, also issue license plates with the words “Sunshine State” printed on the license plate subject to the approval of DHSMV and a legislative appropriation for the additional license plates. Florida automobile owners have an array of choices that include over 100 specialty license plates which require an additional fee and several “special” plates priced the same as standard plates.¹

“In God We Trust” was included in the state seal and flag of Florida adopted in 1886, and was adopted as the official state motto in the 2006 Florida Legislative Session.² In 1956, “In God We Trust” was established as the United States national motto. Additionally, “In God We Trust” has been printed on U.S. currency since the Civil War and has been mandated on all coin and paper currency since 1957.³

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

This bill allows county tax collectors to, in addition to issuing license plates with the county name printed on the license plate, also issue license plates with the state motto (“In God we Trust”), or the words “Sunshine State.” A county may, upon majority vote of the county commission, elect to have the county name removed from the license plates sold in that county. In counties opting to remove the county name, this bill would allow drivers the choice of having the official state motto at the bottom of their license plate rather than the state nickname (“Sunshine State”). This optional plate would be a standard plate, not a specialty plate. Drivers would not be required to pay any additional fees, and standard license plate fees would apply.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

¹ <http://www.flhsmv.gov/html/titlinf.html>

² s. 15.0301, F.S.

³ U.S. Mint Website- www.moneyfactory.gov

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

An additional license plate type will increase initial inventory stocking cost. An estimated supply of 100 plates would be needed at each of the 320 Tax Collector/Tag Office locations. With license plates costing \$1.67 each, DHSMV anticipates the estimated cost to be \$53,440. Although there would be an initial stocking cost for the new plates with the "In God We Trust" graphic, there should also be a corresponding decrease in the sale of current license plates to eventually negate the cost of the new plates. According to DHSMV, this bill will require 300 hours of programming at a cost of \$100 per hour. This \$30,000 contracted cost for programming would be the only permanent fiscal impact.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

The intent of the legislation is to allow drivers a third option of the state motto ("In God We Trust") appearing on their standard license plates; however, as currently written, the bill appears to only allow counties where the county name has been removed from license plates to offer drivers the choice of having the official state motto at the bottom of their license plate. According to DHSMV, there are only two counties, Bay and Miami-Dade, which have removed their county name. The DHSMV recommends removing the sentence stating, "in counties opting to remove the county name, license plates that have the state motto printed on the bottom and license plates that have the words 'Sunshine State' printed on the bottom shall both be offered for issuance" to clarify the statutory language and match the intent of the bill.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

CS by Transportation on March 18, 2008:

As originally written, the bill excluded counties (Miami-Dade and Bay) which have previously removed their county name from the license plate. The CS reorganizes the

current statutory language and the intent of the CS is to allow the state motto license plate to be available in all 67 Florida counties; however, as currently written, the bill appears to only allow counties where the county name has been removed from license plates to offer drivers the choice of having the official state motto at the bottom of their license plate.

B. Amendments:

None.