

2026 -- S 2175

LC004235

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

A N A C T

RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES -- REGISTRATION OF VEHICLES

Introduced By: Senators Felag, Appollonio, Lauria, Gallo, Burke, LaMountain, and Britto

Date Introduced: January 16, 2026

Referred To: Senate Special Legislation and Veterans Affairs

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 31-3-80 of the General Laws in Chapter 31-3 entitled "Registration of Vehicles" is hereby amended to read as follows:

31-3-80. Reserve Forces plates.

(a) The administrator of the division of motor vehicles is empowered and authorized to make available to all active and retired members of the United States Reserve Forces of Rhode Island a special motor vehicle registration plate for any motor vehicle eligible for registration as an automobile or a commercial vehicle having a gross weight of ~~eight thousand five hundred pounds~~ ~~(8,500 lbs.)~~ twelve thousand pounds (12,000 lbs.) or less.

(b) The special motor vehicle registration plate shall carry on it the designation "US Reserve Forces" and shall carry on it the titles (Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, and Coast Guard) arranged on the left hand side of the plate from top to bottom in this order of precedence, with numerals to the right of the titles and over the United States flag on the plate.

(c) The administrator of the division of motor vehicles shall issue the plate upon payment of a service charge of twenty dollars (\$20.00) and a transfer charge of five dollars (\$5.00) for the plate. All revenues shall be deposited as general revenues.

(d) For the purposes of this section an active or retired member of the United States Reserve Forces shall be defined as currently serving or having retired under honorable conditions from any of the Reserve Forces other than the Rhode Island Army or Air National Guard.

(e) In a national state of emergency, any active member of the United States Reserve Forces

1 driving a vehicle bearing the special motor vehicle registration plate shall be authorized and
2 empowered to travel upon the highways of the state notwithstanding any driving ban imposed by
3 any state or municipal authority.

4 (f) No US Reserve Forces plates shall be issued until at least nine hundred (900) such plates
5 have been ordered.

6 (g) A DD 214 showing "honorable discharge" shall be furnished to the division of motor
7 vehicles for issuance.

8 (h)(1) Passenger vehicles shall be renewed every two (2) years, and the renewal month
9 shall be based on the first letter of a registered owner's last name, or the first letter of the name of
10 the company of which the vehicles are registered.

11 (2) Commercial vehicles, as defined in subsection (a) of this section, shall be renewed
12 annually in March.

13 (i) Upon the death of the veteran, the plates may be transferred to the holder's surviving
14 spouse for the spouse's lifetime unless or until the spouse remarries.

15 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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1 This act would raise the gross weight of a vehicle eligible for reserve forces plates from
2 eight thousand five hundred pounds (8,500 lbs.) to twelve thousand pounds (12,000 lbs.) and have
3 the United States flag on the plates. The act would also spell out the requirements for proof of
4 honorably discharge to be furnished to the division of motor vehicles and the renewal month for
5 the passenger and commercial vehicles.

6 This act would take effect upon passage.

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