

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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FIRST REGULAR SESSION

ONE HUNDRED AND NINTH LEGISLATURE

Legislative Document

No. 685

S. P. 233

In Senate, February 21, 1979

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

Presented by Senator Trafton of Androscoggin.

Cosponsors: Senators Emerson of Penobscot, Usher of Cumberland, O'Leary of Oxford.

MAY M. ROSS, Secretary of the Senate

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED
SEVENTY-NINE

AN ACT to Provide for a Single Number Plate and to Revise Motor Vehicle Registration Fees.

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

Sec. 1. 29 MRSA § 1, sub-§ 1-C, as repealed and replaced by PL 1975, c. 731, § 19, is amended to read:

1-C. Automobile. "Automobile" shall mean a motor vehicle designed for the conveyance of passengers with a seating capacity of not more than 14 persons, excluding motor homes.

Sec. 2. 29 MRSA § 5-B is enacted to read:

5-B. Motor home. "Motor home" shall mean a self-propelled single chassis motor vehicle which is designed to be used as a self-contained temporary dwelling in conjunction with recreational, touring and other activities.

A motor home shall be deemed to be a motor home for the purposes of this Title even though it may be used for advertising, sales, display, or promotional purposes or for any other commercial purpose except the transportation of property.

Sec. 3. 29 MRSA § 106, 2nd sentence, as repealed and replaced by PL 1973, c. 588, § 1, is amended to read:

On and after February 1st it shall be lawful to use and display on such vehicles the number ~~plates~~ **plate** or suitable ~~devices~~ **device** in lieu thereof issued for the registration year.

Sec. 4. 29 MRSA § 106, last ¶, as repealed and replaced by PL 1973, c. 588, § 1, is amended to read:

~~Number A number~~ **plates** **plate** or a suitable device in lieu thereof furnished for the next registration period for automobiles may be displayed on the first day of the month in which the current registration expires.

Sec. 5. 29 MRSA § 110, first and 2nd sentences, are amended to read:

The Secretary of State shall furnish a suitable number ~~plates,~~ ~~seals~~ **plate, seal** and other distinguishing ~~marks~~ **mark**, without charge, to every person except dealers, manufacturers and holders of transporter registration plates whose vehicle is registered under this Title. Such ~~plates~~ **plate** shall be of a distinctly different color or shade each year and shall be in such form as the Secretary of State may determine; and shall bear the numerals of the year of issue or the last 2 numerals of said year, 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."

Sec. 6. 29 MRSA § 110, last ¶, is amended to read:

The Secretary of State may issue a permanent registration ~~plates~~ **plate** so designed and equipped as to provide for the reregistration thereof by changing the expiration date on such ~~plates~~ **plate** without the issuance of a new ~~plates~~ **plate**.

Sec. 7. 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. 8. 29 MRSA § 117, as enacted by PL 1967, c. 41, is amended to read:

§ 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 ~~plates~~ **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 ~~said that~~ exemption shall be valid only for a period of 45 days after the owner thereof has returned to the United States.

Sec. 9. 29 MRSA § 152, first sentence, as 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. 10. 29 MRSA § 154, as last amended by PL 1977, c. 481, § 5-B, 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. 11. 29 MRSA § 192, first ¶, as amended by PL 1975, c. 109, § 1, is further amended to read:

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

Sec. 12. 29 MRSA § 192, 2nd ¶, first sentence, as amended by PL 1975, c. 589, § 5 is further amended to read:

The registration ~~plates~~ **plate** so provided shall be issued only upon application therefor and upon payment of an annual service fee of \$10.

Sec. 13. 29 MRSA § 192, 3rd ¶, as amended by PL 1975, c. 109, § 2 is further amended to read:

Applications for a registration ~~plates~~ **plate** as prescribed above, pertaining to owners of passenger vehicles or motor vehicles of the station wagon type, pickup trucks or 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—plates~~ **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.

Sec. 14. 29 MRSA § 192, last ¶, first sentence, as repealed and replaced by PL 1969, c. 80 is amended to read:

Application for a new registration ~~plates~~ **plate** shall be received in the office of the Secretary of State.

Sec. 15. 29 MRSA § 193, as last amended by PL 1977, c. 78, § 166, is further amended to read:

§ 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 ~~pair of~~ specially designed number ~~plates~~ **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 ~~pair of~~ specially designed number ~~plates~~ **plate** for a 2nd designated motor vehicle owned or controlled by that member. Such specially designed ~~plates~~ **plate** and ~~their~~ **its** accompanying registration certificate shall be issued to, and used by, the named officials in lieu of the regular ~~plates~~ **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 ~~plates~~ **plate** as prescribed in section 110, and also request in addition to the regular registration and ~~plates~~ **plate**, that he or she be issued an additional ~~set of~~ specially designed ~~plates~~ **plate** together with their accompanying certificates of registration, the Secretary of State shall upon receipt of application and the payment of a fee of \$2 issue ~~such the~~ special ~~plates~~ **plate** and registration certificate for ~~such the~~ motor vehicle that is currently registered and assigned a regular registration ~~plates~~ **plate**. Any specially designed number ~~plates~~ **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 said term, ~~such the~~ special number ~~plates~~ **plate** and registration certificate shall be immediately surrendered to the Secretary of State.

The color, shape, size, lettering and numbering of the special ~~plates~~ **plate** shall be determined by the Secretary of State, except the ~~plates~~ **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 ~~plates~~ **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. 16. 29 MRSA § 241, first sentence, as last amended by PL 1975, C. 589, § 6, is further amended to read:

Replacement number plates shall be furnished to replace lost or mutilated plates for ~~\$5~~ **\$3** each.

Sec. 17. 29 MRSA § 244, 4th ¶, as amended by PL 1975, c. 252, § 8, is further amended to read:

Mobile homes shall be registered and pay a fee of ~~¥5~~ **\$10** for such registration.

Sec. 18. 29 MRSA § 246, 1st ¶ is amended to read:

With each application for registration of a **motor home**, motor truck, tractors and truck tractors shall be paid an annual registration fee graduated as follows when equipped with pneumatic tires:

Sec. 19. 29 MRSA § 246, 3rd ¶, as amended by PL 1977, c. 481, § 8-A, is further amended by adding at the end the following:

From 50,001 pounds gross weight to 54,000 pounds gross weight
.....**\$300.**

Sec. 20. 29 MRSA § 246, 5th ¶, first 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. 21. 29 MRSA § 253, first ¶, 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. 22. 29 MRSA § 254 is repealed.

Sec. 23. 29 MRSA § 256, sub-§ 2, first ¶, as amended by PL 1977, c. 481, § 9, is further amended to read:

All county, municipal, school and water district vehicles shall be registered with the Secretary of State who shall furnish a semipermanent ~~plates~~ **plate** for each vehicle which shall expire at the end of each 10-year semipermanent plate program. The vehicles shall be exempt from this Title as to payment of registration fees, but shall not be exempt from the inspection requirements of section 2122. The plate ~~or plates~~ shall be of a design determined by the Secretary of State.

Sec. 24. 29 MRSA § 256, sub-§ 2, 3rd ¶, last sentence, as enacted by PL 1977, c. 142, is 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. 24-A. 29 MRSA § 256, sub-§ 4, last sentence, as enacted by PL 1977, c. 142, is amended to read:

Such vehicles shall display a registration ~~plates~~ **plate** of a design determined by the Secretary of State.

Sec. 25. 29 MRSA § 354, sub-§ 2, 2nd ¶, first sentence, as enacted by PL 1973, c. 529, § 1,

A vehicle loaned by an equipment dealer to a customer for demonstration or emergency purposes may be operated on the registration ~~plates~~ **plate** of the dealer for not more than 7 consecutive days.

Sec. 26. 29 MRSA § 354, sub-§ 3, as enacted by PL 1973, c. 529, § 1, is repealed and the following enacted in its place:

3. Wreckers. Anyone issued vehicle dealer or equipment dealer registration plates shall have the right to operate his motor vehicle wrecker in connection with his business on a dealer plate.

Sec. 27. 29 MRSA § 354, sub-§ 4, as enacted by PL 1973, c. 529, § 1, is amended to read:

4. Permit to demonstrate a loaded truck. A dealer, to demonstrate a loaded truck bearing a dealer registration ~~plates~~ **plate**, must first obtain a written permit from the Secretary of State and either the dealer or one of his full-time employees must accompany the vehicle.

Sec. 28. 29 MRSA § 381, as last amended by PL 1971, c. 360, §§ 21 & 22, is repealed and the following enacted in its place:

§ 831. Display of Registration number plate.

All registration number plates shall be kept reasonably clean and the numbers legible.

1. Position of Number Plate. The motor vehicle number plate shall be displayed horizontally and attached to the rear of the vehicle in a way that the number plate and registration number shall always be plainly visible.

2. Farm Trucks. On farm trucks, or any vehicle used for hauling forest products and required by law to be registered, the number plate may be attached by means of a rigid or semi-rigid bracket designed so as to allow the plate to swing freely.

Sec. 29. 29 MRSA § 382, first ¶, as last amended by PL 1977, c. 481, § 14, is further amended to read:

If any number plate is lost or the register number thereon becomes mutilated or illegible, the owner or person in control of the vehicle for which the number plate was furnished shall immediately place a temporary number plate bearing his register number upon the vehicle with the exception of dealers and transporters as found in subchapter III-A. Such temporary number plate shall conform to the register number plate and shall be displayed as nearly as possible as provided in this Title for said regular number plate, and such person shall within 24 hours

after such loss or mutilation give notice thereof to the Secretary of State and apply for a new number ~~plates~~ **plate**. Thereupon the Secretary of State, if satisfied of the truth of the facts stated in the application, shall supply a new number ~~plates~~ **plate** upon payment of a fee of ~~\$5~~ **\$3** for ~~each~~ **plate**.

Sec. 30. **29 MRSA § 382, 2nd ¶**, as enacted by PL 1971, c. 104, § 7, 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 said plate shall be displayed upon said vehicle in the same manner as required for regular certificates and number plates. In case a plate is lost in transportation, and the applicant certifies in the affidavit that the plate has not been received by him and agrees that if the plate is received at some later date and that he will return it forthwith, the Secretary of State, after a thorough investigation, may furnish the applicant with a 2nd plate without additional charge.

STATEMENT OF FACT

The intent of this bill is to require one number plate to be placed on the rear of a motor vehicle and to revise registration and number plate fees to meet changing conditions. A single number plate will reduce costs without jeopardizing enforcement of motor vehicle laws.

Revision of registration and number plate fees in this bill includes a reduction of the fee from \$5 to \$3 for a number plate replacement, a change in motor home registration fees which are to be based on truck weight registration fees, an increase in mobile home registration fees from \$5 to \$10, and an increase in the present maximum gross vehicle weight for farm trucks from 50,000 pounds to 54,000 pounds.

The purpose for requiring motor homes to be subject to the registration fee schedule for trucks is that some motor homes weight 14,000 lbs or more. Since truck registration fees are based upon the weight of a truck which, in part, is a major factor in roadwear, motor homes should be subject to the same provisions.