

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

**BILL #:** HB 435 Gold Star License Plates

**SPONSOR(S):** Burgess, Jr.

**TIED BILLS:** **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** SB 88

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR or BUDGET/POLICY CHIEF
1) Highway & Waterway Safety Subcommittee	8 Y, 0 N	Whittaker	Smith
2) Transportation & Economic Development Appropriations Subcommittee	13 Y, 0 N	Cobb	Davis
3) Economic Affairs Committee	15 Y, 0 N	Whittaker	Pitts

### SUMMARY ANALYSIS

The Gold Star special license plate, created in 2007, was developed to honor the family members of service members who have been killed while serving in the Armed Forces of the United States. To qualify for a Gold Star license plate, the applicant must be directly related to a fallen service member as spouse, legal mother or father, or stepparent who is currently married to the mother or father of the fallen service member.<sup>1</sup>

The bill expands the list of individuals who qualify for issuance of a Gold Star license plate to include the following family members of a fallen service member upon payment of the appropriate license tax and fees:

Parent through adoption	Child	Brother/Sister
Foster parent	Stepchild	Half-brother
Grandparent	Adopted child	Half-sister

Additionally, the bill removes the requirement that the stepparent must be currently married to the mother or father of the fallen service member.

The fiscal impact of the bill is indeterminate. The bill will have a negative, but likely insignificant fiscal impact to the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHMSV) for each additional Gold Star plate that must be manufactured. The bill may have a positive, but likely insignificant fiscal impact to state trust funds due to revenues generated from the sales of additional Gold Star plates. See fiscal comments.

The bill provides an effective date of upon becoming a law.

<sup>1</sup> s. 320.0894, F.S.

# FULL ANALYSIS

## I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

### A. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

#### Present Situation

##### ***Gold Star License Plate***

The Gold Star special license plate, created in 2007, was developed to honor the family members of service members who have been killed while serving in the Armed Forces of the United States. To qualify for a Gold Star license plate, the applicant must be directly related to a fallen service member as spouse, legal mother or father, or stepparent who is currently married to the mother or father of the fallen service member.<sup>2</sup>

The Gold Star plate bears a unique design that includes the symbol for a fallen service member: a gold star with blue fringe on a white background with a red border.<sup>3</sup>



A qualifying surviving spouse and a surviving parent, upon application, are issued the Gold Star license plate for one vehicle per household free of charge. Renewal decals are also issued free of charge. Other qualifying applicants, or additional household license plates, are subject to payment of the license tax and appropriate fees. Each initial application for a Gold Star license plate must include documented proof that the service member was killed while serving and proof of relationship to the service member.<sup>4</sup>

During fiscal year 2014-15, there were 51 Gold Star license plates issued and as of August 2015, there were 564 active registrations statewide.<sup>5</sup>

#### Proposed Change

The bill amends s. 320.0894(4)(a), F.S., expanding the list of individuals who qualify for issuance of a Gold Star license plate to include the following family members of a fallen service member upon payment of the appropriate license tax and fees:

Parent through adoption	Child	Brother/Sister
Foster parent	Step child	Half brother
Grandparent	Adopted child	Half sister

Additionally, the bill removes the requirement that the stepparent must be currently married to the mother or father of the fallen service member.

### B. SECTION DIRECTORY:

**Section 1** Amends s. 320.0894, F.S., including certain individuals as qualified for issuance of a Gold Star license plate.

**Section 2** Provides an effective date of upon becoming a law.

<sup>2</sup> s. 320.0894(4)(a)2., F.S.

<sup>3</sup> s. 320.0894(1), F.S.

<sup>4</sup> s. 320.0894(3)-(4), F.S.

<sup>5</sup> Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, Agency Analysis of 2016 House Bill 435, (November 25, 2015) (on file with the Economic Affairs Committee).

## II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

### A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

#### 1. Revenues:

The bill will have a positive, but likely insignificant fiscal impact to state trust funds. If a Gold Star plate is purchased to replace a plate prior to the original plate's scheduled ten year replacement date, the purchaser would have to pay \$28 to obtain the Gold Star plate. .

#### 2. Expenditures:

The state will pay \$2.82 in manufacturing costs for each additional Gold Star license plate issued.<sup>6</sup> A standard license plate costs \$1.57 to manufacture, so there will be a net cost of \$1.25 for each additional Gold Star plate manufactured.<sup>7</sup> The cost to implement this bill will be absorbed within the DHSMV's existing resources.

### B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

#### 1. Revenues:

None.

#### 2. Expenditures:

None.

### C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

Any newly eligible family member who chooses to purchase a Gold Star license plate will pay \$28 if the Gold Star plate replaces a plate prior to the original plate's scheduled ten year replacement date; otherwise, the same taxes and fees will apply as if he or she were issued a standard license plate.<sup>8</sup>

### D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

None

## III. COMMENTS

### A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

#### 1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

The bill does not require a municipality or county to expend funds or to take any action requiring the expenditure of funds. The bill does not reduce the authority that municipalities or counties have to raise revenues in the aggregate. The bill does not require a reduction of the percentage of state tax shared with municipalities or counties.

#### 2. Other:

None

### B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

---

<sup>6</sup> Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, Agency Analysis of 2016 House Bill 435, (November 25, 2015) (on file with the Economic Affairs Committee).

<sup>7</sup> Email from the DHSMV (Dec. 17, 2015)(on file with the Economic Affairs Committee)

<sup>8</sup> License taxes vary based on type and weight of vehicle. *See* s. 320.08, F.S.

None

**C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:**

The bill expands the list of individuals who qualify for issuance of a Gold Star license plate. One of the individuals on the expanded list is the parent through adoption. It is unclear what distinction there may be between a parent through adoption and a legal mother or father who already qualify for the Gold Star license plate

**IV. AMENDMENTS/ COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES**

None