

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB-136

By Wayne Bollig, Veteran Services Director, Kansas Commission on Veterans' Affairs

Chairman Peterson and members of the committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to come before you in support of SB-136.

As the Director of Veteran Services, I am privileged to visit with, and receive input from, veterans across the state, both directly and through our 13 veteran services offices. For several years now, we have been receiving requests from veterans. The requests have included Kansas having the designation of "Veteran" on the Kansas Driver's License, or if we cannot do that, they ask that we create a Veterans ID card issued by the state.

Legislation to add a veteran designation on state-issued ID cards is currently pending in 12 states, including Kansas. Eight (8) states currently do not have any pending legislation that we are aware of, seven (7) if you do not count Washington D.C. among those without pending legislation. Only two (2) states, one currently in law and one pending, have elected to have a separate ID card rather than designate it on the license.

Adding the designation of "Veteran" to the Driver's license is a shortcut that would be beneficial to veterans for securing state veterans license plates, or simply getting military discounts at a hotel or retailer. With more service members returning home from overseas, this also provides our veterans with a safer, more efficient way to prove eligibility for benefits that doesn't involve passing out copies of discharge documents that contain confidential information, including their Social Security number, address, birthdate, and more.

As you can see from the attached list, most states have seen the benefit to the veteran and the state of making this feature available to veterans. However, we also believe we must be sensitive to our veterans; therefore, it must be voluntary. It must be up to the veteran whether he/she wants this designation (like we do with the Kansas veterans license plates). We also believe it should be a simple designation of "Veteran" on the license. We would recommend something similar to the designation used by New Mexico (see the attached photos.)

Lastly, we believe that we can use this as an opportunity to help us identify veterans to ensure they are getting the benefits to which they are entitled. To this end, we would request SB-136 be amended, first to simply designate "Veteran" on the license. We would also request that on an annual basis, the Department of Revenue, in a manner mutually agreed upon between the Department of Revenue and the Kansas Commission on Veterans' Affairs, provide an electronic list of all individuals who have been approved for the veteran designation on their driver's license, and any of those who have purchased one of the distinctive veterans license plates.

Thank you and I would now be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Status of Veterans Designations on Driver's Licenses:

Alabama – None
Alaska – Pending Legislation (HB 180)
Arizona – Pending Legislation
Arkansas – Driver's License Designation
California – Pending Legislation (SB 1355)
Colorado – Driver's License Designation (more info)
Connecticut – Driver's License Designation
Delaware – Driver's License Designation
Florida – Driver's License Designation
Georgia – Driver's License Designation
Hawaii – None
Idaho – None
Illinois – Driver's License Designation (beginning July 2015)
Indiana – Driver's License Designation
Iowa – Driver's License Designation (starting 2013)
Kansas – Pending Legislation
Kentucky – Driver's License Designation
Louisiana – Driver's License Designation
Maine – Driver's License Designation
Maryland – Driver's License Designation (enacted Jan. 1, 2013)
Massachusetts – Driver's License Designation
Michigan – Pending Legislation (House Bill 4127)
Minnesota – Driver's License Designation
Mississippi – Driver's License Designation
Missouri – Driver's License Designation
Montana – None
Nebraska – None
Nevada – Pending Proposal in 2013
New Hampshire – Pending Legislation (SB 313)
New Jersey – Veterans ID Cards Available at County Level (Pending Legislation at the state level: A691 and S717)
New Mexico – Driver's License Designation
New York – Pending Legislation (S6453-2011)
North Carolina – Driver's License Designation (law passed; not yet available).
North Dakota – Driver's License Designation
Ohio – Driver's License Designation
Oklahoma – Driver's License Designation
Oregon – Driver's License Designation
Puerto Rico – Driver's License Designation
Pennsylvania – Driver's License Legislation (HB 2428)
Rhode Island – Pending Legislation
South Carolina – Driver's License Designation
South Dakota – Driver's License Designation
Tennessee – Driver's License Designation (Fall 2012)
Texas – Driver's License Designation
Utah – Driver's License Designation
Vermont – None
Virginia – Separate Veterans ID card
Washington – Pending Legislation (House Bill 2378)
Washington D.C. – None
West Virginia – Driver's License Designation
Wisconsin – Pending Legislation
Wyoming – None

New Mexico Driver's License Photos

