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2007 ASSEMBLY BILL 80

February 20, 2007 – Introduced by Representatives Gottlieb, Musser, Albers, Berceau, Bies, Friske, Gronemus, Hahn, Hines, Kerkman, Kleefisch, Lothian, Montgomery, A. Ott, Suder, Townsend, Travis, Molepske, Vos, Sinicki and Gunderson, cosponsored by Senators Breske, Coggs, S. Fitzgerald, Grothman, Kedzie, Lassa, Leibham, Plale, Roessler and Schultz. Referred to Committee on Transportation.

AN ACT to amend 341.14 (6r) (f) 19m. of the statutes; relating to: special distinguishing registration plates for persons who have had an immediate family member die while in military service.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

Under current law, any group or organization may apply to the Department of Transportation (DOT) for designation as an authorized special group. If the application is approved, members of the authorized special group may obtain special distinguishing registration plates for certain vehicles, including automobiles and motor homes, that are owned or leased by special group members. A fee, in addition to the regular registration fee for the particular kind of vehicle, is assessed for the issuance or reissuance of most special plates.

Before October 2, 1998, authorized special groups whose members may obtain special distinguishing registration plates were specifically enumerated in state law. Current law provides that specific enumeration in state law of authorized special groups is limited to those special groups enumerated before October 2, 1998. In 2005 Wisconsin Act 25 (the biennial budget bill), a special group was enumerated for persons who have had an immediate family member die in combat while serving in the U.S. armed forces. The design of these special plates, which are colored red, white, and blue, must include a gold star flag.

Under current federal law, gold star lapel buttons may be furnished to the widows, parents, and next of kin of members of the armed forces who lost their lives:

1) during World War I, World War II, or during any subsequent period of armed

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hostilities in which the United States was engaged before July 1, 1958; 2) after June 30, 1958, while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States, while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force, or while serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict in which the United States was not a belligerent party against an opposing armed force; or 3) after March 28, 1973, as a result of an international terrorist attack against the United States or a foreign nation friendly to the United States or as a result of military operations while serving outside the United States as part of a peacekeeping force.

This bill makes changes to who may obtain these "gold star" special plates by identifying the special group as persons who have had an immediate family member die while serving in the U.S. armed forces or in forces incorporated as part of the U.S. armed forces if the immediate family member meets any of the eligibility criteria specified under federal law for a gold star lapel button. The bill does not change the definition under current law for "immediate family member."

For further information see the **state** fiscal estimate, which will be printed as an appendix to this bill.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. 341.14 (6r) (f) 19m. of the statutes is amended to read:

341.14 **(6r)** (f) 19m. Persons who have had an immediate family member die in combat while serving in the U.S. armed forces or in forces incorporated as part of the U.S. armed forces if the immediate family member meets any of the eligibility criteria specified in 10 USC 1126 (a) (1) to (3) for a gold star lapel button.

SECTION 2. Effective date.

(1) This act takes effect on the first day of the 2nd month beginning after publication.

9 (END)