

- SUBJECT:** Specialty license plates for retired military regardless of service time
- COMMITTEE:** Defense and Veterans' Affairs — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 7 ayes — S. King, Frank, Aycock, Blanco, Farias, Schaefer, Shaheen
0 nays
- WITNESSES:** For — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Morgan Little and Jim Brennan, Texas Coalition of Veterans Organizations)

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Jeremiah Kuntz, Texas Department of Motor Vehicles)
- BACKGROUND:** Transportation Code, sec. 504.303 requires the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles to issue specialty license plates for former members of the United States armed forces. Retired members who have completed 20 or more years of satisfactory federal service are eligible to receive specialty plates that designate the appropriate military branch and include the word “Retired.”

Retired members of the Texas National Guard and Texas State Guard who have completed 20 or more years of satisfactory federal service also are eligible to receive specialty plates that include the words “Texas Guard.”

A letter from any military branch under the U.S. Department of Defense or Department of Homeland Security confirming that the retired member of the armed forces has completed at least 20 years of satisfactory federal service is sufficient to establish eligibility. A similar letter from the U.S. Department of Defense, Department of the Army, or Department of the Air Force is sufficient to establish a retired guard member’s eligibility.
- DIGEST:** HB 789 would require the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles to issue specialty license plates for retired members of the United States armed

forces, Texas National Guard, and Texas State Guard regardless of how long they had served.

A retired armed forces member could establish eligibility by producing an identification card indicating that the member was retired and issued by any military branch under the U.S. Department of Defense or Department of Homeland Security. A retired member of the Texas National Guard or the Texas State Guard also could establish eligibility by producing an identification card indicating that the member was retired and issued by the Department of Defense, Department of the Army, or Department of the Air Force.

This bill would take effect September 1, 2015.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

HB 789 would honor all those who served this country in uniform but were unable give the 20 years of service necessary to receive retired military license plates. Requirements in current law overlook a large number of veterans whose time in the armed forces was shortened due to injury or other issues. Some of these men and women intended to serve long military careers, and this bill would honor their status as retired members of the armed forces, regardless of when they retired from the military.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

No apparent opposition.