

MINUTES OF THE SENATE TRANSPORTATION & TOURISM COMMITTEE.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Senator Ben Vidricksen at 9:05 a.m. on March 10, 1999 in Room 254-E of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Senator Nancey Harrington

Committee staff present: Hank Avila, Legislative Research Department
Bruce Kinzie, Revisor of Statutes
Marian F. Holeman, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Rep. Dan Johnson
Rep. Galen Weiland
Herb Taylor
Chuck Yonkers, American Legion

Others attending: See attached sheet

HB 2094: Fees for license plates for U.S. Military Veterans

Representative Dan Johnson appeared in support of this bill, explaining that when he introduced the bill for the distinctive license plate for veterans he understood that all plates had the same fee and he strongly supports this bill to make that a reality (Attachment 1). Representative Galen Weiland also testified in support of the bill, as many veterans feel it is an insult to ask them to pay this extra fee when it is supposed to be an honor (Attachment 2). Herb Taylor, another proponent, cited the fact that National Guard plates do not have an additional cost as well as other special veteran plates (Attachment 3). Charles M. Yunker, Department Adjutant, Kansas American Legion, provided background information regarding the original authorization of the US Military veteran license tags, also stressing the fixed income status of older retired veterans. The Legion strongly supports equal treatment for all (Attachment 4)

Senator Jordan moved to report **HB 2094** favorable for passage. Senator Gilstrap seconded the motion. Motion carried. The Chair asked if the committee would recommend placing the bill on the consent calendar. Senator Jordan so moved. Senator Gilstrap seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Minutes - approval of

Senator Goodwin moved to approved the minutes of February 24, 1999. Senator Gilstrap seconded the motion. Motion carried.

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HUMAN RESOURCES
BUDGET COMMITTEE

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Fees for license plates for United States military veterans

March 10, 1999

Topeka, Kansas

Presented by Representative
Dan Johnson

Chairman Vidricksen and members of the Senate Committee on Transportation and Tourism. I am Representative Dan Johnson. I am here to support House Bill 2094.

Two years ago, I was here to introduce House Bill number 2170 which was the bill that made the distinctive license plate for veterans a reality. At that time, it was my understanding that all distinctive license plates had the same fee. Since then, it has become clear that they do not. I believe that it is unfair that some cost less than \$5 and the veterans plates cost more than \$40.

I support any effort to make all distinctive license plates cost the same.

I am proud to have distinctive plate number 2272 on my car. I believe that we should reduce the cost to that more veterans will be able to proudly display them.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear and speak on behalf of this bill. I will be happy to stand for questions.

STATE OF KANSAS

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MR CHAIRMAN & MEMBERS OF THE
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Thank you for holding this Hearing today on HB 2094. I am State Representative Galen Weiland representing Doniphan and Brown Counties.

I have had many veterans contact me about the charge for this license plate. The cost is not the total issue. Many told me they were insulted that we would ask them to pay, when the purple heart plate is not an extra cost.

They were very proud they had served their country and that we honored them with a plate, but would not buy one because they could not afford or felt insulted.

Thank you again.

SN TRANSPORTATION & TOURISM COMM
March 10, 1999
Attachment #2

2-1

March 10, 1999

Herb Taylor's proponent testimony on HB 2094:

Chairman Vidricksen and Honorable members of the Senate Transportation Committee, thank you for allowing me to address you today. My name is Herb Taylor; I am a fifth generation Kansas resident and have resided in Shawnee, Kansas for the past 30 years. I am a combat infantry veteran having served with the 4th Infantry Division for one year in the Republic of Viet Nam.

I stand here today to urge your support of HB 2094, an elimination of the special fees to obtain a Veteran's License tag. Currently the fees are \$40.00, plus Local County handling fees, in addition to the regularly assessed tag fees and I find this outlandish for our military veterans. As an aside, and an even further aggravation to myself, as well as many other veterans, is the fact a Kansas National Guard tag costs nothing additional to the regular tag fees. I full well realize that some National Guard members may have served in the regular military forces but at the same time many did not and this is a personal affront to those of us that walked in "harm's way".

I have been told that these special tags, such as a Veteran's Tag, are profit generators for the State of Kansas. My question to you is, should the State of Kansas be making a profit off the backs of her military veterans? Veterans that gave a portion of their lives and at times parts of themselves in support of our Country? I think not! I think we Kansas residents should instead show our veterans how proud we are of their sacrifices!

Another point that came to mind as I went about securing my veterans tag last fall was the thought of how many veterans are living on fixed incomes. Many of the vets in this category are very proud of their military service but simply cannot afford one of these very nicely designed tags. These same veterans would be proud to show their allegiance and prior service to our Country if allowed to display a tag at a cost that is affordable.

I full well realize that the current "Purple Heart, POW or Pearl Harbor" tags also are provided to those veterans at no additional charge to the regular tag fees. If you stop and think of what these veterans endured or faced to qualify for that tag, we are still way overcharging them!

As a taxpaying Kansas resident and a military veteran, I urge you to support HB 2094 and eliminate the special tag fees for all qualified military veterans. If it is in the committee's heart to do so, thank you.

I currently display a veteran's tag on my vehicle and frankly would have one on both vehicles but cannot justify spending \$40.00 plus county fees twice. I value my life too much to push my luck with my wife at that point! And those of you on the committee that may know my wife understand full well what I mean.

In closing, I am very gratified to find that we had sixty-six co-sponsors on this bill in the House. Obviously many of our Kansas Representatives felt this was a justified and overdue tribute to our military veterans. The recent 122 - 0 passage of HB 2094 reflects how strongly the House supports this bill. I sincerely hope the Senate follows suite and passes this bill by the same majority. I stand here today to ask and urge this Committee to work this bill and pass it to the full Senate for further consideration and passage.

I am proud to be a Kansan and look forward to the Kansas Senate showing all veterans and myself how proud you are of us!

Thank you and I stand for questions.



Herb Taylor
12317 West 74th Terrace
Shawnee, Kansas 66216

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF
HOUSE BILL 2094
PRESENTED TO
SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
BY CHARLES M. YUNKER, DEPT. ADJUTANT
KANSAS AMERICAN LEGION

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to address you on behalf of The Kansas American Legion in support of House Bill 2094. My name is Chuck Yunker and I serve The American Legion as its State Adjutant.

When the current "Kansas US Veteran" license plate was authorized by the Legislature it was done so as a compromise designed to satisfy all Kansas citizens who served in the Armed Forces during our nation's various wars and conflicts. That is; those veterans who thankfully did not qualify for an Ex-Prisoner of War or Purple Heart license plate were seeking a distinctive plate identifying them as a former service member. Added to the mix were various veterans groups who sought their own distinctive license plates such as "retired military", "U.S. Army veterans", "veteran of a foreign war" (not to be confused with the organization known as the Veterans of Foreign Wars), and yes The American Legion, VFW and others were very interested in a distinctive place recognizing membership in their organizations.

Thus rather than authorizing license plates recognizing each branch of the military, every veterans organization and even specific service within the military such as Infantry, Airborne,

Navy Seals, etc. the legislature chose to authorize one plate for everyone. Although The American Legion would like to have its own "American Legion" plate, we applaud the Legislature's action because like the Legislature, The American Legion believes veterans are veterans regardless of how long or where they served, or their specific branch or duties while in the Armed Forces.

Unfortunately, as you know, many veterans are on fixed incomes especially those of the World War II generation who as retired persons make up the bulk of Kansas veterans. Others, such as our youngest veterans are still getting started in life therefore the cost of a "Veterans" license plate becomes a real budget item in many households. Personally I'm in the middle age wise, but I haven't purchased a Kansas Veterans license plate because I choose to apply the additional cost to my children's college education fund.

The purpose of House Bill 2094 is to lower the cost of Kansas' veteran license plate therefore making it more affordable for all veterans to proclaim their service to America. The American Legion fully supports HB2094 and urges your approval of it.

Again thank you for allowing me this opportunity to testify before you in support of HB2094.