

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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1 FIRST REGULAR SESSION  
2

3 ONE HUNDRED AND ELEVENTH LEGISLATURE  
4

5 Legislative Document

No. 594

6  
7 H.P. 497

House of Representatives, February 7, 1983

8 Received by the Clerk of the House on February 7, 1983. Referred to the  
9 Committee on Transportation and ordered printed pursuant to Joint Rule 14.

10 EDWIN H. PERT, Clerk

Presented by Representative Baker of Portland.

Cosponsors: Representative Nadeau of Lewiston and Representative  
11 Paradis of Augusta.

12 STATE OF MAINE  
13

14 IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD  
15 NINETEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-THREE  
16

17 AN ACT to Require a Single License Plate.  
18  
19

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

22 Sec. 1. 29 MRSA §106, first ¶, as repealed and  
23 replaced by PL 1979, c. 664, is amended to read:

24 The registration year for all vehicles, except  
25 automobiles, newly acquired motor trucks and truck  
26 tractors, is from March 1st to the last day of February  
27 of the next calendar year. On and after February  
28 1st, it is lawful to use and display on such vehicles  
29 ~~the number plates a registration plate~~ or a suitable  
30 ~~devices device~~ in lieu thereof issued for the registra-  
31 tion year.

32 Sec. 2. 29 MRSA §106, sub-§3, as repealed and  
33 replaced by PL 1979, c. 664, is amended to read:

1           3. Number plate. ~~Number plates~~ A number plate  
2 or a suitable device in lieu thereof furnished for  
3 the next registration period for automobiles, motor  
4 trucks and truck tractors may be displayed on the  
5 first day of the month in which the current registra-  
6 tion expires.

7           Sec. 3. 29 MRSA §110, first 2 paragraphs are  
8 amended to read:

9           The Secretary of State shall furnish a suitable  
10 ~~number plates, seals plate, seal~~ and other distin-  
11 guishing marks, without charge, to every person  
12 except dealers, manufacturers and holders of trans-  
13 porter registration plates whose vehicle is regis-  
14 tered under this Title. ~~Such plates~~ The plate shall  
15 be of a distinctly different color or shade each year  
16 and shall be in such form as the Secretary of State  
17 may determine; and shall bear the numerals of the  
18 year of issue or the last 2 numerals of said year,  
19 the word "Maine" or the abbreviation "Me." in letters  
20 not less than 3/4 inch in height, and on plates  
21 issued for passenger vehicles for private use, hire  
22 cars and trucks, there shall be placed at the bottom  
23 thereof in letters not less than 3/4 inch in height  
24 the word "Vacationland." The numerals of the register  
25 number thereon, except on motorcycle number plates,  
26 shall be substantially not less than 3 inches high.  
27 The Secretary of State may select and issue a special  
28 distinguishing letter, mark or design for number  
29 plates issued for any temporary or other special  
30 classes of registration and for use on motorcycles,  
31 trucks, trailers and tractors which are required to  
32 be registered under this Title.

33           Notwithstanding other provisions of law, the  
34 Secretary of State may provide and issue a suitable  
35 device in lieu of a new registration number plates  
36 plate for any calendar year. Such device shall  
37 clearly indicate the year or period for which issued  
38 and shall be furnished only upon application and pay-  
39 ment of registration fees required by statute, and  
40 when such device is so attached to the appropriate  
41 vehicle or to the plate thereon, such vehicle shall  
42 be deemed properly registered for the period speci-  
43 fied, subject to suspension or revocation of regis-  
44 tration as provided by statute.

1           Sec. 4. 29 MRSA §117, as enacted by PL 1967, c.  
2 41, is amended to read:

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

5           The provisions of this Title relative to the  
6 registration of motor vehicles and the display of a  
7 number ~~plates~~ plate shall not apply to motor vehicles  
8 having registrations and displaying plates issued by  
9 the Armed Forces of the United States in foreign  
10 countries for vehicles owned by military or naval  
11 personnel, but said exemption shall be valid only for  
12 a period of 45 days after the owner thereof has  
13 returned to the United States.

14           Sec. 5. 29 MRSA §152, first ¶, as amended by PL  
15 1981, c. 437, §2, is further amended to read:

16           Whoever transfers the ownership or discontinues  
17 the use of a registered motor vehicle, trailer or  
18 semitrailer and applies to the Secretary of State for  
19 registration of another motor vehicle, trailer or  
20 semitrailer in the same registration year shall be  
21 entitled to a certificate of registration permitting  
22 the use of a number ~~plates~~ plate of the proper class  
23 of registration thereon upon payment of a transfer  
24 fee of \$8, provided the fee is the same as that of  
25 the former vehicle. If the fee for the vehicle to be  
26 registered is greater, he shall pay in addition to  
27 the transfer fee of \$8 the difference between the fee  
28 paid by him for the vehicle first registered and the  
29 fee for the vehicle to which the transfer is to be  
30 made. If application is made for a trailer with a  
31 gross weight of 2,000 pounds or less, the transfer  
32 fee shall be \$5. The certificate issued for the  
33 registration of the former vehicle shall be returned  
34 to the Secretary of State, showing that the ownership  
35 of such vehicle has been transferred or its use dis-  
36 continued and that the registration has been can-  
37 celed.

38           Sec. 6. 29 MRSA §154, as amended by PL 1977, c.  
39 481, §5-B, is further amended to read:

40           §154. Unused plate

1           The owner, or the surviving spouse, who returns a  
2 number ~~plates~~ plate with an affidavit that ~~they have~~  
3 it has never been used and the Secretary of State is  
4 satisfied that the number ~~plates have~~ plate has never  
5 been used, shall be refunded the registration fee  
6 paid if such ~~plates are~~ plate is returned within 120  
7 days of the date of purchase.

8           Sec. 7. 29 MRSA §191, sub-§1, as enacted by PL  
9 1977, c. 481, §6, is amended to read:

10           1. Plate issue year. Except in the case of auto-  
11 mobiles, the Secretary of State shall reserve until  
12 November 1st preceding the year for which plates are  
13 issued, the same registration number for the succeed-  
14 ing year for persons who shall, previous to said  
15 first day of November, pay for the registration of  
16 his vehicle for the succeeding year and otherwise  
17 comply with the motor vehicle law. In the case of  
18 automobiles, the same registration number shall be  
19 reserved until the first day of the 3rd month prior  
20 to their expiration. If a person wishes to retain his  
21 registration number and does not have a vehicle to  
22 register on said November 1st, or on the first day of  
23 the 3rd month prior to the expiration month in the  
24 case of automobiles, he may hold his registration  
25 number for a maximum of 2 registration years by  
26 depositing with the Secretary of State the sum of \$10  
27 for each year. These deposit fees shall not be  
28 applied as part payment of the registration fee when  
29 ~~plates are~~ a plate is issued.

30           All numbers other than those reserved shall be  
31 released and issued in rotation after said November  
32 1st, or after the first day of the 3rd month prior to  
33 expiration in the case of automobiles, except that a  
34 person wishing to select a number out of rotation may  
35 do so by paying his registration fee and a reserved  
36 number fee of \$5.

37           The amount received from the fee charged for reserved  
38 numbers shall go into the ~~General~~ Highway Fund of the  
39 State.

40           Sec. 8. 29 MRSA §192, as last amended by PL  
41 1981, c. 492, Pt. E, §2, is further amended to read:

1     §192. Initial plate

2           The Secretary of State is authorized to design  
3 and to issue, under such regulations as he shall deem  
4 appropriate, an initial type registration plates  
5 plate or a combination of initials and numeric type  
6 registration plates plate to be used on passenger  
7 motor vehicles or motor vehicles of the station wagon  
8 type or pickup trucks or motorcycles or camper vehi-  
9 cles in lieu of other numeric type registration  
10 plates. Such plates The plate shall be of such design  
11 and shall bear such letters or letters and numbers as  
12 the Secretary of State shall prescribe, but there  
13 shall be no duplication of identification.

14           The registration plates plate so provided shall  
15 be issued only upon application therefor, and upon  
16 payment of an annual service fee of \$15. The service  
17 fee is to be in addition to the regular motor vehicle  
18 registration fee as prescribed by law for the partic-  
19 ular vehicle. The amount received for such service  
20 fee shall be credited to the ~~General~~ Highway Fund and  
21 there shall be allocated annually from the ~~General~~  
22 Highway Fund a sum sufficient to defray the cost of  
23 this program.

24           Applications Application for a registration  
25 plates plate as prescribed above, pertaining to  
26 owners of passenger vehicles or motor vehicles of the  
27 station wagon type or pickup trucks or motorcycles or  
28 camper vehicles who are residents of this State and  
29 who own an unrevoked and unexpired official amateur  
30 radio station license issued by the Federal Communi-  
31 cations Commission, except those licensed as novices  
32 by the Federal Communications Commission, shall be  
33 accompanied by a notarized proof of ownership of such  
34 amateur radio station license. Registration plates A  
35 registration plate issued under this paragraph shall  
36 be inscribed with the official amateur radio call  
37 letters of such applicant as assigned by the Federal  
38 Communications Commission.

39           Application for a new registration plates plate  
40 shall be received in the office of the Secretary of  
41 State. The Secretary of State may issue a facsimile  
42 plate for a 15-day period during the period of pro-  
43 duction of the semi-permanent plate. The facsimile  
44 plate shall be attached to the rear plate bracket.

1           Sec. 9. 29 MRSA §193, as last amended by PL  
2 1977, c. 78, §166, is further amended to read:

3 §193. State officials

4           The Secretary of State shall, upon payment of the  
5 fees required in sections 109 and 242, subsection 1,  
6 paragraph A and application therefor, by Maine Mem-  
7 bers of the United States Senate, Maine Members of  
8 the United States House of Representatives, Members  
9 of the Legislature, Representatives of the Indian  
10 Tribes at the Legislature, President of the Senate,  
11 Speaker of the House, Secretary of the Senate and  
12 Clerk of the House, issue one ~~pair of~~ specially  
13 designed number ~~plates~~ plate for one designated motor  
14 vehicle owned or controlled by each of the officials  
15 named. Upon request by a Maine Member of the United  
16 States Senate or by a Maine Member of the United  
17 States House of Representatives, the Secretary of  
18 State shall issue an additional ~~pair of~~ specially  
19 designed number ~~plates~~ plate for a 2nd designated  
20 motor vehicle owned or controlled by that member.  
21 Such specially designed ~~plates~~ plate and ~~their~~ its  
22 accompanying registration certificate shall be issued  
23 to, and used by, the named officials in lieu of the  
24 regular ~~plates~~ plate and registration provided for in  
25 section 110 at the option of the named officials. If  
26 any of the named officials shall choose to apply for  
27 a motor vehicle registration and ~~plates~~ plate as pre-  
28 scribed in section 110, and also request in addition  
29 to the regular registration and ~~plates~~ plate, that he  
30 or she be issued an additional ~~set of~~ specially  
31 designed ~~plates~~ plate together with ~~their~~ its accom-  
32 panying certificates of registration, the Secretary  
33 of State shall upon receipt of application and the  
34 payment of a fee of \$2 issue such special ~~plates~~  
35 plate and registration certificate for such motor  
36 vehicle that is currently registered and assigned a  
37 regular registration ~~plates~~ plate. Any specially  
38 designed number ~~plates~~ plate issued to any of the  
39 named officials shall be valid only during the term  
40 of office for which the registrant is elected. In  
41 case the office is for any cause vacated during said  
42 term, such special number ~~plates~~ plate and registra-  
43 tion certificate shall be immediately surrendered to  
44 the Secretary of State.

1           The color, shape, size, lettering and numbering  
2 of the special ~~plates~~ plate shall be determined by  
3 the Secretary of State, except the ~~plates~~ plate  
4 issued to Members of the House of Representatives,  
5 other than the Speaker of the House, shall bear the  
6 number of the seat assigned to such member, and  
7 except the ~~plates~~ plate issued to the Members of the  
8 Senate, except the President of the Senate, shall  
9 bear the number of the Senatorial District which the  
10 respective Senators represent.

11           Sec. 10. 29 MRSA §246, 5th ¶ is amended to read:

12           The Secretary of State shall issue a registration  
13 plate ~~or plates~~ so designed that a farm motor truck  
14 registered under this section may be distinguished  
15 from commercial vehicles otherwise registered under  
16 this section. Trucks which are used on a substan-  
17 tially daily delivery schedule on established routes  
18 are not included as "farm trucks." Any person fraud-  
19 ulently obtaining a farm truck license shall be fined  
20 upon conviction \$50. Any person using a truck with  
21 a license plate marked for any purposes other than  
22 those authorized by this section shall be fined not  
23 less than \$100 nor more than \$500.

24           Sec. 11. 29 MRSA §251, last ¶ is amended to  
25 read:

26           Any veteran who has lost both legs or the use of  
27 both legs and who has registered his motor vehicle  
28 without the payment of a fee as provided in this  
29 section upon certification by the Veterans Adminis-  
30 tration shall be issued a special designating ~~plates~~  
31 plate to be used in addition to the regular registra-  
32 tion ~~plates~~ plate. Such a designating ~~plates~~ plate  
33 shall be issued by the Secretary of State and shall  
34 bear the words "Disabled Veteran".

35           Sec. 12. 29 MRSA §252, as last amended by PL  
36 1981, c. 89, §§1 and 2, is further amended to read:

37           §252. Handicapped persons

38           On annual application to the Secretary of State,  
39 any handicapped person or the spouse, parents or  
40 legal guardian of a handicapped person who has regis-



1       tered a motor vehicle as the motor vehicle of prin-  
2       cipal use by the handicapped person shall be issued a  
3       ~~set of~~ special designating ~~plates~~ plate to be used in  
4       place of the regular registration ~~plates~~ plate or  
5       placard to be fixed to the sun visor of a motor vehi-  
6       cle registered by such a person. Such placard shall  
7       be so affixed that the information thereon shall be  
8       clearly legible from outside the motor vehicle. Such  
9       placard issued under this section shall include the  
10      motor vehicle registration plate number of the vehi-  
11      cle registered in the name of the handicapped person  
12      or the spouse, parents or legal guardian of the hand-  
13      icapped person. When the Secretary of State deems it  
14      appropriate, a placard may be issued to any handi-  
15      capped person who does not have a duly registered  
16      motor vehicle. In such cases the placard may be dis-  
17      played on any motor vehicle properly registered in  
18      this State but it may only be so displayed during the  
19      time when the handicapped person is a passenger in  
20      the vehicle, when the driver of the vehicle is trans-  
21      porting the handicapped person or when the driver is  
22      waiting for a service to be rendered to the handi-  
23      capped person. The annual registration fee is as set  
24      forth in this subchapter for the type of vehicle  
25      assigned the special designating ~~plates~~ plate or  
26      placard. A \$1 fee shall be charged in those cases  
27      where a placard is issued to a handicapped person who  
28      does not have a duly registered motor vehicle.

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

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

40           Any person other than a handicapped person or the  
41      spouse of a handicapped person issued a ~~set of~~ spe-  
42      cial designating ~~plates~~ plate or placard under this  
43      section shall be subject to a \$100 fine for use of  
44      the special designating ~~plates~~ plate or placard. The

1 special designating ~~plates~~ plate or placard shall be  
2 suspended if improper use is permitted.

3 ~~These~~ The special designating ~~plates~~ plate shall  
4 bear the International Symbol, easily recognizable at  
5 a distance, which indicates that the vehicle is owned  
6 by a handicapped person.

7 Sec. 13. 29 MRSA §252-A, as enacted by PL 1979,  
8 c. 371, §1, is amended to read:

9 §252-A. Disabled veterans; special free license  
10 plate

11 The Secretary of State on application and upon  
12 evidence of payment of the excise tax required by  
13 Title 36, section 1482 shall issue a registration  
14 certificate and ~~set of a~~ special designating ~~plates~~  
15 plate to be used in lieu of a regular registration  
16 ~~plates~~ plate to any 100% disabled veteran who served  
17 in the United States Armed Forces in a combat zone at  
18 any time during his tenure of service when that  
19 application is accompanied by certification from the  
20 Veterans Administration as to the veteran's disabili-  
21 ty and receipt of 100% service-connected benefits  
22 and a copy of the appropriate military form certifying  
23 combat duty service.

24 ~~These~~ The special designating ~~plates~~ plate shall  
25 bear the International Symbol, easily recognizable at  
26 a distance, and the letters VET which indicates that  
27 the vehicle is owned by a disabled veteran.

28 Sec. 14. 29 MRSA §253, first ¶ is amended to  
29 read:

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

37 Sec. 15. 29 MRSA §256, sub-§2, as amended by PL  
38 1977, c. 481, §9, is further amended to read:

1           2. Municipal vehicles. All county, municipal,  
2 school and water district vehicles shall be regis-  
3 tered with the Secretary of State who shall furnish a  
4 semipermanent ~~plates~~ plate for each vehicle which  
5 shall expire at the end of each 10-year semi-permanent  
6 plate program. The vehicles shall be exempt from this  
7 Title as to payment of registration fees, but shall  
8 not be exempt from the inspection requirements of  
9 section 2122. The plate ~~or plates~~ shall be of a  
10 design determined by the Secretary of State.

11 A municipal fire department or an organized volunteer  
12 fire department may be exempt from this Title as to  
13 registration and payment of registration fees, but  
14 shall not be exempt from the inspection requirements  
15 of section 2122.

16 All vehicles owned or used by any municipal corpora-  
17 tion therein and all vehicles loaned by automobile  
18 dealers to municipalities for use in driver education  
19 in secondary schools and all motor vehicles loaned by  
20 automobile dealers to private secondary schools for  
21 use in driver education in the schools and all motor  
22 vehicles used in volunteer ambulance and rescue squad  
23 services in such municipalities shall be registered,  
24 but shall be exempt from this Title as to the regis-  
25 tration fees, except that when the vehicles are  
26 leased or rented for commercial purposes they shall  
27 be subject to payment of fees as provided in this  
28 Title. All such vehicles shall display a registration  
29 ~~plates~~ plate as required by this Title or approved by  
30 the Secretary of State.

31           Sec. 16. 29 MRSA §381, as last amended by PL  
32 1971, c. 360, §§21 and 22, is further amended to  
33 read:

34           §381. Manner of display

35           Each number plate displayed shall be horizontal.  
36 ~~Not more than one set of number plates shall be dis-~~  
37 ~~played upon any vehicle, except as may be otherwise~~  
38 ~~permitted by law.~~

39           Farm trucks, or any vehicle used for hauling  
40 forest products and required by law to be registered,  
41 may attach the number plate by means of a rigid or

1 semi-rigid bracket designed so as to allow the plate  
2 to swing freely.

3 In the case of all motor vehicles, ~~one~~ the number  
4 plate shall be attached to ~~the front and the other to~~  
5 the rear of ~~said the~~ vehicle, so that the ~~plates~~  
6 plate and the registered number thereon shall always  
7 be plainly visible. In the case of trailers and semi-  
8 trailers, one ~~such~~ plate shall be attached to the  
9 rear thereof and shall be always plainly visible;  
10 except that a truck tractor shall display the plate  
11 on the front. ~~All plates~~ Each plate shall be kept  
12 reasonably clean and the numbers legible.

13 In the case of a motorcycle or motor driven  
14 cycle, no number plate shall be attached to the front  
15 of said motorcycle or motor driven cycle.

16 Commencing on October 1, 1983, only one number  
17 plate shall be required for each motor vehicle and  
18 that plate shall be displayed as set forth in this  
19 section.

20 Sec. 17. 29 MRSA §382, as amended by PL 1977, c.  
21 481, §14, is further amended to read:

22 §382. Loss of number plate

23 If any number plate is lost or the register  
24 number thereon becomes mutilated or illegible, the  
25 owner or person in control of the vehicle for which  
26 the number plate was furnished shall immediately  
27 place a temporary number plate bearing his register  
28 number upon the vehicle with the exception of dealers  
29 and transporters as found in subchapter III-A. Such  
30 temporary number plate shall conform to the register  
31 number plate and shall be displayed as nearly as pos-  
32 sible as provided in this Title for said regular  
33 number plate, and such person shall within 24 hours  
34 after such loss or mutilation give notice thereof to  
35 the Secretary of State and apply for a new number  
36 ~~plates~~ plate. Thereupon, the Secretary of State, if  
37 satisfied of the truth of the facts stated in the  
38 application, shall supply a new number plates plate  
39 upon payment of a fee of \$5 for each plate.

1 If the Secretary of State is unable to furnish  
2 immediately to any person entitled thereto any plate  
3 or marker provided in this Title, he may issue a  
4 temporary certificate with a temporary number plates  
5 plate, which certificate shall be carried and said  
6 plates that plate shall be displayed upon said that  
7 vehicle in the same manner as required for regular  
8 certificates and number plates. Whenever one of a set  
9 of number plates is lost and a new set is issued, the  
10 remaining plate shall forthwith be returned to the  
11 Secretary of State. In case plates are lost in trans-  
12 portation, and the applicant shall certify in the  
13 affidavit that the plates have not been received by  
14 him and agrees that if they shall be received at some  
15 later date to return them forthwith, the Secretary of  
16 State, after a thorough investigation, may furnish  
17 the applicant with a second set of plates without ad-  
18 ditional charge. In case the plate is lost in trans-  
19 portation, and the applicant shall certify in the  
20 affidavit that the plate has not been received by him  
21 and agrees that if it is received at some later date  
22 to return it forthwith, the Secretary of State, after  
23 a thorough investigation, may furnish the applicant  
24 with a 2nd plate without additional charge.

25 Sec. 18. Allocation. The following reductions  
26 are made to allocations from the Highway Fund.

	1983-84	1984-85
27 <u>Secretary of State,</u>		
28 <u>Department of</u>		
29		
30 Motor Vehicles		
31 Unallocated	(\$105,000)	(\$105,000)
32 Provides for a reduction		
33 in anticipated alloca-		
34 tion for new and re-		
35 placement license plates		
36 due to establishment of		
37 a single license plate		
38 system.		

1

STATEMENT OF FACT

2

This bill establishes a single license plate  
3 system in Maine.

4

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