ASSEMBLY, No. 3141

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 24, 2020

Sponsored by:
Assemblyman WAYNE P. DEANGELO
District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)

Co-Sponsored by:
Assemblywoman Murphy

SYNOPSIS

Authorizes special Combat Action Badge license plate program.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 2/24/2020)

AN ACT concerning Combat Action Badge license plates and supplementing Title 39 of the Revised Statutes.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. a. Upon proper application, the Chief Administrator of the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission shall issue Combat Action Badge license plates for any motor vehicle owned or leased and registered in this State. In addition to the registration number and other markings or identification otherwise prescribed by law, the license plate shall display the words, "Combat Action Badge" and depict the Combat Action Badge emblem. The chief administrator, in consultation with the Adjutant General of the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs, shall select the design of the Combat Action Badge license plates. The Combat Action Badge license plates shall be subject to the provisions of chapter 3 of Title 39 of the Revised Statutes, except as hereinafter otherwise specifically provided.

b. Application for issuance of Combat Action Badge license plates shall be made to the chief administrator on forms and in a manner prescribed by the chief administrator. The application shall include proof satisfactory to the chief administrator that the applicant is a holder of the Combat Action Badge as certified on the applicant's DD-214 form or on a Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty. In order to be deemed complete, an application shall be accompanied by a fee of $50, payable to the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission, which shall be in addition to the fee otherwise prescribed by law for the registration of motor vehicles. The chief administrator shall collect annually, subsequent to the year of issuance of the Combat Action Badge license plate, a $10 fee for the license plate in addition to the fee otherwise prescribed by law for the registration of a motor vehicle. The additional fees required by this subsection shall be deposited in the "Combat Action Badge License Plate Fund" created pursuant to subsection c. of this section.

c. There is created in the Department of [1]the[1] Treasury a special non-lapsing fund to be known as the "Combat Action Badge License Plate Fund." There shall be deposited in the fund the amount collected from all license plate fees collected pursuant to subsection b. of this section, less the amounts necessary to reimburse the commission for administrative costs pursuant to subsection d. of this section. Monies deposited in the fund shall be appropriated annually to the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs and shall be used to support programs

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

benefiting combat veterans. Monies deposited in the fund shall be held in interest-bearing accounts in public depositories as defined pursuant to section 1 of P.L.1970, c.236 (C.17:9-41), and may be invested or reinvested in securities approved by the State Treasurer. Interest or other income earned on monies deposited into the fund, and any monies which may be appropriated or otherwise become available for the purposes of the fund, shall be credited to and deposited in the fund for use as set forth in P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

d. Prior to the deposit of the additional fees collected pursuant to subsection b. of this section into the "Combat Action Badge License Plate Fund," amounts thereof as are necessary shall be used to reimburse the commission for all costs reasonably and actually incurred, as stipulated by the chief administrator, for:

(1) producing, issuing, renewing, and publicizing the availability of the Combat Action Badge license plates; and

(2) any computer programming changes that may be initially necessary to implement the Combat Action Badge license plate program established by P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill), in an amount not to exceed $150,000.

The chief administrator shall annually certify to the State Treasurer the average cost per license plate incurred in the immediately preceding year by the commission in producing, issuing, renewing, and publicizing the availability of the Combat Action Badge license plates. The annual certification of the average cost per license plate shall be approved by the Joint Budget Oversight Committee, or its successor.

In the event that the average cost per license plate as certified by the chief administrator and approved by the Joint Budget Oversight Committee, or its successor, is greater than the $50 application fee established in subsection b. of this section in two consecutive fiscal years, the chief administrator may discontinue the issuance of Combat Action Badge license plates.

e. The chief administrator shall notify eligible motorists of the opportunity to obtain Combat Action Badge license plates by publicizing the availability of the license plates on the website of the commission. The New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs, and any other individual or entity designated by the department, may publicize the availability of the Combat Action Badge license plates in any manner that the department deems appropriate.

f. The chief administrator and adjutant general shall develop and enter into an interdepartmental memorandum of agreement setting forth the procedures to be followed in carrying out their respective responsibilities under P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

g. The adjutant general shall appoint a representative who shall act as a liaison between the New Jersey Department of Military and

Veterans' Affairs and the commission. The liaison shall represent the department in any and all communications with the commission regarding the Combat Action Badge license plates established by P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

2. a. No State or public funds shall be used by the commission for the initial cost of:

(1) producing, issuing, and publicizing the availability of Combat Action Badge license plates; or

(2) any computer programming changes which may be necessary to implement the Combat Action Badge license plate program established by P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

b. An individual or entity designated by the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs, shall contribute non-public monies in an amount to be determined by the chief administrator, not to exceed a total of $25,000, to be used to offset the initial costs incurred by the commission for producing, issuing, and publicizing the availability of Combat Action Badge license plates, and any computer programming changes which may be necessary to implement the program. Concerned organizations and individual donors may contribute monies to the department to be used to offset the initial costs incurred by the commission for the Combat Action Badge license plates authorized by P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill). Any amount remaining after the payment of the initial cost shall be deposited in the "Combat Action Badge License Plate Fund" established pursuant to subsection c. of section 1 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

c. The commission shall not begin designing, producing, issuing, or publicizing the availability of the Combat Action Badge license plates, or making any necessary computer programming changes, until the <u>following requirements have been met:</u>

(1) The individual or entity designated by the department has provided the commission with the money necessary, as determined by the chief administrator pursuant to subsection b. of this section, to offset the initial costs incurred by the commission in establishing the Combat Action Badge license plate program; and

(2) The liaison appointed by the adjutant general pursuant to subsection g. of section 1 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill) has provided the commission with not less than 500 completed applications for Combat Action Badge license plates. These applications shall constitute the initial order for Combat Action Badge license plates and shall be accompanied by a fee representing the total cost of the initial order. The fee shall be determined by multiplying the number of sets of license plates being ordered by the applicable initial fee for each set of license

plates as set forth in subsection b. of section 1 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

3. This act shall take effect immediately, but shall remain inoperative until the first day of the 13th month following the date on which the conditions set forth in subsection c. of section 2 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill) have been satisfied. The chief administrator may take such anticipatory acts in advance of that date as may be necessary for the timely implementation of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill). P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill) shall expire if the conditions set forth in subsection c. of section 2 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill) are not satisfied by the last day of the 12th month following enactment.

STATEMENT

This bill authorizes special Combat Action Badge license plates. The license plate is to display the words, "Combat Action Badge" and the Combat Action Badge emblem. An application to obtain Combat Action Badge license plates is to include satisfactory proof that the applicant received the Combat Action Badge. In addition to the required motor vehicle registration fees, there is an application fee of $50 and an annual renewal fee of $10 for the Combat Action Badge license plates. After deducting the cost of producing and publicizing the plates, the additional fees collected will be deposited into the “Combat Action Badge License Fund” and the funds will be appropriated annually to the New Jersey Department of Military Veterans Affairs (department) for programs to benefit combat veterans.

The Chief Administrator of the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission (commission) is required to annually certify the average cost of producing, issuing, and publicizing the availability of the specialty license plates. If the average cost per plate exceeds $50, the chief administrator may discontinue the license plate program.

The bill provides that State or other public funds may not be used by the commission for the initial cost to implement the Combat Action Badge license plate program. The bill authorizes the department to receive funds, in an amount not to exceed a total of $25,000, from private sources to be used to offset the initial costs incurred by the commission for designing, producing, issuing, and publicizing the availability of the license plates.

The provisions of the bill are to remain inoperative until the commission receives the initial funds. The bill will expire if the

funds to initiate the license plate program are not received within 12 months of the effective date.

The Combat Action Badge was approved for creation by the Chief of Staff of the United States Army on May 2, 2005. The honor was created to provide special recognition to any member of the armed forces who personally engaged an enemy in close combat in an imminent danger area. Recognition for close combat was previously only provided to members of infantry units through the Combat Infantry Badge. The Combat Action Badge extended the opportunity for recognition for close combat to members of the United States Army outside of infantry units.