

CHAPTER 148

(HB 530)

AN ACT relating to personalized license plates.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:

➔Section 1. KRS 186.174 is amended to read as follows:

- (1) For purposes of this section, "personalized license plate" means a license plate issued with personal letters or numbers significant to the applicant and it also means a license plate that is issued under this section and has been combined with a special license plate.
- (2) Any owner or lessee of a motor vehicle that is required to be registered under the provisions of KRS 186.050(1), (3)(a), or (4)(a), or any owner or lessee of a motorcycle required to be registered under the provisions of KRS 186.050(2) may obtain a personalized license plate by applying for a personalized license plate in the office of the county clerk and upon payment of the fee required in KRS 186.162. A person initially applying for a personalized license plate shall submit the application and appropriate SF fee in person to the county clerk, but may submit the annual application to renew the personalized license plate and entire fee required in KRS 186.162 by mail to the county clerk.
- (3) (a) *For personalized license plates already issued on the effective date of this Act, renewal applications and fees* ~~for personalized license plates pursuant to this section~~ must be received by the Transportation Cabinet on or before September 1, 2018. *Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this subsection, personalized license plates that expire December 31, 2018, and are renewed under this subsection, shall then expire on the last day of the birth month of the applicant in 2019 and in each succeeding year. An applicant who renews a plate under this paragraph shall be charged a prorated registration fee based on the number of months the registration is valid for during the year 2019.*
 - (b) *Personalized license plates that expire December 31, 2018 and are renewed under this subsection by individuals whose birth months are in January, February, and March shall expire April 30, 2019, and then shall expire on the last day of the birth month of the applicant in each succeeding year. An applicant who renews a plate under this paragraph shall be charged a prorated registration fee based on the number of months the registration is valid for during the year 2019.*
- (4) *Personalized license plates issued after the effective date of this Act shall expire on the last day of the birth month of the applicant* ~~preceding the year that the plate or renewal is to be issued~~.
- (5) A personalized license plate shall be replaced *on the same schedule as regular issue license plates unless it is damaged or unreadable* ~~annually unless the applicant chooses to receive a renewal registration decal~~. A county clerk shall immediately forward the application and the fee required in KRS 186.162 for a personalized license plate to the Transportation Cabinet. ~~Personalized plates issued under this section expire December 31 each year.~~ The initial fee for a personalized license plate that has been combined with special license plate shall be as established in KRS 186.162(3).
- ~~(6)~~~~(3)~~ A personalized plate shall not be issued that would conflict with or duplicate the alphabetical-numerical system used for regular license plates or any other license plates issued in the Commonwealth, and shall not contain a combination of more than six (6) letters of the alphabet and Arabic numerals, including spaces. A personalized plate shall not be issued if the cabinet determines the request fails to comply with the conditions specified in KRS 186.164(9)(c) to (g). The owner or lessee shall submit an application and fee to renew a personalized license plate pursuant to the provisions of ~~subsection (2) of~~ this section. Once an applicant obtains a personalized plate, he or she will have first priority on that plate for each of the following years that he or she makes timely and proper application.

➔Section 2. KRS 186.164 is amended to read as follows:

- (1) The SF portion of the fee required under KRS 186.162 shall include the fee to reflectorize all license plates under KRS 186.240. All EF fees required under KRS 186.162 shall be collected at the time of an initial or renewal application by the county clerk who shall forward the EF fee to the cabinet. The cabinet shall remit EF fees to the group or organization identified in KRS 186.162 on a quarterly basis. The cabinet may retain any investment income earned from holding EF fees designated to be remitted under this subsection to offset administrative costs incurred by the cabinet in the administration of EF fees.

- (2) A special license plate shall be the color and design selected by the group or organization identified in subsection (13) of this section, contingent upon the approval of the Transportation Cabinet. In addition to the design selected for a special license plate, the name "Kentucky," an annual renewal decal, and any combination of letters or numerals required by the cabinet in the design shall also appear on the plate.
- (3) Except as provided in KRS 186.162, the total initial fee for a special license plate created under this chapter shall be twenty-eight dollars (\$28), of which the Transportation Cabinet shall receive twenty-five dollars (\$25) and the county clerk shall receive three dollars (\$3), and the total renewal fee shall be fifteen dollars (\$15), of which the Transportation Cabinet shall receive twelve dollars (\$12) and the county clerk shall receive three dollars (\$3). The twenty-five dollar (\$25) initial fee and twelve dollar (\$12) renewal fee received by the Transportation Cabinet under this subsection shall include an applicant's registration fee required under KRS 186.050.
- (4) An actual metal special license plate shall be issued on the same schedule as regular license plates are issued under KRS 186.240. The cabinet shall have the discretion to extend the time period that will exist between the date a metal special license plate is issued and the date that regular plates are issued under KRS 186.240. A renewal registration decal shall be issued all other years during the owner's or lessee's birth month, except as provided in KRS 186.041(2) ~~and~~ ~~186.042(5), and 186.174(2)~~. A person seeking a special license plate for a vehicle provided as part of the person's occupation shall conform to the requirements of KRS 186.050(14).
- (5)
 - (a) If a special license plate issued under this chapter deteriorates to the point that the lettering, numbering, or images on the face of the plate are not legible, the plate shall be replaced free of charge, if the owner or lessee has not transferred the vehicle to which the plate was issued during the current licensing period.
 - (b) If a special license plate issued under this chapter is lost, stolen, or damaged in an accident, the county clerk shall issue a new plate upon payment of a three dollar (\$3) county clerk fee, if the owner or lessee has not transferred the vehicle to which the plate was issued during the current licensing period.
- (6) Upon the sale, transfer, or termination of a lease of a vehicle with any special license plate issued under this chapter, the owner or lessee shall remove the special plate and return it and the certificate of registration to the county clerk. The county clerk shall reissue the owner or lessee a regular license plate and a certificate of registration upon payment of a three dollar (\$3) county clerk fee. If the owner or lessee requests, the county clerk shall reissue the special plate upon payment of a three dollar (\$3) county clerk fee for use on any other vehicle of the same classification and category owned, leased, or acquired by the person during the current licensing period. If the owner or lessee has the special plate reissued to a vehicle which has been previously registered in this state, the regular license plate that is being replaced shall be returned to the county clerk who shall forward the plate to the Transportation Cabinet.
- (7) A special license plate may be issued to the owner or lessee of a motor vehicle that is required to be registered under KRS 186.050(1), (3)(a), or (4)(a), except a special license plate shall not be issued to a taxicab, limousine, or U-Drive-It registered and licensed under this chapter or KRS Chapter 281. A person applying for a special license plate shall apply in the office of the county clerk in the county of the person's residence, except as provided in KRS 186.168(3). All special license plates issued under this chapter may be combined with a personalized license plate under the provisions of KRS 186.174. The fee to combine a special license plate with a personalized license plate shall be as established in KRS 186.162(3).
- (8) Within thirty (30) days of termination from election to, appointment to, or membership with any group or organization, an applicant to whom a special license plate was issued under this chapter shall return the special license plate to the county clerk of the county of his or her residence, unless the person is merely changing his or her status with the group or organization to retired.
- (9) A group wanting to create a special license plate that is not authorized under this chapter on June 20, 2005, shall comply with the following conditions before being eligible to apply for a special license plate:
 - (a) The group shall be nonprofit and based, headquartered, or have a chapter in Kentucky;
 - (b) The group may be organized for, but shall not be restricted to, social, civic, or entertainment purposes;
 - (c) The group, or the group's lettering, logo, image, or message to be placed on the license plate, if created, shall not discriminate against any race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, and shall not be construed, as determined by the cabinet, as an attempt to victimize or intimidate any person due to the person's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin;

- (d) The group shall not be a political party and shall not have been created primarily to promote a specific political belief;
 - (e) The group shall not have as its primary purpose the promotion of any specific faith, religion, or antireligion;
 - (f) The name of the group shall not be the name of a special product or brand name, and shall not be construed, as determined by the cabinet, as promoting a product or brand name; and
 - (g) The group's lettering, logo, image, or message to be placed on the license plate, if created, shall not be obscene, as determined by the cabinet.
- (10) If the cabinet denies to issue a group a special license plate based upon the conditions specified in subsection (9) of this section, the cabinet shall, immediately upon denying to issue a group a special license plate, notify in writing the chairperson of both the House and Senate standing committees on transportation of the denial and the reasons upon which the cabinet based the denial. A person seeking a personalized license plate under KRS 186.174 shall be subject to the conditions specified in subsection (9)(c) to (g) of this section.
- (11) If the cabinet approves a request for a special license plate, the cabinet shall begin designing and printing the plate after the group collects a minimum of nine hundred (900) applications with each application being accompanied by a twenty-five dollar (\$25) state fee. The applications and accompanying fee shall be submitted to the cabinet at one (1) time as a whole and shall not be submitted individually or intermittently.
- (12) An initial applicant for, or an applicant renewing, his or her registration for a special license plate may, at the time of application, make a voluntary contribution that the county clerk shall forward to the cabinet. The entity that sponsors a special plate established by the process outlined in this section may set a requested donation amount, not to exceed ten dollars (\$10), that will automatically be added to the cost of registration or renewal, unless the individual registering or renewing the vehicle registration opts out of contributing that recommended amount. The cabinet shall, on an annual basis, remit the voluntary contributions to the appropriate group identified to be used for the declared purpose stated under subsection (13) of this section. The cabinet may retain any investment income earned from holding voluntary contributions designated to be remitted under this subsection to offset administrative costs incurred by the cabinet in the administration of the contributions. Any group or organization that receives a mandatory EF fee under KRS 186.162 shall submit the information required under subsection (13)(a) and (c) of this section to the Transportation Cabinet within thirty (30) days of June 20, 2005.
- (13) If a group wants to receive a donation when the group or organization's special license plate is initially purchased or renewed under subsection (12) of this section, the group shall, at the time the nine hundred (900) applications are submitted to the Transportation Cabinet, also submit a notarized affidavit to the cabinet attesting to:
- (a) The name, address, and telephone number for the group or organization. If the group or organization does not have its headquarters in the Commonwealth, then the name, address, and telephone number for the group or organization's Kentucky state chapter shall be required. The names of the officers of the group or organization shall also be required. If the entity receiving funds under subsection (12) of this section is not a state governmental agency, a program unit within a state governmental agency, or is a group or organization that does not have a statewide chapter, then an extra donation for use by the group or organization shall be prohibited;
 - (b) The amount of the monetary donation the group wants to receive when a person purchases the group or organization's special license plate; and
 - (c) The purpose for which the donated funds will be used by the group or organization. Donated funds shall not be limited for use by members of the group or organization, and shall not be used for administrative or personnel costs of the group or organization.
- (14) All funds received by a group or organization under subsection (12) of this section shall be deposited into an account separate from all other accounts the group or organization may have, and the account shall be audited yearly at the expense of the group or organization. The completed audit shall be forwarded to the Transportation Cabinet in Frankfort. One hundred percent (100%) of the funds received by a group or organization under subsection (12) of this section shall be used for the express purpose identified by the group in subsection (13) of this section. Any group or organization that receives a mandatory EF fee under KRS 186.162 shall comply with the provisions of this subsection.

- (15) The secretary of the Transportation Cabinet shall promulgate administrative regulations under KRS Chapter 13A to establish additional rules to implement the issuance of special license plates issued under this chapter, including but not limited to:
- (a) Documentation that will be required to accompany an application for a special license plate to provide proof of:
 - 1. Election to the United States Congress or the Kentucky General Assembly;
 - 2. Election or appointment to the Kentucky Court of Justice;
 - 3. Membership in a Masonic Order, Fraternal Order of Police, or emergency management organization;
 - 4. Eligibility for membership in the Gold Star Mothers of America;
 - 5. Eligibility as a father for associate membership in the Gold Star Mothers of America;
 - 6. Eligibility for membership in the Gold Star Wives of America;
 - 7. Ownership of an amateur radio operator license;
 - 8. Receipt of the Silver Star Medal;
 - 9. Receipt of the Bronze Star Medal awarded for valor;
 - 10. Eligibility for a Gold Star Siblings license plate for a person whose sibling died while serving the country in the United States Armed Forces. For the purposes of this subparagraph, "sibling" means a sibling by blood, a sibling by half-blood, a sibling by adoption, or a stepsibling; or
 - 11. Eligibility for a Gold Star Sons or Gold Star Daughters license plate for a person whose parent or stepparent died while serving the country in the United States Armed Forces;
 - (b) The time schedule permissible for a group or organization to request a design change for the special license plate; and
 - (c) The procedures for review of proposed license plates and the standards by which proposed special license plates are approved or rejected in accordance with subsection (9) of this section.
- (16) Any individual, group, or organization that fails to audit any funds received under this chapter, or that intentionally uses any funds received in any way other than attested to under subsection (13) of this section or for administrative or personnel costs in violation of subsection (13) of this section, shall be guilty of a Class D felony and upon conviction shall, in addition to being subject to criminal penalties, be assessed a mandatory five thousand dollar (\$5,000) fine.

Signed by Governor April 10, 2018.