

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

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Legislative Document

No. 704

S. P. 224

In Senate, March 2, 1977

Referred to the Committee on Transportation. Sent down for concurrence and ordered printed.

MAY M. ROSS, Secretary

Presented by Senator Carpenter of Aroostook.

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STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED  
SEVENTY-SEVEN

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**AN ACT Concerning Single Motor Vehicle Registration Plates and  
Placement of Motor Vehicle Inspection Stickers.**

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Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine, as follows:

**Sec. 1.** 29 MRSA § 106, as last amended by PL 1975, c. 56, is repealed and the following enacted in its place:

**§ 106. Expiration date**

The registration year for all vehicles except automobiles shall be from March 1st to the last day of February of the next calendar year. On and after February 1st, it shall be lawful to use and display on such vehicles a registration plate and any registration validation device issued for the following registration year.

Any person, firm or corporation that has a fleet of 5 or more automobiles and having a common expiration date for all automobiles in their fleet may petition the Secretary of State to have their common expiration date apply to any additional automobiles they acquire.

An automobile registration for which an annual month of expiration has been created shall expire annually on the last day of that month thereafter.

New registrations shall expire at the end of the month one year from the month of issuance.

A registration plate and any registration validation device issued for the following registration period, in the case of automobiles, may be displayed on the first day of the month in which a current registration expires or after

the first day of that month during which the following year's registration becomes effective in the case of a newly registered automobile.

A vehicle operated or remaining on a way shall display the valid registration plate and any validation device issued for the current registration period.

Sec. 2. 29 MRSA § 110, is repealed and the following enacted in its place:

§ 110. Form of plates

The Secretary of State shall furnish a suitable registration plate, seal and other distinguishing mark, without charge, to every person except dealers, manufacturers and holders of transporter registration plates whose vehicle is registered under this Title. Such plate shall be of a color or shade and form as the Secretary of State may determine and shall bear the word "Maine" or the abbreviation "Me." in letters not less than  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch in height and on plates issued for passenger vehicles for private use, hire cars and trucks, there shall be placed at the bottom thereof in letters not less than  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch in height the word "Vacationland." The numerals of the registration number thereon, except on motorcycle registration plates, shall be substantially not less than 3 inches high. The Secretary of State may select and issue a special distinguishing letter, mark or design for plates issued for any temporary or other special classes of registration and for use on motorcycles, trucks, trailers and tractors which are required to be registered under this Title.

Notwithstanding other provisions of the law, the Secretary of State may provide and issue a suitable device in lieu of a new registration plate for any year. Such device shall clearly indicate the year or period for which issued and shall be furnished only upon application and payment of registration fees required by statute, and when such device is so attached to the appropriate vehicle or to the plate thereon, such vehicle shall be deemed properly registered for the period specified, subject to suspension or revocation of registration as provided by statute.

The Secretary of State may issue a permanent registration plate so designed and equipped as to provide for the reregistration thereof by changing the expiration date on such plate in a location prescribed by the Secretary of State.

Sec. 3. 29 MRSA § 114, 2nd ¶, first sentence, is repealed and the following enacted in its place:

The Secretary of State is authorized to design and to issue a registration plate for antique motor vehicles.

Sec. 4. 29 MRSA § 117, as enacted by PL 1967, c. 41, is repealed and the following enacted in its place:

§ 117. Registration for members of Armed Forces returning from overseas duty

The provisions of this Title relative to the registration of motor vehicles and the display of a number plate shall not apply to motor vehicles having registrations and displaying plates issued by the Armed Forces of the United States in foreign countries for vehicles owned by military or naval personnel,

but that exemption shall be valid only for a period of 45 days after the owner thereof has returned to the United States.

**Sec. 5.** 29 MRSA § 151, 1st sentence, as last amended by PL 1973, c. 211, § 1, is further amended to read:

Upon the transfer of ownership, other than a transfer to the surviving spouse, of any vehicle, its registration shall expire and the person in whose name such vehicle is registered shall forthwith return the certificate of registration and number plate to the Secretary of State with a written notice containing the date of the transfer of ownership and the name, place of residence and address of the vendee and a description of the vehicle, including its motor, serial or vehicle identification number.

**Sec. 6.** 29 MRSA § 152, 1st sentence, as last amended by PL 1975, c. 589, § 1, is further amended to read:

Whoever transfers the ownership or discontinues the use of a registered motor vehicle, trailer or semitrailer and applies to the Secretary of State for registration of another motor vehicle, trailer or semitrailer in the same registration year shall be entitled to a certificate of registration permitting the use of a number ~~plates~~ plate of the proper class of registration thereon upon payment of a transfer fee of \$5, provided the fee is the same as that of the former vehicle.

**Sec. 7.** 29 MRSA § 154, as last amended by PL 1973, c. 211, § 3, is repealed and the following enacted in its place:

§ 154. Unused plates

The owner, or the surviving spouse, who returns a number plate with an affidavit that it has never been used and the Secretary of State is satisfied that the number plate has never been used, shall be refunded the registration fee paid.

**Sec. 8.** 29 MRSA § 192, as last amended by PL 1975, c. 589, § 5, is repealed and the following enacted in its place:

§ 192. Initial plates

The Secretary of State is authorized to design and to issue, under such regulations as he shall deem appropriate, an initial type registration plate or combination of initials and numeric type registration plate to be used on passenger motor vehicles, motor vehicles of the station wagon type, pickup trucks, motorcycles or camper vehicles in lieu of other numeric type registration plates. Such plate shall be of such design and shall bear such letters and numbers as the Secretary of State shall prescribe, but there shall be no duplication of identification.

The registration plate so provided shall be issued only upon application therefor and upon payment of an annual service fee of \$10. The service fee is to be in addition to the regular motor vehicle registration fee as prescribed by law for the particular vehicle. The amount received for such service fee shall be credited to the General Highway Fund and there shall be allocated

annually from the General Highway Fund a sum sufficient to defray the cost of this program.

Applications for a registration plate as prescribed above, pertaining to owners of passenger vehicles, motor vehicles of the station wagon type, pick-up trucks, motorcycles or camper vehicles who are residents of this State and who own an unrevoked and unexpired official amateur radio station license issued by the Federal Communications Commission, except those licensed as novices by the Federal Communications Commission, shall be accompanied by a notarized proof of ownership of such amateur radio station license. A registration plate issued under this paragraph shall be inscribed with the official amateur radio call letters of such applicant as assigned by the Federal Communications Commission.

Application for a new registration plate shall be received in the office of the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State may issue a facsimile plate for a 15-day period during the period of production of the semipermanent plate. The facsimile plate shall be attached to the rear plate bracket.

Sec. 9. 29 MRSA § 193, as last amended by PL 1975, c. 771, § 305, is repealed and the following enacted in its place:

§ 193. State officials

The Secretary of State shall, upon payment of the fees required in sections 109 and 242, subsection 1, paragraph A and application therefor, by Maine Members of the United States Senate, Maine Members of the United States House of Representatives, Members of the Legislature, Representatives of the Indian Tribes at the Legislature, President of the Senate, Speaker of the House, Secretary of the Senate and Clerk of the House, issue one specially designed number plate for one designated motor vehicle owned or controlled by each of the officials named. Upon request by a Maine Member of the United States Senate or by a Maine Member of the United States House of Representatives, the Secretary of State shall issue an additional specially designed number plate for a 2nd designated motor vehicle owned or controlled by that member. Such specially designed plate and its accompanying registration certificate shall be issued to, and used by, the named officials in lieu of the regular plate and registration provided for in section 110 at the option of the named officials. If any of the named officials shall choose to apply for a motor vehicle registration and plate as prescribed in section 110, and also request in addition to the regular registration and plate, that he be issued an additional specially designed plate together with its accompanying certificates of registration, the Secretary of State shall upon receipt of application and the payment of a fee of \$2 issue such special plate and registration certificate for such motor vehicle that is currently registered and assigned a regular registration plate. Any specially designed number plate issued to any of the named officials shall be valid only during the term of office for which the registrant is elected. In case the office is for any cause vacated during that term, such special number plate and registration certificate shall be immediately surrendered to the Secretary of State. Willful failure to comply with this requirement shall be a misdemeanor.

The color, shape, size, lettering and numbering of the special plate shall be determined by the Secretary of State, except the plate issued to Members of the House of Representatives, other than the Speaker of the House, shall bear the number of the seat assigned to such member, and except the plate issued to the Members of the Senate, except the President of the Senate, shall bear the number of the Senatorial District which the respective Senators represent.

Sec. 10. 29 MRSA § 242, sub-§ 1, ¶ A-1, as amended by PL 1973, c. 588, § 5, is repealed.

Sec. 11. 29 MRSA § 246, 5th ¶, 1st sentence, is amended to read:

The Secretary of State shall issue a registration plate ~~or plates~~ so designed that a farm motor truck registered under this section may be distinguished from commercial vehicles otherwise registered under this section.

Sec. 12. 29 MRSA § 251, 2nd ¶, is amended to read:

Any veteran who has lost both legs or the use of both legs and who has registered his motor vehicle without the payment of a fee as provided in this section upon certification by the Veterans Administration shall be issued a special designating ~~plates plate~~ to be used in addition to the regular registration ~~plates plate~~. Such a designating ~~plates plate~~ shall be issued by the Secretary of State and shall bear the words "Disabled Veteran."

Sec. 13. 29 MRSA § 252, as last amended by PL 1975, c. 16, §§ 1, 2, 3 and 4, is repealed and the following enacted in its place:

#### § 252. Handicapped persons

On annual application to the Secretary of State, with the payment of \$1, any handicapped person who has registered a motor vehicle shall be issued a special designating plate to be used in place of the regular registration plate or placard to be affixed to the sun visor of a motor vehicle registered by such a person. Such placard shall be so affixed that the information thereon shall be clearly legible from outside the motor vehicle. Such placard issued under this section shall include the motor vehicle registration plate number of the vehicle registered in the name of the handicapped person.

A handicapped person is herein defined to mean a person who is permanently confined to a wheelchair or restricted to the permanent use of crutches or braces or otherwise handicapped in such a way that his mobility is seriously restricted.

An application under this section shall be accompanied by the certificate of a physician as to that person's physical disability. Those persons who are found by their physicians to have permanent handicaps shall not be required to submit annual certificates following their initial qualification.

Any person other than a handicapped person issued a special designating plate or placard under this section shall be subject to a \$100 fine for use of the special designating plate or placard. The special designating plate or placard shall be suspended if improper use is permitted.

This special designating plate shall bear the International Symbol, easily recognizable at a distance, which indicates that the vehicle is owned by a handicapped person.

**Sec. 14.** 29 MRSA § 253, 1st ¶, is amended to read:

The Secretary of State on application shall issue, without the payment of any fee, a registration certificate and registration ~~plates~~ **plate** for a motorized invalid chair owned and operated by any invalid person when such application is accompanied by the certification of at least 2 physicians as to such person's physical incapacity.

**Sec. 15.** 29 MRSA § 254, is repealed.

**Sec. 16.** 29 MRSA § 256, 2nd ¶, 2nd sentence, as last amended by PL 1971, c. 360, § 16, is further amended to read:

All such vehicles shall display a registration ~~plates~~ **plate** as required by this Title or approved by the Secretary of State.

**Sec. 17.** 29 MRSA § 256, 4th ¶, as enacted by PL 1973, c. 469, § 5, is amended to read:

The Secretary of State may furnish counties, municipalities, school districts and water districts with a semipermanent ~~plates~~ **plate** for each vehicle, which plate shall expire at the end of each 6-year semipermanent plate program. Such plate ~~or plates~~ shall be of a design determined by the Secretary of State.

**Sec. 18.** 29 MRSA § 381, as last amended by PL 1971, c. 360, §§ 21 and 22, is repealed and the following enacted in its place:

**§ 381. Manner of display**

Each number plate displayed shall be horizontal. Not more than one number plate shall be displayed upon any vehicle, except as may be otherwise permitted by law.

Farm trucks, or any vehicle used for hauling forest products and required by law to be registered, may attach the number plate by means of a rigid or semirigid bracket designed so as to allow the plate to swing freely.

In the case of all vehicles, one number plate shall be attached to the rear plate bracket of that vehicle, so that the plate and the registered number thereon shall always be plainly visible; except that truck tractors as defined in section 1 shall display their plate on the front. The plate shall be kept clean and the numbers legible.

Commencing in October, 1976, all front number plates shall be removed at such time that registration for 1977 is accomplished and no front number plate shall be displayed thereafter. When the registration for truck tractors expires in 1977, the rear plate shall be removed and no plate shall be displayed on the rear.

**Sec. 19.** 29 MRSA § 382, 2nd ¶, is repealed and the following enacted in its place:

If the Secretary of State is unable to furnish immediately to any person entitled thereto any plate or marker provided in this Title, he may issue a temporary certificate with a temporary number plate, which certificate shall be carried and that plate displayed upon that vehicle in the same manner as required for regular certificates and number plates. In case a plate is lost in transportation, and the applicant shall certify in the affidavit that the plate has not been received by him and agrees that if it is received at some later date to return it forthwith, the Secretary of State, after a thorough investigation, may furnish the applicant with a 2nd plate without additional charge.

Sec. 20. 29 MRSA § 2122, 1st ¶, 3rd sentence, is amended to read:

If, at the time of such inspection, the condition of ~~said~~ that vehicle conforms in each and every respect as required by law and the rules and regulations governing inspection promulgated by the Chief of the State Police, an official inspection sticker as a certificate of inspection furnished by the Chief of the State Police shall be placed ~~in the lower left hand corner of the windshield~~ ~~or~~ in the center of the windshield back of the rear view mirror.

Sec. 21. **Effective date.** This Act shall become effective for the 1977 registration year.

#### STATEMENT OF FACT

Passage of this bill would create a \$54,000 savings in materials alone annually which would be a saving of approximately \$270,000 before the next plate issue, and using current costs, the savings in material for the new plate issue would be approximately \$375,000.

The purpose of this bill is to have just one registration plate for all vehicles and to change the placement of inspection stickers on all vehicles.