

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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SB 93

Specialty License Plates

Specialty license plates are sweeping the country. By January 21, 2011, Alaska legislators had introduced bills for Choose Life, LaoVeteran, National Rifle Association, and In God We Trust specialty license plates. The 26th Legislature approved firefighter, fraternal order¹ and Iditarod finisher license plates and made a change in the Children's Trust specialty plate funds in a total of 15 committee meetings, entailing 9 versions of bills, and requiring one concurrent resolution.

Each license plate request takes legislative attention away from more pressing state matters and creates monetary and staff costs of drafting, duplicating, distributing, posting, scheduling, and amending. Legislatively created fundraising plates require the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to track and request for re-appropriation small accounts of money. Other plates require the DMV to verify a status (such as HB 92 "the owner must present evidence satisfactory to the department that the owner served in combat as required by this subsection") to complete a transaction. Two legislatively created plates from 1998 (dog mushing and arts) have never been issued.

There is a better way. About half of the states currently allow administrative approval for license plates. The Alaska Division of Motor Vehicles supports this bill, including the effective date.

SB 93

- Gives the Division of Motor Vehicles authority to develop a procedure for administrative review and award of specialty license plates.
- Requires DMV to develop a standard template so all specialty plates will be easily readable and recognizable for law enforcement.
- Creates standard regulations, fees and procedures that will apply to all specialty license plates.
- Will result in cost savings for the state as administrative responsibilities of confirming eligibility, collecting and accounting for funds for the non-profit, and developing the license plate artwork and design are transferred to the sponsoring organization. DMV processing of plate applications is streamlined as the applications will be submitted in batches by sponsoring organizations.
- Is revenue neutral. The \$30/vehicle specialty registration fee covers the cost of producing and issuing the specialty plates.

¹ No fraternal orders have yet applied for the plates authorized in 2010.