

Senate Bill 257

By: Senators Douglas of the 17th, Staton of the 18th, Johnson of the 1st, Shafer of the 48th, Balfour of the 9th and others

**AS PASSED**

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 3 of Chapter 2 of Title 40 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,  
2 relating to prestige license plates for motor vehicles, so as to provide for special license  
3 plates supporting Georgia troops; to provide for issuance, renewal, fees, licensing  
4 agreements, applications, and transfers relative to such license plates; to state legislative  
5 intent with respect to use of fees; to provide for related matters; to provide an effective date;  
6 to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

7 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:**

8 **SECTION 1.**

9 Article 3 of Chapter 2 of Title 40 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to  
10 prestige license plates for motor vehicles, is amended by adding a new Code Section  
11 40-2-86.10 to read as follows:

12 "40-2-86.10.

13 (a) There shall be issued beginning in 2006 special and distinctive vehicle license plates  
14 identifying persons supporting Georgia troops subject to the conditions set forth in this  
15 Code section.

16 (b) The commissioner shall design special distinctive license plates to identify persons  
17 who support Georgia troops. The license plates must be of the same size as general issue  
18 motor vehicle license plates and shall include a unique design and identifying number,  
19 whereby the total number of characters does not exceed six. No two recipients shall  
20 receive identically numbered plates. The license plate will contain the words 'Support  
21 Georgia Troops' in the space normally containing the county of issuance. Such design shall  
22 not provide space in which to indicate the name of the county of issuance. The graphic on  
23 the special license plate shall be placed to the left of the alphanumeric characters and shall  
24 be no larger than three inches by three inches.

25 (c) Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions of this Code section, this Code section shall  
26 not be implemented until such time as the State of Georgia has, through a licensing

1 agreement or otherwise and at no cost to the state, received such licenses or other  
2 permissions as may be required for the use of any logo or as may otherwise be necessary  
3 or appropriate to implement this Code section. No royalty, license fee, or other moneys  
4 shall be paid to any organization or its licensor for the use by the state of such logo or  
5 design on license plates authorized by this Code section. The commissioner may charge  
6 fees, take other actions, and agree to or impose terms and conditions which might normally  
7 be envisioned in licensing and cross-licensing agreements for the use of designs and similar  
8 intellectual property. Without limitation, the commissioner may agree to allow to others  
9 the exclusive or nonexclusive use of the design of the special license plate. The design of  
10 the special license plate, excepting only any part of the design owned by others and  
11 licensed to the state, shall be owned solely by the State of Georgia for its exclusive use and  
12 control, except as authorized by the commissioner. The commissioner may take such steps  
13 as may be necessary to give notice of and protect such right, including the copyright.  
14 However, such steps shall be cumulative of the ownership and exclusive use and control  
15 established by this subsection as a matter of law and no person shall reproduce or otherwise  
16 use such design, except as authorized by the commissioner.

17 (d) Beginning in calendar year 2006, any qualified Georgia resident who is the owner of  
18 a motor vehicle, except a vehicle registered under the International Registration Plan, upon  
19 complying with the motor vehicle laws relating to registration and licensing of motor  
20 vehicles and upon the payment of a manufacturing fee of \$25.00 in addition to the regular  
21 motor vehicle registration fee shall be issued a license plate identifying him or her as a  
22 person who supports Georgia troops. Revalidation decals shall be issued for such license  
23 plates in the same manner as provided for general issue license plates.

24 (e) An applicant may request a license plate identifying him or her as a person who  
25 supports Georgia troops at any time during the applicant's registration period. If such a  
26 license plate is to replace a current valid license plate, such license plate shall be issued  
27 with appropriate decals attached.

28 (f) No special license plate authorized pursuant to this Code section shall be issued except  
29 upon the receipt by the department of at least 1,000 applications. The special license plate  
30 shall have an application period of two years after July 1, 2005, for payment of the  
31 manufacturing fee. After such time if the minimum number of applications is not met, the  
32 department shall not continue to accept the manufacturing fee, and all fees shall be  
33 refunded to applicants.

34 (g) The department shall not be required to continue to manufacture the special license  
35 plate if the number of active registrations falls below 500 registrations at any time during  
36 the five-year period as provided in subsection (b) of Code Section 40-2-31. A current  
37 registrant may continue to renew such special license plate during his or her annual

1 registration period upon payment of an additional \$25.00 annual special tag fee which fee  
2 shall be collected by the county tag agent at the time of collection of other registration fees  
3 and shall be remitted to the state as provided in Code Section 40-2-34. The department  
4 may continue to issue such special license plates that it has in its inventory to assist in  
5 achieving the minimum number of registrations. If the special license plate falls below 500  
6 active registrations at any time during the five-year period as provided in subsection (b) of  
7 Code Section 40-2-31, the department must receive 1,000 applications accompanied by the  
8 manufacturing fee to continue to manufacture the license plate.

9 (h) License plates identifying persons who support Georgia troops shall be transferred  
10 from one vehicle to another vehicle in accordance with the provisions of Code Section  
11 40-2-80.

12 (i) License plates identifying persons who support Georgia troops shall be issued within  
13 30 days of application once the requirements of this Code section have been met.

14 (j) The funds derived from the sale of license plates identifying persons supporting  
15 Georgia troops, less a \$1.00 processing fee, which shall be granted to county tag offices per  
16 plate sold, and less the actual manufacturing cost of the plates, shall be deposited in the  
17 general fund of the state treasury. As soon as practicable after December 31 of each year,  
18 the commissioner shall report the net amount derived from the sale of such license plates  
19 to the Office of Planning and Budget and the Department of Veterans Service. It is the  
20 intent of the General Assembly that the General Assembly appropriate an amount equal to  
21 the net proceeds from the sale of such license plates to the Department of Veterans Service  
22 for use by the National Guard Foundation in carrying out such programs and purposes as  
23 may be contractually agreed upon by the department and the foundation."

## 24 SECTION 2.

25 This Act shall become effective on July 1, 2005.

## 26 SECTION 3.

27 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.