

SENATE, No. 1758

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 13, 2020

Sponsored by:
Senator VIN GOPAL
District 11 (Monmouth)

SYNOPSIS

Authorizes special Combat Action Badge license plate program.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



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

3
4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*

6
7 1. a. Upon proper application, the Chief Administrator of the
8 New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission shall issue Combat Action
9 Badge license plates for any motor vehicle owned or leased and
10 registered in this State. In addition to the registration number and
11 other markings or identification otherwise prescribed by law, the
12 license plate shall display the words, "Combat Action Badge" and
13 depict the Combat Action Badge emblem. The chief administrator,
14 in consultation with the Adjutant General of the New Jersey
15 Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs, shall select the
16 design of the Combat Action Badge license plates. The Combat
17 Action Badge license plates shall be subject to the provisions of
18 chapter 3 of Title 39 of the Revised Statutes, except as hereinafter
19 otherwise specifically provided.

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

37 c. There is created in the Department of the Treasury a special
38 non-lapsing fund to be known as the "Combat Action Badge
39 License Plate Fund." There shall be deposited in the fund the
40 amount collected from all license plate fees collected pursuant to
41 subsection b. of this section, less the amounts necessary to
42 reimburse the commission for administrative costs pursuant to
43 subsection d. of this section. Monies deposited in the fund shall be
44 appropriated annually to the New Jersey Department of Military
45 and Veterans' Affairs and shall be used to support programs
46 benefiting combat veterans. Monies deposited in the fund shall be
47 held in interest-bearing accounts in public depositories as defined

1 pursuant to section 1 of P.L.1970, c.236 (C.17:9-41), and may be
2 invested or reinvested in securities approved by the State Treasurer.
3 Interest or other income earned on monies deposited into the fund,
4 and any monies which may be appropriated or otherwise become
5 available for the purposes of the fund, shall be credited to and
6 deposited in the fund for use as set forth in
7 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

45 g. The adjutant general shall appoint a representative who shall
46 act as a liaison between the New Jersey Department of Military and
47 Veterans' Affairs and the commission. The liaison shall represent

1 the department in any and all communications with the commission
2 regarding the Combat Action Badge license plates established by
3 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

4
5 2. a. No State or public funds shall be used by the commission
6 for the initial cost of:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3
4 3. This act shall take effect immediately, but shall remain
5 inoperative until the first day of the 13th month following the date
6 on which the conditions set forth in subsection c. of section 2 of
7 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill)
8 have been satisfied. The chief administrator may take such
9 anticipatory acts in advance of that date as may be necessary for the
10 timely implementation of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the
11 Legislature as this bill). P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the
12 Legislature as this bill) shall expire if the conditions set forth in
13 subsection c. of section 2 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before
14 the Legislature as this bill) are not satisfied by the last day of the
15 12th month following enactment.

16 17 18 STATEMENT

19
20 This bill authorizes special Combat Action Badge license plates.
21 The license plate is to display the words, "Combat Action Badge" and
22 the Combat Action Badge emblem. An application to obtain Combat
23 Action Badge license plates is to include satisfactory proof that the
24 applicant received the Combat Action Badge. In addition to the
25 required motor vehicle registration fees, there is an application fee of
26 \$50 and an annual renewal fee of \$10 for the Combat Action Badge
27 license plates. After deducting the cost of producing and publicizing
28 the plates, the additional fees collected will be deposited into the
29 "Combat Action Badge License Fund" and the funds will be
30 appropriated annually to the New Jersey Department of Military
31 Veterans Affairs (department) for programs to benefit combat
32 veterans.

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

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

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

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

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