

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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# 128th MAINE LEGISLATURE

## FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2017

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Legislative Document

No. 788

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H.P. 568

House of Representatives, March 2, 2017

**An Act To Require Motor Vehicles To Be Registered on a Biennial Basis**

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Reference to the Committee on Transportation suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "R B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT  
Clerk

Presented by Representative CEBRA of Naples.  
Cosponsored by Senator BRAKEY of Androscoggin and  
Representatives: HERRICK of Paris, LOCKMAN of Amherst, O'CONNOR of Berwick,  
PARRY of Arundel, SANDERSON of Chelsea, STEWART of Presque Isle, WADSWORTH  
of Hiram, WOOD of Greene.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 29-A MRSA §351, sub-§2, ¶C**, as amended by PL 1999, c. 68, §1, is  
3 further amended to read:

4 C. The registration fee is the same as for a full ~~year's~~ registration period.

5 **Sec. 2. 29-A MRSA §405, sub-§1**, as amended by PL 2011, c. 167, §1 and  
6 affected by §7, is further amended to read:

7 **1. Automobile, truck, truck tractor, motor home, moped, semitrailers not**  
8 **exceeding a gross vehicle weight of 2,000 pounds, special mobile equipment, tractor**  
9 **and camp trailer registration.** Registration for an automobile, truck, truck tractor,  
10 motor home, moped, semitrailer not exceeding a gross vehicle weight of 2,000 pounds,  
11 special mobile equipment, tractor and camp trailer is as follows.

12 A. ~~A~~ Except as provided in paragraph A-1, a registration expires on the last day of  
13 the month one year from the month of issuance.

14 A-1. For a motor vehicle registered biennially under section 501, subsection 1, a  
15 registration expires on the last day of the month 2 years from the date of issuance.

16 B. When an application is made after the registration for the previous ~~year~~  
17 registration period has expired, the term of the renewal begins on the month of the  
18 issuance of the previous registration.

19 C. A person who has a fleet of 5 or more motor vehicles may petition the Secretary  
20 of State for a common expiration date of all vehicle registrations.

21 **Sec. 3. 29-A MRSA §453, sub-§2**, as amended by PL 2007, c. 647, §1 and  
22 affected by §8, is further amended to read:

23 **2. Fee.** The ~~annual~~ service fee for a vanity registration plate is \$25 in addition to the  
24 regular motor vehicle registration fee. The service fee must be credited to the General  
25 Highway Fund, except that, beginning July 1, 2009, \$10 of the service fee must be  
26 transferred on a quarterly basis by the Treasurer of State to the TransCap Trust Fund  
27 established by Title 30-A, section 6006-G. A sum sufficient to defray the cost of this  
28 program must be allocated annually from the General Highway Fund.

29 **Sec. 4. 29-A MRSA §455, sub-§4-A**, as enacted by PL 2007, c. 703, §2, is  
30 amended to read:

31 **4-A. Renewal fee.** In addition to the regular motor vehicle registration fee  
32 prescribed by law for the particular class of vehicle registered, the ~~annual~~ renewal  
33 contribution for environmental registration plates is \$15, which must be deposited with  
34 the Treasurer of State and credited as follows:

35 A. Fourteen dollars to the Maine Environmental Trust Fund established in Title 12,  
36 section 10255; and

37 B. One dollar to the Specialty License Plate Fund established under section 469.

1           **Sec. 5. 29-A MRSA §456, sub-§5**, as amended by PL 2007, c. 703, §3, is further  
2 amended to read:

3           **5. Renewal fee.** In addition to the regular motor vehicle registration fee prescribed  
4 by law, the ~~annual~~ renewal contribution for University of Maine System registration  
5 plates is \$15, which must be deposited with the Treasurer of State and credited as  
6 follows:

7           A. Thirteen dollars to the University of Maine System Scholarship Fund established  
8 in Title 20-A, section 10909;

9           B. One dollar to the Highway Fund; and

10          C. One dollar to the Specialty License Plate Fund established under section 469.

11          **Sec. 6. 29-A MRSA §456-A, sub-§1**, as amended by PL 2009, c. 435, §2, is  
12 further amended to read:

13          **1. Lobster plates.** The Secretary of State, upon receiving an application and  
14 evidence of payment of the excise tax required by Title 36, section 1482, the ~~annual~~  
15 motor vehicle registration fee required by section 501 and the contribution provided for in  
16 subsection 2, shall issue a registration certificate and a set of lobster special registration  
17 plates to be used in lieu of regular registration plates. These plates must bear  
18 identification numbers and letters. The Secretary of State may issue lobster plates to  
19 certain state-owned vehicles in accordance with section 517.

20          **Sec. 7. 29-A MRSA §456-A, sub-§4**, as amended by PL 2007, c. 703, §4, is  
21 further amended to read:

22          **4. Renewal fee.** In addition to the regular motor vehicle registration fee prescribed  
23 by law, the ~~annual~~ renewal contribution for lobster special registration plates is \$15,  
24 which must be deposited with the Treasurer of State and credited as follows:

25          A. Ten dollars to the Lobster Research, Education and Development Fund  
26 established in Title 12, section 6465;

27          B. Four dollars to the Highway Fund for administrative and production costs; and

28          C. One dollar to the Specialty License Plate Fund established under section 469.

29          **Sec. 8. 29-A MRSA §456-B, sub-§1**, as enacted by PL 2001, c. 623, §4, is  
30 amended to read:

31          **1. Maine Black Bears plates.** The Secretary of State, upon receiving an application  
32 and evidence of payment of the excise tax required by Title 36, section 1482, the ~~annual~~  
33 motor vehicle registration fee required by section 501 and the contribution provided for in  
34 subsection 2, shall issue a registration certificate and a set of Maine Black Bears special  
35 registration plates to be used in lieu of regular registration plates. These plates must bear  
36 identification numbers and letters.

37          **Sec. 9. 29-A MRSA §456-B, sub-§4**, as amended by PL 2007, c. 703, §5, is  
38 further amended to read:

1           **4. Renewal fee.** In addition to the regular motor vehicle registration fee prescribed  
2 by law, the ~~annual~~ renewal contribution for Maine Black Bears special registration plates  
3 is \$15, which must be deposited with the Treasurer of State and credited as follows:

4           A. Ten dollars to the Maine Black Bears Scholarship Fund established in Title 20-A,  
5 section 10971;

6           B. Four dollars to the Highway Fund for administrative and production costs; and

7           C. One dollar to the Specialty License Plate Fund established under section 469.

8           **Sec. 10. 29-A MRSA §456-C, sub-§3,** as amended by PL 2011, c. 576, §7, is  
9 further amended to read:

10           **3. Renewal fee.** In addition to the regular motor vehicle registration fee prescribed  
11 by law, the ~~annual~~ renewal contribution for sportsman registration plates is \$20, which  
12 must be deposited with the Treasurer of State and credited as follows:

13           A. Eighteen dollars credited as follows:

14                   (1) Fifty percent to the fish hatchery maintenance fund established in Title 12,  
15 section 10252;

16                   (2) Fifteen percent to the Boat Launch Facilities Fund established in Title 12,  
17 section 10261;

18                   (3) Ten percent to the Maine Endangered and Nongame Wildlife Fund  
19 established in Title 12, section 10253; and

20                   (4) Twenty-five percent to the landowner relations program in Title 12, section  
21 10108, subsection 4-A;

22           B. One dollar to the Highway Fund for administrative and production costs; and

23           C. One dollar to the Specialty License Plate Fund established under section 469.

24           **Sec. 11. 29-A MRSA §456-D, sub-§3,** as amended by PL 2009, c. 481, §3, is  
25 further amended to read:

26           **3. Renewal fee.** In addition to the regular motor vehicle registration fee required  
27 under section 501, the ~~annual~~ renewal contribution for We Support Our Troops plates is  
28 \$15, which must be deposited with the Treasurer of State and credited as follows:

29           A. Ten dollars to the Maine Military Family Relief Fund as established in Title 37-B,  
30 section 158;

31           B. Four dollars to the Highway Fund for administrative and production costs; and

32           C. One dollar to the Specialty License Plate Fund established under section 469.

33           **Sec. 12. 29-A MRSA §456-E, sub-§1,** as enacted by PL 2007, c. 547, §2, is  
34 amended to read:

35           **1. Breast cancer support services plates.** The Secretary of State, upon receiving an  
36 application and evidence of payment of the excise tax required by Title 36, section 1482,

1 the ~~annual~~ motor vehicle registration fee required by section 501 and the contribution  
2 provided for in subsection 2, shall issue a registration certificate and a set of breast cancer  
3 support services special registration plates to be used in lieu of regular registration plates.  
4 These plates must bear identification numbers and letters.

5 **Sec. 13. 29-A MRSA §456-E, sub-§4**, as amended by PL 2007, c. 703, §9, is  
6 further amended to read:

7 **4. Renewal fee.** In addition to the regular motor vehicle registration fee prescribed  
8 by law, the ~~annual~~ renewal contribution for breast cancer support services special  
9 registration plates is \$15, which must be deposited with the Treasurer of State and  
10 credited as follows:

11 A. Ten dollars to the Breast Cancer Services Special Program Fund, as established in  
12 Title 22, section 1408;

13 B. Four dollars to the Highway Fund for administrative and production costs; and

14 C. One dollar to the Specialty License Plate Fund established under section 469.

15 **Sec. 14. 29-A MRSA §456-F, sub-§1**, as amended by PL 2009, c. 435, §3, is  
16 further amended to read:

17 **1. Agriculture education plates.** The Secretary of State, upon receiving an  
18 application and evidence of payment of the excise tax required by Title 36, section 1482,  
19 the ~~annual~~ motor vehicle registration fee required by section 501, section 504, subsection  
20 1 or section 505 and the contribution provided for in subsection 2, shall issue a  
21 registration certificate and a set of agriculture education special registration plates to be  
22 used in lieu of regular registration plates. These plates must bear identification numbers  
23 and letters. The Secretary of State may issue agricultural education plates to certain state-  
24 owned vehicles in accordance with section 517.

25 **Sec. 15. 29-A MRSA §456-F, sub-§4**, as enacted by PL 2007, c. 703, §10, is  
26 amended to read:

27 **4. Renewal fee.** In addition to the regular motor vehicle registration fee prescribed  
28 by law, the ~~annual~~ renewal contribution for agriculture education special registration  
29 plates is \$15, which must be deposited with the Treasurer of State and credited as  
30 follows:

31 A. Ten dollars to the Maine Agriculture in the Classroom Council established in  
32 Title 5, section 12004-G, subsection 4-C;

33 B. Four dollars to the Highway Fund for administrative and production costs; and

34 C. One dollar to the Specialty License Plate Fund established under section 469.

35 **Sec. 16. 29-A MRSA §456-G, sub-§1**, as enacted by PL 2009, c. 73, §1, is  
36 amended to read:

37 **1. Support Animal Welfare plates.** The Secretary of State, upon receiving an  
38 application and evidence of payment of the excise tax required by Title 36, section 1482,

1 the ~~annual~~ motor vehicle registration fee required by section 501 and the contribution  
2 provided for in subsection 2, shall issue a registration certificate and a set of Support  
3 Animal Welfare special registration plates to be used in lieu of regular registration plates.

4 **Sec. 17. 29-A MRSA §456-G, sub-§4**, as enacted by PL 2009, c. 73, §1, is  
5 amended to read:

6 **4. Renewal fee.** In addition to the regular motor vehicle registration fee prescribed  
7 by law, the ~~annual~~ renewal contribution for Support Animal Welfare special registration  
8 plates is \$15, which must be deposited with the Treasurer of State and credited as  
9 follows:

10 A. Five dollars to the animal welfare auxiliary fund pursuant to Title 7, section  
11 3906-B, subsection 16;

12 B. Five dollars to the Companion Animal Sterilization Fund established in Title 7,  
13 section 3910-B;

14 C. Four dollars to the Highway Fund for administrative and production costs;

15 D. One dollar to the Specialty License Plate Fund established under section 469.

16 **Sec. 18. 29-A MRSA §461**, as amended by PL 1999, c. 470, §4, is further  
17 amended to read:

18 **§461. Reservation of same number**

19 **1. Plate issue year.** In a year in which new registration plates are issued, the  
20 Secretary of State shall reserve until July 1st the same registration number for the  
21 succeeding registration ~~year~~ period for a person who notifies in writing the Secretary of  
22 State prior to May 1st of that person's desire to retain that registration number. The fee for  
23 retention of the same registration number is \$15.

24 The Secretary of State may issue a facsimile plate that is valid for a 90-day period during  
25 production of a reserved plate. A facsimile plate must be attached to the rear plate  
26 bracket.

27 If a person does not have a vehicle to register on May 1st, a registration number may be  
28 held for a maximum of 2 registration ~~years~~ periods by depositing with the Secretary of  
29 State \$15 for each ~~year~~, ~~except that the~~ registration period. The registered owner of an  
30 antique vehicle may reserve the antique registration assigned to that person for 4 years by  
31 depositing the sum of \$15 for each registration year. These fees are not refundable and  
32 may not be applied against the registration fee.

33 All numbers other than those reserved must be released and issued in rotation after July  
34 1st.

35 A person wishing to select a number out of rotation may do so by paying the registration  
36 fee and a reserved number fee of \$15.

37 A holder of vanity registration plates must pay the sum of \$15 to reserve those letters or  
38 combination of letters and numbers, which is credited toward the renewal fee.

1           **2. Nonplate issue year.** In other than a plate issue year, when a person fails to  
2 reregister and the registration remains expired for 6 consecutive months, the reservation  
3 of the same number ceases and the number becomes available for reissuance.

4           For a maximum of 2 registration ~~years~~ periods, a person may reserve the registration  
5 number assigned to that person by depositing with the Secretary of State the sum of \$15  
6 for each ~~year; except that the~~ registration period. The registered owner of an antique  
7 motor vehicle may reserve the antique registration assigned to that person for 4 years by  
8 depositing with the Secretary of State the sum of \$15 for each year. A person wishing to  
9 select a number out of rotation may do so by paying the registration fee and a reserved  
10 number fee of \$15.

11           **Sec. 19. 29-A MRSA §501, first ¶**, as enacted by PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 and  
12 affected by Pt. B, §5, is amended to read:

13           The ~~annual~~ fees for the registration of motor vehicles must accompany the  
14 application for registration and are as follows.

15           **Sec. 20. 29-A MRSA §501, sub-§1**, as amended by PL 2015, c. 206, §4, is  
16 further amended to read:

17           **1. Automobiles; pickup trucks.** The biennial fee for an automobile, a pickup truck  
18 registered for 6,000 pounds or less or a sport utility vehicle used for the conveyance of  
19 passengers or interchangeably for passengers or property is ~~\$35~~ \$50. The biennial fee for  
20 a pickup truck registered for more than 6,000 pounds but no more than 10,000 pounds is  
21 ~~\$37~~ \$50.

22           An automobile or sport utility vehicle used for the conveyance of passengers or property  
23 is a "combination" vehicle and may be issued a special plate with the word "combination"  
24 instead of "Vacationland." A passenger vehicle used under contract with the State, a  
25 municipality or a school district to transport students must be designated as  
26 "combination." A vehicle owned or operated by parents or legal guardians is exempt  
27 from this subsection.

28           Commercial plates may not be issued for or displayed on an automobile.

29           A sport utility vehicle may be registered either as an automobile or a truck. A sport  
30 utility vehicle with a gross vehicle weight or combined gross vehicle weight in excess of  
31 10,000 pounds and used in the furtherance of a commercial enterprise must be registered  
32 as a truck according to its actual gross weight as provided in section 504.

33           The gross weight of a pickup truck registered as provided by this subsection may not  
34 exceed 10,000 pounds. An owner of a pickup truck who operates the pickup truck with a  
35 gross weight in excess of 10,000 pounds or the pickup truck drawing a semitrailer with a  
36 combined gross weight in excess of 10,000 pounds must register the truck as provided in  
37 section 504.

38           A combination of vehicles consisting of a motor vehicle and a camp trailer is not required  
39 to be registered for the gross weight of the combination.

40           Beginning July 1, 2009, \$10 of the fee must be transferred on a quarterly basis by the  
41 Treasurer of State to the TransCap Trust Fund established by Title 30-A, section 6006-G.



1           **Sec. 21. 29-A MRSA §502**, as amended by PL 2009, c. 598, §2, is further  
2 amended to read:

3           **§502. Transfer and return of registration; prorated registration fees**

4           **1. Transferring registration.** A person who transfers the ownership or discontinues  
5 the use of a registered motor vehicle, trailer or semitrailer and applies for registration of  
6 another motor vehicle, trailer or semitrailer in the same registration year period may use  
7 the same number plates on payment of a transfer fee of \$8, as long as the registration fee  
8 is the same as that of the former vehicle. If the fee for the vehicle to be registered is  
9 greater than the fee for the vehicle first registered, that person must also pay the  
10 difference. If application is made for a truck camper or a trailer with a gross weight of  
11 2,000 pounds or less, the transfer fee is \$5.

12           **3. Refunds; credits.** No portion of a fee is refundable, but credits toward the  
13 registration of another vehicle may be given. On registration by an owner or owner's  
14 surviving spouse, a credit is allowed as follows.

15           A. For the first 8 months of a registration year, the full fee may be credited toward  
16 the registration of another vehicle.

17           B. For the last 4 months of a registration year, an amount not to exceed 1/2 of the  
18 original fee may be credited toward the registration of another vehicle.

19           C. For a motor vehicle registered biennially under section 501, subsection 1, for the  
20 last 16 months of a registration biennium, the full fee may be credited toward the  
21 registration of another vehicle.

22           D. For a motor vehicle registered biennially under section 501, subsection 1, for the  
23 last 8 months of a registration biennium, an amount not to exceed 1/2 of the original  
24 fee may be credited toward the registration of another vehicle.

25           **4. Prorated fee.** On any application for registration made during the last 4 months  
26 of a registration year, the registration fee is 1/2 the annual registration fee. For a motor  
27 vehicle registered biennially under section 501, subsection 1, on any application for  
28 registration made during the last 8 months of a registration biennium, the registration fee  
29 is 1/2 the biennial registration fee.

30           **Sec. 22. 29-A MRSA §524, sub-§4**, as amended by PL 2011, c. 356, §13, is  
31 further amended to read:

32           **4. Purple Heart medal recipients; special license plates.** The Secretary of State,  
33 on application and upon evidence of payment of the excise tax required by Title 36,  
34 section 1482, shall issue, at no fee, a registration certificate and a set of Purple Heart  
35 registration plates, to be used in lieu of regular registration plates, to a person who is a  
36 Purple Heart medal recipient.

37           An application for Purple Heart plates must be accompanied by proof that the applicant  
38 has been awarded the Purple Heart medal. The Secretary of State shall verify the  
39 documentation presented by the applicant. Misrepresentation of documents is in violation  
40 of section 2103, subsection 5.

1 The Secretary of State may issue Purple Heart plates for display only on an automobile or  
2 truck registered for not more than 10,000 pounds. A Purple Heart recipient may be  
3 issued Purple Heart plates for no more than 2 vehicles.

4 The surviving spouse of a Purple Heart recipient issued plates in accordance with this  
5 subsection may retain and use the Purple Heart plates as long as the surviving spouse  
6 remains unmarried. Upon remarriage, the surviving spouse may not use the Purple Heart  
7 plates on a motor vehicle, but may retain them. Upon the death of the surviving spouse,  
8 the family may retain the Purple Heart plates, but may not use them on a motor vehicle.

9 The Secretary of State shall determine the design of the Purple Heart plate. Upon request  
10 and as provided by section 453, the Secretary of State shall issue Purple Heart plates that  
11 are also vanity plates. Purple Heart vanity plates are issued in accordance with this  
12 section and section 453. The ~~annual~~ service fee for vanity plates required in section 453  
13 is credited to the Highway Fund.

14 A Purple Heart recipient or the surviving spouse of a Purple Heart recipient who does not  
15 operate a motor vehicle or register a motor vehicle and who otherwise qualifies for the  
16 issuance of special Purple Heart registration plates may apply to the Secretary of State for  
17 a special single plate recognizing that award.

18 The Secretary of State shall design and identify these single plates for recognition  
19 purposes only. Single Purple Heart plates may not be attached to a motor vehicle. Only  
20 one plate may be issued to each recipient.

21 **Sec. 23. 29-A MRSA §524-B, sub-§1**, as amended by PL 2015, c. 17, §1 and  
22 affected by §3, is further amended to read:

23 **1. Eligibility.** Notwithstanding the requirements in section 468-A, the Secretary of  
24 State, upon application and upon evidence of payment of the excise tax required by Title  
25 36, section 1482 and the ~~annual~~ motor vehicle registration fee required by section 501,  
26 shall issue a registration certificate and a set of gold star family registration plates, to be  
27 used in lieu of regular registration plates, to:

28 A. A person who is eligible to receive a gold star lapel button under 10 United States  
29 Code, Section 1126 (2010);

30 B. A grandparent of a member of the United States Armed Forces, if that member  
31 dies after March 28, 1973 as a result of:

32 (1) An international terrorist attack against the United States or a foreign nation  
33 friendly to the United States, recognized as such an attack by the United States  
34 Secretary of Defense; or

35 (2) Military operations while serving outside the United States, including the  
36 commonwealths, territories and possessions of the United States, as a part of a  
37 peacekeeping force;

38 C. A person who is not eligible to receive a gold star lapel button under 10 United  
39 States Code, Section 1126 (2010) but who is eligible for a lapel button for next of kin  
40 of deceased personnel under 32 Code of Federal Regulations, Section 578.63 (2006);  
41 and

1 D. A grandparent of a member of the United States Armed Forces, if that member  
2 dies while serving on active duty or while assigned in the reserve components of the  
3 United States Armed Forces or Army National Guard unit in a drill status.

4 **SUMMARY**

5 This bill changes the annual registration requirement and fee for automobiles, pickup  
6 trucks registered for 10,000 pounds or less and sport utility vehicles to a biennial  
7 registration at a fee of \$50.