

1 *House* BILL NO. *481*

2 INTRODUCED BY *Schmidt*

3 *Mont. Public Safety*

4 A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT GENERALLY REVISING THE LAWS RELATING TO MOTOR  
5 VEHICLE LICENSE PLATES; AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF CAPITOL RESTORATION LICENSE PLATES;  
6 ALLOWING A FOREIGN-MADE VEHICLE TO DISPLAY ORIGINAL LICENSE PLATES; AMENDING SECTIONS  
7 61-3-332, 61-3-407, AND 61-3-412, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN APPLICABILITY DATE."

8  
9 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

10  
11 NEW SECTION. **Section 1. Capitol restoration license plates.** (1) The owner of a motor vehicle  
12 subject to registration may apply for capitol restoration license plates. The capitol restoration license plates  
13 must be a separate series of plates, numbered as provided in 61-3-332(5), except that the county number  
14 must be replaced by a nonremovable design or decal designating capitol restoration. The department shall  
15 design the decal in consultation with the capitol restoration commission. Capitol restoration license plates  
16 are subject to the same rules and laws as those that govern the issuance of regular license plates.

17 (2) A person who receives capitol restoration license plates under this section is liable for payment  
18 of all taxes and fees required under parts 3, 4, and 5 of this chapter and a special capitol restoration license  
19 plate fee of \$20. Upon an original application for a license, the county treasurer shall:

- 20 (a) deposit \$3 of the special fee in the county general fund;
  - 21 (b) remit \$2 to the state general fund; and
  - 22 (c) remit to the state treasurer the remainder of the special fee for deposit in the capitol restoration
- 23 account in the state special revenue fund.

24 (3) Upon subsequent annual renewal of registration, the county treasurer shall remit all of the  
25 special fee as provided in subsection (2)(c).

26  
27 **Section 2.** Section 61-3-332, MCA, is amended to read:

28 **"61-3-332. Number plates.** (1) A motor vehicle that is driven upon the streets or highways of  
29 Montana must display both front and rear number plates, bearing the distinctive number assigned to the  
30 vehicle. The number plates are in 10 series: one series for owners of motorcars, one for owners of motor



*HB 481*  
INTRODUCED BILL

1 vehicles of the motorcycle or quadricycle type, one for trailers, one for trucks, one for dealers in vehicles  
2 of the motorcycle or quadricycle type that bear the distinctive letters "MCD" or the letters "MC" and the  
3 word "DEALER", one for franchised dealers in new motorcars (including trucks and trailers) or new and  
4 used motorcars (including trucks and trailers) that bear the distinctive letter "D" or the word "DEALER",  
5 one for dealers in used motorcars only (including used trucks and trailers) that bear the distinctive letters  
6 "UD" or the letter "U" and the word "DEALER", one for dealers in trailers and/or semitrailers (new or used)  
7 that bear the distinctive letters "DTR" or the letters "TR" and the word "DEALER", one for dealers in  
8 recreational vehicles that bear the distinctive letters "RV" or the letter "R" and the word "DEALER", and  
9 one for special license plates. All markings for the various kinds of dealers' plates must be placed on the  
10 number plates assigned to the dealer, in the position that the department designates.

11 (2) All number plates for motor vehicles must be issued for a minimum period of 4 years, bear a  
12 distinctive marking, and be furnished by the state. In years when number plates are not issued, the  
13 department shall provide nonremovable stickers bearing appropriate registration numbers that must be  
14 affixed to the license plates in use.

15 (3) Subject to the provisions of this section, the department shall create a new design for number  
16 plates as provided in this section.

17 (4) In the case of motorcars and trucks, plates must be of metal 6 inches wide and 12 inches in  
18 length. The outline of the state of Montana must be used as a distinctive border on the license plates, and  
19 the word "Montana" and the year must be placed across the plates. Registration plates must be treated  
20 with a reflectorized background material according to specifications prescribed by the department.

21 (5) The distinctive registration numbers must begin with a number one or with a letter-number  
22 combination, such as "A 1" or "AA 1", or any other similar combination of letters and numbers. ~~The Except~~  
23 as provided in [section 1], the distinctive registration number or letter-number combination assigned to the  
24 vehicle must appear on the plate preceded by the number of the county and appearing in horizontal order  
25 on the same horizontal baseline. The county number must be separated from the distinctive registration  
26 number by a separation mark unless a letter-number combination is used. The dimensions of the numerals  
27 and letters must be determined by the department, and all county and registration numbers must be of  
28 equal height.

29 (6) For the use of tax-exempt motor vehicles, in addition to the markings provided in this section,  
30 number plates must bear the following distinctive markings:

1 (a) For vehicles owned by the state, the department may designate the prefix number for the  
2 various state departments. All numbered plates issued to state departments must bear the words "State  
3 Owned", and a year number may not be indicated on the plates because these numbered plates are of a  
4 permanent nature and will be replaced by the department only when the physical condition of numbered  
5 plates requires it.

6 (b) For vehicles that are owned by the counties, municipalities, and special districts, as defined in  
7 18-8-202, organized under the laws of Montana and not operating for profit, and that are used and  
8 operated by officials and employees in the line of duty and for vehicles on loan from the United States  
9 government or the state of Montana to, or owned by, the civil air patrol and used and operated by officials  
10 and employees in the line of duty, there must be placed on the number plates assigned, in a position that  
11 the department may designate, the letter "X" or the word "EXEMPT". Distinctive registration numbers for  
12 plates assigned to motor vehicles of each of the counties in the state and those of the municipalities and  
13 special districts that obtain plates within each county must begin with number one and be numbered  
14 consecutively. Because these number plates are of a permanent nature, they are subject to replacement  
15 by the department only when the physical condition of the number plates requires it and a year number may  
16 not be displayed on the number plates.

17 (7) On all number plates assigned to motor vehicles of the truck and trailer type, other than  
18 tax-exempt trucks and tax-exempt trailers, there must appear the letter "T" or the word "TRUCK" on plates  
19 assigned to trucks and the letters "TR" or the word "TRAILER" on plates assigned to trailers and  
20 housetrailer. The letters "MC" or the word "CYCLE" must appear on plates assigned to vehicles of the  
21 motorcycle or quadricycle type.

22 (8) Number plates issued to a passenger car, truck, trailer, or vehicle of the motorcycle or  
23 quadricycle type may be transferred only to a replacement passenger car, truck, trailer, or motorcycle- or  
24 quadricycle-type vehicle. A registration or license fee may not be assessed upon a transfer of a number  
25 plate under 61-3-317 and 61-3-335.

26 (9) For the purpose of this chapter, the several counties of the state are assigned numbers as  
27 follows: Silver Bow, 1; Cascade, 2; Yellowstone, 3; Missoula, 4; Lewis and Clark, 5; Gallatin, 6; Flathead,  
28 7; Fergus, 8; Powder River, 9; Carbon, 10; Phillips, 11; Hill, 12; Ravalli, 13; Custer, 14; Lake, 15; Dawson,  
29 16; Roosevelt, 17; Beaverhead, 18; Chouteau, 19; Valley, 20; Toole, 21; Big Horn, 22; Musselshell, 23;  
30 Blaine, 24; Madison, 25; Pondera, 26; Richland, 27; Powell, 28; Rosebud, 29; Deer Lodge, 30; Teton, 31;

1 Stillwater, 32; Treasure, 33; Sheridan, 34; Sanders, 35; Judith Basin, 36; Daniels, 37; Glacier, 38; Fallon,  
2 39; Sweet Grass, 40; McCone, 41; Carter, 42; Broadwater, 43; Wheatland, 44; Prairie, 45; Granite, 46;  
3 Meagher, 47; Liberty, 48; Park, 49; Garfield, 50; Jefferson, 51; Wibaux, 52; Golden Valley, 53; Mineral,  
4 54; Petroleum, 55; Lincoln, 56. Any new counties must be assigned numbers by the department as they  
5 may be formed, beginning with the number 57.

6 (10) Each type of special license plate approved by the legislature, except collegiate license plates  
7 authorized in 61-3-463, must be a separate series of plates, numbered as provided in subsection (5), except  
8 that the county number must be replaced by a nonremovable design or decal designating the group or  
9 organization to which the applicant belongs. Unless otherwise specifically stated in this section, the special  
10 plates are subject to the same rules and laws as govern the issuance of regular license plates, must be  
11 placed or mounted on a vehicle owned by the person who is eligible to receive them, and must be removed  
12 upon sale or other disposition of the vehicle. The special license plates must be issued to national guard  
13 members, former prisoners of war, handicapped persons, reservists, disabled veterans, survivors of the  
14 Pearl Harbor attack, veterans of the armed services, or veterans of the armed services who were awarded  
15 the purple heart medal, who comply with the following provisions:

16 (a) An active member of the Montana national guard may be issued special license plates with a  
17 design or decal displaying the letters "NG". The adjutant general shall issue to each active member of the  
18 Montana national guard a certificate authorizing the department to issue national guard plates, numbered  
19 in sets of two with a different number on each set, and the member shall surrender the plates to the  
20 department upon becoming ineligible to use them.

21 (b) An active member of the reserve armed forces of the United States of America who is a  
22 resident of this state may be issued special license plates with a design or decal displaying the following:  
23 United States army reserve, AR (symbol); United States naval reserve, NR (anchor); United States air force  
24 reserve, AFR (symbol); and United States marine corps reserve, MCR (globe and anchor). The commanding  
25 officer of each armed forces reserve unit shall issue to each eligible member of the reserve unit a certificate  
26 authorizing the issuance of special license plates, numbered in sets of two with a different number on each  
27 set. The member shall surrender the plates to the department upon becoming ineligible to use them.

28 (c) (i) A resident of Montana who is a veteran of the armed forces of the United States and who  
29 is 100% disabled because of an injury that has been determined by the department of veterans affairs to  
30 be service-connected may, upon presentation to the department of proof of the 100% disability, be issued:

1 (A) a special license plate under this section with a design or decal displaying the letters "DV"; or

2 (B) one set of any other military-related plates that the disabled veteran is eligible to receive under  
3 this section.

4 (ii) The fee for original or renewal registration by a 100% disabled veteran for a passenger vehicle  
5 or a truck with a GVW-rated capacity of 1 ton or less is \$5 and is in lieu of all other fees and taxes for that  
6 vehicle under this chapter.

7 (iii) Special license plates issued to a disabled veteran are not transferable to another person.

8 (iv) A disabled veteran is not entitled to a special disabled veteran's license plate for more than one  
9 vehicle.

10 (v) A vehicle lawfully displaying a disabled veteran's plate and that is conveying a 100% disabled  
11 veteran is entitled to the parking privileges allowed a handicapped person's vehicle under this title.

12 (d) A Montana resident who is a veteran of the armed forces of the United States and was  
13 captured and held prisoner by a military force of a foreign nation, documented by the veteran's service  
14 record, may upon application and presentation of proof be issued special license plates, numbered in sets  
15 of two with a different number on each set, with a design or decal displaying the words "ex-prisoner of  
16 war" or an abbreviation the department considers appropriate.

17 (e) Except as provided in subsection (10)(c), upon payment of all taxes and fees required by parts  
18 3 and 5 of this chapter and upon furnishing proof satisfactory to the department that the applicant meets  
19 the requirements of this subsection (e), the department shall issue to a Montana resident who is a veteran  
20 of the armed services of the United States special license plates, numbered in sets of two with a different  
21 number on each set, designed to indicate that the applicant is a survivor of the Pearl Harbor attack if the  
22 applicant was a member of the United States armed forces on December 7, 1941, was on station on  
23 December 7, 1941, during the hours of 7:55 a.m. to 9:45 a.m. (Hawaii time) at Pearl Harbor, the island  
24 of Oahu, or offshore at a distance of not more than 3 miles, and received an honorable discharge from the  
25 United States armed forces. If special license plates issued under this subsection are lost, stolen, or  
26 mutilated, the recipient of the plates is entitled to replacement plates upon request and without charge.

27 (f) A motor vehicle owner and resident of this state who is a veteran or the surviving spouse of  
28 a veteran of the armed services of the United States may be issued license plates inscribed as provided in  
29 subsection (10)(f)(i) if the veteran was separated from the armed services under other than dishonorable  
30 circumstances or was awarded the purple heart medal:

1 (i) Upon submission of a department of defense form 214(DD-214) or its successor or documents  
2 showing an other-than-dishonorable discharge or a reenlistment, proper identification, and other relevant  
3 documents to show an applicant's qualification under this subsection, there must be issued to the applicant,  
4 in lieu of the regular license plates prescribed by law, special license plates numbered in sets of two with  
5 a different number on each set. The plates must display:

6 (A) the word "VETERAN" and a symbol signifying the United States army, United States navy,  
7 United States air force, United States marine corps, or United States coast guard, according to the record  
8 of service verified in the application; or

9 (B) a symbol representing the purple heart medal.

10 (ii) Plates must be furnished by the department to the county treasurer, who shall issue them to a  
11 qualified veteran or to the veteran's surviving spouse. The plates must be placed or mounted on the vehicle  
12 owned by the veteran or the veteran's surviving spouse designated in the application and must be removed  
13 upon sale or other disposition of the vehicle.

14 (iii) Except as provided in subsection (10)(c), a veteran or surviving spouse who receives special  
15 license plates under this subsection (10)(f) is liable for payment of all taxes and fees required under parts  
16 3 and 4 of this chapter and a special veteran's or purple heart medal license plate fee of \$10. Upon an  
17 original application for a license under this subsection (10)(f), the county treasurer shall:

18 (A) deposit \$3 of the special fee in the county general fund;

19 (B) remit \$1 for deposit in the state general fund; and

20 (C) deposit the remainder of the special fee in the state special revenue account established in  
21 10-2-603 for administration, construction, operation, and maintenance of the state veterans' cemetery.

22 (iv) Upon subsequent annual renewal of registration, the county treasurer shall deposit all of the  
23 special fee as provided in subsection (10)(f)(iii)(C).

24 (g) A Montana resident who is eligible to receive a special parking permit under 49-4-301 may,  
25 upon written application on a form prescribed by the department, be issued a special license plate with a  
26 design or decal bearing a representation of a wheelchair as the symbol of the handicapped person."  
27

28 **Section 3.** Section 61-3-407, MCA, is amended to read:

29 "**61-3-407. Personalized veterans' or capitol restoration license plates.** (1) Subject to the  
30 provisions of 61-3-405 and 61-3-406, an application for veterans' license plates under 61-3-332(10)(f) and

1 an application for capitol restoration license plates under [section 1] may be combined with an application  
2 for personalized plates.

3 (2) An application for personalized veterans' license plates or personalized capitol restoration  
4 license plates must be made on a form supplied by the department."

5  
6 **Section 4.** Section 61-3-412, MCA, is amended to read:

7 **"61-3-412. Display of original Montana or foreign license plates on collector's item vehicle --**  
8 **definition -- validation.** (1) (a) As used in this section, "original Montana license plate" means a license plate  
9 issued according to the provisions of 61-3-331; section 53-116, R.C.M. 1947; section 1759.1, R.C.M.  
10 1935; or section 1759, R.C.M. 1921; whichever section was effective during the year of the manufacture  
11 of the motor vehicle on which the license plate is authorized to be displayed.

12 (b) As used in this section, "original foreign license plate" means an original license plate or the  
13 replica of an original license plate issued by a country outside of the United States for a foreign motor  
14 vehicle manufactured more than 30 years ago. The license plate must have English letters and numbers  
15 with a maximum of nine characters that may not conflict with any current license plate series issued by the  
16 department.

17 (2) Notwithstanding the provisions of 61-3-332, the department shall authorize the owner of a  
18 motor vehicle registered as provided in 61-3-411 to display original Montana license plates or original  
19 foreign license plates, with validation as required in subsection (3), after:

20 (a) payment of the fee required in subsection (5);

21 (b) inspection by a highway patrol officer of the original Montana license plate to be displayed on  
22 the motor vehicle and, upon payment of a \$5 fee, receipt of the highway ~~patrolman's~~ patrol officer's  
23 certification that ~~he~~ the officer has determined the license plate is legible and meets the requirements of  
24 subsection (1); ~~and~~

25 (c) receipt of an application by the owner of the motor vehicle as provided for in 61-3-411; and

26 (d) in the case of an original foreign license plate, certifying to the department that it is an original  
27 or replica foreign license plate for the year in which the vehicle was manufactured.

28 (3) If the owner of a vehicle registered under the provisions of 61-3-314 meets the requirements  
29 of subsection (2), the department shall:

30 (a) file the application and register information on the motor vehicle in the manner prescribed in

1 61-3-101; and

2 (b) issue a validating decal inscribed with:

3 (i) a unique number; and

4 (ii) the letter:

5 (A) "P" to designate vehicles described in 61-3-411(3)(a); or

6 (B) "V" to designate vehicles described in 61-3-411(3)(b).

7 (4) The owner of the motor vehicle shall permanently affix the validating decal to the windshield  
8 of the collector's item motor vehicle or, if no windshield exists, to another prominent and visible position  
9 on the vehicle.

10 (5) The owner of the motor vehicle shall pay to the department with the application required under  
11 this section a one-time special collector's item motor vehicle license fee of \$20."

12

13 **NEW SECTION. Section 5. Codification instruction.** [Section 1] is intended to be codified as an  
14 integral part of Title 61, chapter 3, part 4, and the provisions of Title 61, chapter 3, part 4, apply to  
15 [section 1].

16

17 **NEW SECTION. Section 6. Applicability date.** [Sections 1 through 3] apply to registrations of  
18 motor vehicles occurring after December 31, 1997.

19

-END-



STATE OF MONTANA - FISCAL NOTE

Fiscal Note for HB0481, as introduced

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION:

An act generally revising the laws relating to motor vehicle license plates; authorizing the issuance of capitol restoration license plates; allowing a foreign-made vehicle to display original license plates.

ASSUMPTIONS:

Department of Corrections:

1. New Section 1 of HB 481 establishes procedures for capitol restoration license plates similar to current procedures for regular issue license plates. On capitol restoration license plates the county number must be replaced by a non-removable design or decal designating capitol restoration.
2. The license plate operation general fund appropriation would assume any costs not borne by the Department of Justice Motor Vehicle Division for the capitol restoration license plates involved with this bill. The non-removable design or decal designating capitol restoration could be silk-screened on the existing plate at the Montana Correctional Enterprises (MCE) license plate operation. If a self-adhesive decal is used by the Department of Justice and issued at the time of license application, then the Department of Justice would assume the associated costs.
3. Existing plate design would be used with the county number replaced by a non-removable design or decal designating capitol restoration. Therefore, special license plates (such as collegiate plates) would not be necessary.
4. The MCE license plate operation would have no involvement with the foreign-made original license plates in Section 4 and as such no costs involved.
5. The existing license plate facility and MCE operations have the capability to produce these plates.

Department of Justice:

Capitol restoration license plates:


6. It is assumed that 750 capitol restoration license plates would be purchased during fiscal 1998 and renewed during fiscal 1999 and 250 additional "new" capitol restoration license plates would be purchased during fiscal 1999. Total capitol restoration license plate fees are estimated at \$15,000 in fiscal 1998 and \$20,000 in fiscal 1999.

The special state capitol restoration license plate fee is \$20. Upon the original application for the special license plate, the county treasurer would deposit \$3 of the plate fee in the county general fund, \$2 in the state general fund, and the balance in the capitol restoration state special revenue account.

The capitol restoration account will receive "donations" of approximately \$11,250 in fiscal 1998 (750 x \$15) and \$18,750 in fiscal 1999 ((250 x \$15) + (750 x \$20)). The county general fund would receive approximately \$2,250 in fiscal 1998 (750 x \$3) and \$750 in fiscal 1999 (250 x \$3). The state general fund would receive approximately \$1,500 in fiscal 1998 (750 x \$2) and \$500 in fiscal 1999 (250 x \$2).

The Department of Justice, Motor Vehicle Division, estimates that 200 of these "new" license plates issued in fiscal 1998 would be personalized and would be renewed in fiscal 1999. Also, 50 of the 250 "new" plates issued in fiscal 1999 would be personalized plates. Therefore, the state general fund would receive approximately \$4,000 (200 x \$20) in fiscal 1998 and \$1,000 (50 x \$20) in fiscal 1999 for these new personalized plates and \$1,000 (200 x \$5) in fiscal 1999 for renewals of these personalized plates.

(Continued)

  
DAVID LEWIS, BUDGET DIRECTOR      DATE  
Office of Budget and Program Planning

TRUDI SCHMIDT, PRIMARY SPONSOR      DATE

Fiscal Note for HB0481, as introduced

**HB 481**

7. Operating expenses in fiscal 1998 are estimated at \$500 for contracted services to design this issue of license plates and \$500 for printing and shipping of decals. In addition, the Department of Justice, Motor Vehicle Division, estimates that approximately 80 hours of programming will be required in the personalized plate system and 120 hours of programming in the registration system at a cost of approximately \$3,975 to implement the changes necessary in the motor vehicle system required by this bill. Operating expenses in fiscal 1999 are estimated at \$175 for printing and shipping of decals. Operating expenses for the Motor Vehicle Division related to the capitol restoration license plates are projected at \$4,975 in fiscal 1998 and \$175 in fiscal 1999.
8. The Department of Justice, Motor Vehicle Division, projects that this issue of license plates would be available to the public effective January 1, 1998, due to the time required to design this new issue of license plate and to coordinate with the MCE License Plate operation and the private vendor the production of the materials used to manufacture the license plates.

Foreign license plates on collector's item vehicle:

9. Implementation of Section 4 of this bill would increase the Department of Justice's operating expenses by approximately \$2,800 in fiscal 1998 for 140 hours of programming necessary to modify the motor vehicle computer system, registration and personalized plates subsystems including tracking the foreign plates and ensuring that law enforcement is able to obtain the necessary information on the foreign plates.
10. In calendar 1996 the Department of Justice registered 407 pioneer vehicles, 119 vintage vehicles, 24 vintage motorcycles, and 4 vintage snowmobiles. The number of those vehicles that were foreign motor vehicles manufactured more than 30 years ago is unknown.

FISCAL IMPACT:

**Department of Corrections:**

There is no fiscal impact anticipated as the license plate operations general fund contained in the Governor's Executive Budget would be sufficient to cover any costs associated with HB 481.

**Department of Justice:**

	<u>FY98</u>	<u>FY99</u>
<u>Expenditures:</u>	<u>Difference</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Operating Expenses	7,775	175
 <u>Funding:</u>		
General Fund (01)	7,775	175
 <u>Revenues:</u>		
State General Fund (01)	5,500	2,500
County General Fund	2,250	750
Capitol Restoration Account (02)	11,250	18,750
 <u>Net Impact:</u>		
State General Fund (01)	(2,275)	2,325
Capitol Restoration Account (02)	11,250	18,750

EFFECT ON COUNTY OR OTHER LOCAL REVENUES OR EXPENDITURES:

County revenues are projected to be \$2,250 in fiscal 1998 and \$750 in fiscal 1999.

MOTION TO TAKE FROM TABLE,  
PRINT & PLACE ON 2ND READING

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

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*House* BILL NO. *481*

INTRODUCED BY *Schmidt*  
*Mark Paulsen Study*

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT GENERALLY REVISING THE LAWS RELATING TO MOTOR VEHICLE LICENSE PLATES; AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF CAPITOL RESTORATION LICENSE PLATES; ALLOWING A FOREIGN-MADE VEHICLE TO DISPLAY ORIGINAL LICENSE PLATES; AMENDING SECTIONS 61-3-332, 61-3-407, AND 61-3-412, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN APPLICABILITY DATE."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

**NEW SECTION. Section 1. Capitol restoration license plates.** (1) The owner of a motor vehicle subject to registration may apply for capitol restoration license plates. The capitol restoration license plates must be a separate series of plates, numbered as provided in 61-3-332(5), except that the county number must be replaced by a nonremovable design or decal designating capitol restoration. The department shall design the decal in consultation with the capitol restoration commission. Capitol restoration license plates are subject to the same rules and laws as those that govern the issuance of regular license plates.

(2) A person who receives capitol restoration license plates under this section is liable for payment of all taxes and fees required under parts 3, 4, and 5 of this chapter and a special capitol restoration license plate fee of \$20. Upon an original application for a license, the county treasurer shall:

- (a) deposit \$3 of the special fee in the county general fund;
- (b) remit \$2 to the state general fund; and
- (c) remit to the state treasurer the remainder of the special fee for deposit in the capitol restoration account in the state special revenue fund.

(3) Upon subsequent annual renewal of registration, the county treasurer shall remit all of the special fee as provided in subsection (2)(c).

**Section 2.** Section 61-3-332, MCA, is amended to read:

**"61-3-332. Number plates.** (1) A motor vehicle that is driven upon the streets or highways of Montana must display both front and rear number plates, bearing the distinctive number assigned to the vehicle. The number plates are in 10 series: one series for owners of motorcars, one for owners of motor



*HB 481*  
SECOND READING

1 vehicles of the motorcycle or quadricycle type, one for trailers, one for trucks, one for dealers in vehicles  
2 of the motorcycle or quadricycle type that bear the distinctive letters "MCD" or the letters "MC" and the  
3 word "DEALER", one for franchised dealers in new motorcars (including trucks and trailers) or new and  
4 used motorcars (including trucks and trailers) that bear the distinctive letter "D" or the word "DEALER",  
5 one for dealers in used motorcars only (including used trucks and trailers) that bear the distinctive letters  
6 "UD" or the letter "U" and the word "DEALER", one for dealers in trailers and/or semitrailers (new or used)  
7 that bear the distinctive letters "DTR" or the letters "TR" and the word "DEALER", one for dealers in  
8 recreational vehicles that bear the distinctive letters "RV" or the letter "R" and the word "DEALER", and  
9 one for special license plates. All markings for the various kinds of dealers' plates must be placed on the  
10 number plates assigned to the dealer, in the position that the department designates.

11 (2) All number plates for motor vehicles must be issued for a minimum period of 4 years, bear a  
12 distinctive marking, and be furnished by the state. In years when number plates are not issued, the  
13 department shall provide nonremovable stickers bearing appropriate registration numbers that must be  
14 affixed to the license plates in use.

15 (3) Subject to the provisions of this section, the department shall create a new design for number  
16 plates as provided in this section.

17 (4) In the case of motorcars and trucks, plates must be of metal 6 inches wide and 12 inches in  
18 length. The outline of the state of Montana must be used as a distinctive border on the license plates, and  
19 the word "Montana" and the year must be placed across the plates. Registration plates must be treated  
20 with a reflectorized background material according to specifications prescribed by the department.

21 (5) The distinctive registration numbers must begin with a number one or with a letter-number  
22 combination, such as "A 1" or "AA 1", or any other similar combination of letters and numbers. ~~The~~ Except  
23 as provided in [section 1], the distinctive registration number or letter-number combination assigned to the  
24 vehicle must appear on the plate preceded by the number of the county and appearing in horizontal order  
25 on the same horizontal baseline. The county number must be separated from the distinctive registration  
26 number by a separation mark unless a letter-number combination is used. The dimensions of the numerals  
27 and letters must be determined by the department, and all county and registration numbers must be of  
28 equal height.

29 (6) For the use of tax-exempt motor vehicles, in addition to the markings provided in this section,  
30 number plates must bear the following distinctive markings:

1 (a) For vehicles owned by the state, the department may designate the prefix number for the  
2 various state departments. All numbered plates issued to state departments must bear the words "State  
3 Owned", and a year number may not be indicated on the plates because these numbered plates are of a  
4 permanent nature and will be replaced by the department only when the physical condition of numbered  
5 plates requires it.

6 (b) For vehicles that are owned by the counties, municipalities, and special districts, as defined in  
7 18-8-202, organized under the laws of Montana and not operating for profit, and that are used and  
8 operated by officials and employees in the line of duty and for vehicles on loan from the United States  
9 government or the state of Montana to, or owned by, the civil air patrol and used and operated by officials  
10 and employees in the line of duty, there must be placed on the number plates assigned, in a position that  
11 the department may designate, the letter "X" or the word "EXEMPT". Distinctive registration numbers for  
12 plates assigned to motor vehicles of each of the counties in the state and those of the municipalities and  
13 special districts that obtain plates within each county must begin with number one and be numbered  
14 consecutively. Because these number plates are of a permanent nature, they are subject to replacement  
15 by the department only when the physical condition of the number plates requires it and a year number may  
16 not be displayed on the number plates.

17 (7) On all number plates assigned to motor vehicles of the truck and trailer type, other than  
18 tax-exempt trucks and tax-exempt trailers, there must appear the letter "T" or the word "TRUCK" on plates  
19 assigned to trucks and the letters "TR" or the word "TRAILER" on plates assigned to trailers and  
20 housetrailer. The letters "MC" or the word "CYCLE" must appear on plates assigned to vehicles of the  
21 motorcycle or quadricycle type.

22 (8) Number plates issued to a passenger car, truck, trailer, or vehicle of the motorcycle or  
23 quadricycle type may be transferred only to a replacement passenger car, truck, trailer, or motorcycle- or  
24 quadricycle-type vehicle. A registration or license fee may not be assessed upon a transfer of a number  
25 plate under 61-3-317 and 61-3-335.

26 (9) For the purpose of this chapter, the several counties of the state are assigned numbers as  
27 follows: Silver Bow, 1; Cascade, 2; Yellowstone, 3; Missoula, 4; Lewis and Clark, 5; Gallatin, 6; Flathead,  
28 7; Fergus, 8; Powder River, 9; Carbon, 10; Phillips, 11; Hill, 12; Ravalli, 13; Custer, 14; Lake, 15; Dawson,  
29 16; Roosevelt, 17; Beaverhead, 18; Chouteau, 19; Valley, 20; Toole, 21; Big Horn, 22; Musselshell, 23;  
30 Blaine, 24; Madison, 25; Pondera, 26; Richland, 27; Powell, 28; Rosebud, 29; Deer Lodge, 30; Teton, 31;

1 Stillwater, 32; Treasure, 33; Sheridan, 34; Sanders, 35; Judith Basin, 36; Daniels, 37; Glacier, 38; Fallon,  
2 39; Sweet Grass, 40; McCone, 41; Carter, 42; Broadwater, 43; Wheatland, 44; Prairie, 45; Granite, 46;  
3 Meagher, 47; Liberty, 48; Park, 49; Garfield, 50; Jefferson, 51; Wibaux, 52; Golden Valley, 53; Mineral,  
4 54; Petroleum, 55; Lincoln, 56. Any new counties must be assigned numbers by the department as they  
5 may be formed, beginning with the number 57.

6 (10) Each type of special license plate approved by the legislature, except collegiate license plates  
7 authorized in 61-3-463, must be a separate series of plates, numbered as provided in subsection (5), except  
8 that the county number must be replaced by a nonremovable design or decal designating the group or  
9 organization to which the applicant belongs. Unless otherwise specifically stated in this section, the special  
10 plates are subject to the same rules and laws as govern the issuance of regular license plates, must be  
11 placed or mounted on a vehicle owned by the person who is eligible to receive them, and must be removed  
12 upon sale or other disposition of the vehicle. The special license plates must be issued to national guard  
13 members, former prisoners of war, handicapped persons, reservists, disabled veterans, survivors of the  
14 Pearl Harbor attack, veterans of the armed services, or veterans of the armed services who were awarded  
15 the purple heart medal, who comply with the following provisions:

16 (a) An active member of the Montana national guard may be issued special license plates with a  
17 design or decal displaying the letters "NG". The adjutant general shall issue to each active member of the  
18 Montana national guard a certificate authorizing the department to issue national guard plates, numbered  
19 in sets of two with a different number on each set, and the member shall surrender the plates to the  
20 department upon becoming ineligible to use them.

21 (b) An active member of the reserve armed forces of the United States of America who is a  
22 resident of this state may be issued special license plates with a design or decal displaying the following:  
23 United States army reserve, AR (symbol); United States naval reserve, NR (anchor); United States air force  
24 reserve, AFR (symbol); and United States marine corps reserve, MCR (globe and anchor). The commanding  
25 officer of each armed forces reserve unit shall issue to each eligible member of the reserve unit a certificate  
26 authorizing the issuance of special license plates, numbered in sets of two with a different number on each  
27 set. The member shall surrender the plates to the department upon becoming ineligible to use them.

28 (c) (i) A resident of Montana who is a veteran of the armed forces of the United States and who  
29 is 100% disabled because of an injury that has been determined by the department of veterans affairs to  
30 be service-connected may, upon presentation to the department of proof of the 100% disability, be issued:

1 (A) a special license plate under this section with a design or decal displaying the letters "DV"; or

2 (B) one set of any other military-related plates that the disabled veteran is eligible to receive under  
3 this section.

4 (ii) The fee for original or renewal registration by a 100% disabled veteran for a passenger vehicle  
5 or a truck with a GVW-rated capacity of 1 ton or less is \$5 and is in lieu of all other fees and taxes for that  
6 vehicle under this chapter.

7 (iii) Special license plates issued to a disabled veteran are not transferable to another person.

8 (iv) A disabled veteran is not entitled to a special disabled veteran's license plate for more than one  
9 vehicle.

10 (v) A vehicle lawfully displaying a disabled veteran's plate and that is conveying a 100% disabled  
11 veteran is entitled to the parking privileges allowed a handicapped person's vehicle under this title.

12 (d) A Montana resident who is a veteran of the armed forces of the United States and was  
13 captured and held prisoner by a military force of a foreign nation, documented by the veteran's service  
14 record, may upon application and presentation of proof be issued special license plates, numbered in sets  
15 of two with a different number on each set, with a design or decal displaying the words "ex-prisoner of  
16 war" or an abbreviation the department considers appropriate.

17 (e) Except as provided in subsection (10)(c), upon payment of all taxes and fees required by parts  
18 3 and 5 of this chapter and upon furnishing proof satisfactory to the department that the applicant meets  
19 the requirements of this subsection (e), the department shall issue to a Montana resident who is a veteran  
20 of the armed services of the United States special license plates, numbered in sets of two with a different  
21 number on each set, designed to indicate that the applicant is a survivor of the Pearl Harbor attack if the  
22 applicant was a member of the United States armed forces on December 7, 1941, was on station on  
23 December 7, 1941, during the hours of 7:55 a.m. to 9:45 a.m. (Hawaii time) at Pearl Harbor, the island  
24 of Oahu, or offshore at a distance of not more than 3 miles, and received an honorable discharge from the  
25 United States armed forces. If special license plates issued under this subsection are lost, stolen, or  
26 mutilated, the recipient of the plates is entitled to replacement plates upon request and without charge.

27 (f) A motor vehicle owner and resident of this state who is a veteran or the surviving spouse of  
28 a veteran of the armed services of the United States may be issued license plates inscribed as provided in  
29 subsection (10)(f)(i) if the veteran was separated from the armed services under other than dishonorable  
30 circumstances or was awarded the purple heart medal:

1 (i) Upon submission of a department of defense form 214(DD-214) or its successor or documents  
2 showing an other-than-dishonorable discharge or a reenlistment, proper identification, and other relevant  
3 documents to show an applicant's qualification under this subsection, there must be issued to the applicant,  
4 in lieu of the regular license plates prescribed by law, special license plates numbered in sets of two with  
5 a different number on each set. The plates must display:

6 (A) the word "VETERAN" and a symbol signifying the United States army, United States navy,  
7 United States air force, United States marine corps, or United States coast guard, according to the record  
8 of service verified in the application; or

9 (B) a symbol representing the purple heart medal.

10 (ii) Plates must be furnished by the department to the county treasurer, who shall issue them to a  
11 qualified veteran or to the veteran's surviving spouse. The plates must be placed or mounted on the vehicle  
12 owned by the veteran or the veteran's surviving spouse designated in the application and must be removed  
13 upon sale or other disposition of the vehicle.

14 (iii) Except as provided in subsection (10)(c), a veteran or surviving spouse who receives special  
15 license plates under this subsection (10)(f) is liable for payment of all taxes and fees required under parts  
16 3 and 4 of this chapter and a special veteran's or purple heart medal license plate fee of \$10. Upon an  
17 original application for a license under this subsection (10)(f), the county treasurer shall:

18 (A) deposit \$3 of the special fee in the county general fund;

19 (B) remit \$1 for deposit in the state general fund; and

20 (C) deposit the remainder of the special fee in the state special revenue account established in  
21 10-2-603 for administration, construction, operation, and maintenance of the state veterans' cemetery.

22 (iv) Upon subsequent annual renewal of registration, the county treasurer shall deposit all of the  
23 special fee as provided in subsection (10)(f)(iii)(C).

24 (g) A Montana resident who is eligible to receive a special parking permit under 49-4-301 may,  
25 upon written application on a form prescribed by the department, be issued a special license plate with a  
26 design or decal bearing a representation of a wheelchair as the symbol of the handicapped person."  
27

28 **Section 3.** Section 61-3-407, MCA, is amended to read:

29 **"61-3-407. Personalized veterans' or capitol restoration license plates.** (1) Subject to the  
30 provisions of 61-3-405 and 61-3-406, an application for veterans' license plates under 61-3-332(10)(f) and



1 an application for capitol restoration license plates under [section 1] may be combined with an application  
2 for personalized plates.

3 (2) An application for personalized veterans' license plates or personalized capitol restoration  
4 license plates must be made on a form supplied by the department."

5

6 **Section 4.** Section 61-3-412, MCA, is amended to read:

7 **"61-3-412. Display of original Montana or foreign license plates on collector's item vehicle --**  
8 **definition -- validation.** (1) (a) As used in this section, "original Montana license plate" means a license plate  
9 issued according to the provisions of 61-3-331; section 53-116, R.C.M. 1947; section 1759.1, R.C.M.  
10 1935; or section 1759, R.C.M. 1921; whichever section was effective during the year of the manufacture  
11 of the motor vehicle on which the license plate is authorized to be displayed.

12 (b) As used in this section, "original foreign license plate" means an original license plate or the  
13 replica of an original license plate issued by a country outside of the United States for a foreign motor  
14 vehicle manufactured more than 30 years ago. The license plate must have English letters and numbers  
15 with a maximum of nine characters that may not conflict with any current license plate series issued by the  
16 department.

17 (2) Notwithstanding the provisions of 61-3-332, the department shall authorize the owner of a  
18 motor vehicle registered as provided in 61-3-411 to display original Montana license plates or original  
19 foreign license plates, with validation as required in subsection (3), after:

20 (a) payment of the fee required in subsection (5);

21 (b) inspection by a highway patrol officer of the original Montana license plate to be displayed on  
22 the motor vehicle and, upon payment of a \$5 fee, receipt of the highway ~~patrolman's~~ patrol officer's  
23 certification that ~~he~~ the officer has determined the license plate is legible and meets the requirements of  
24 subsection (1); ~~and~~

25 (c) receipt of an application by the owner of the motor vehicle as provided for in 61-3-411; and

26 (d) in the case of an original foreign license plate, certifying to the department that it is an original  
27 or replica foreign license plate for the year in which the vehicle was manufactured.

28 (3) If the owner of a vehicle registered under the provisions of 61-3-314 meets the requirements  
29 of subsection (2), the department shall:

30 (a) file the application and register information on the motor vehicle in the manner prescribed in

1 61-3-101; and

2 (b) issue a validating decal inscribed with:

3 (i) a unique number; and

4 (ii) the letter:

5 (A) "P" to designate vehicles described in 61-3-411(3)(a); or

6 (B) "V" to designate vehicles described in 61-3-411(3)(b).

7 (4) The owner of the motor vehicle shall permanently affix the validating decal to the windshield  
8 of the collector's item motor vehicle or, if no windshield exists, to another prominent and visible position  
9 on the vehicle.

10 (5) The owner of the motor vehicle shall pay to the department with the application required under  
11 this section a one-time special collector's item motor vehicle license fee of \$20."

12

13 **NEW SECTION. Section 5. Codification instruction.** [Section 1] is intended to be codified as an  
14 integral part of Title 61, chapter 3, part 4, and the provisions of Title 61, chapter 3, part 4, apply to  
15 [section 1].

16

17 **NEW SECTION. Section 6. Applicability date.** [Sections 1 through 3] apply to registrations of  
18 motor vehicles occurring after December 31, 1997.

19

-END-