

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

H.B. 377
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Veteran Affairs & Border Security
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Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Texas is home to one of the largest veteran populations in the country. Active and retired service members may choose from a selection of specialty license plates through the DMV honoring their military service. Under current law, spouses of military veterans are able to register specialty plates for their vehicle, even if the veteran precedes them in death. The spouse may continue to register and keep the specialty plates but cannot newly register specialty plates. This loophole prevents them from being able to honor their loved ones' service to our nation upon the sale and purchase of a new vehicle or if they moved to the state after the death of the veteran. This was not the intent of the program, which was to provide the families of decorated veterans with certain benefits.

H.B. 377 allows all surviving spouses of deceased veterans the ability to order the same specialty plates that the veteran would have been able to order, were they still alive. This benefit remains in place as long as the surviving spouse does not remarry and closes the loophole in current statute that prevents a spouse of a deceased veteran from being able to honor the memory of their loved one's service to our nation.

H.B. 377 amends current law relating to the issuance of specialty license plates to surviving spouses of certain military veterans.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 504.302, Transportation Code, by adding Subsection (a-1) and amending Subsection (b), as follows:

(a-1) Provides that the surviving spouse of a person who would be eligible for a specialty license plate under Section 504.308 (Distinguished Flying Cross Medal Recipients), 504.310 (World War II Veterans), 504.315 (Military Specialty License Plates for Extraordinary Service), 504.316 (Legion of Merit Medal Recipients), or 504.319 (Defense Superior Service Medal Recipients) is entitled to register one vehicle under the applicable section as long as the spouse remains unmarried.

(b) Requires an applicant, rather than an applicant for registration, under this section (Surviving Spouses of Certain Military Veterans) to submit proof of the eligibility of the applicant's deceased spouse for the applicable specialty license plate.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2017.