

Memorandum in Support of Adding The American Legion Emblem to Kansas State License Tags

Good Afternoon. My name is Chuck Shoemaker, State Commander of the Kansas American Legion. I have a brief statement on behalf of the organization on House Bill 2592, the issuing of distinctive license plates for several organizations including the Kansas American Legion.

The American Legion was Chartered by the United States Congress on March 15, 1919 as a patriotic veteran’s organization devoted to mutual helpfulness for returning soldiers from WW-1. Now in the 101st year, it became the world’s largest Wartime Veterans Service Organization, populated today by almost 2 million members.

The American Legion is built on a foundation of 4 pillars.

- **Americanism**: American Flag etiquette; involvement in voter registration and participation; sponsorship of Boy Scouts.
- **Children and Youth**: Sponsoring American Legion Baseball; conducting Boys State; holding a National Oratorical contest for High School Students.
- **National Security**: Support for Homeland Security; Advocating an effective Immigration Policy; Maintaining a Strong National Defense.
- **Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation**: Support for Veterans with Special and other Needs; the Heroes to Hometowns Program; Authorship of the GI Bill by our own Kansas Native Harry W. Colmery: and contributions to the Montgomery GI Bill, to name a few.

The Department of Kansas American Legion currently has approximately 27,000 Members. Those Members are from all Five Branches of the Armed Forces; The Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, and the Reserves and National Guard Components.

There are currently 277 American Legion Posts across the Great State of Kansas which are made up of those Veterans that live within the Cities, Towns, Communities and rural areas of our State.

Recently, The American Legion eligibility dates were changed by Congress to allow ANY Member of our Armed Forces that served at least one day of Active Military Service since December 7, 1941 (commonly known as Pearl Harbor Day), with an Honorable Discharge, to join the Organization. Membership is open to active Military as well and are welcomed to join.

As one can imagine, the above programs just mentioned can only be provided and maintained through the volunteer service of our members. It is due to their service and generosity to the Legion that our programs provide Veterans with much needed assistance in areas that make transition to civilian life more comfortable...as they disengage from the environment of military service.

When Kansas Veterans see The American Legion Emblem on State License Tags, this may encourage those Veterans that are not Members to join The American Legion, helping us to continue supporting the many programs that our organization sponsors through the Four Pillars of The American Legion.

With the Legislature approving passage of the Act to allow The American Legion Emblem to be placed on Kansas License Tags, Honorable and Noble Veterans', that have earned the right to proudly display the emblem, will be able to proclaim Membership in the American Legion, another avenue to show their dedication and support for our State and Country.

We appreciate the work of the legislature on the Act, and in particular Senator Kevin Braun, for involvement in the legislation, for his military service to our country, his support of the Kansas American Legion, and to all, for your service to the citizens of the Great State of Kansas. Thank you.