

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 3208
By: Quintanilla
Transportation
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Almost all specialty license plates produced by the Texas Department of Transportation can be manufactured with the International Symbol of Access (ISA) - also known as the "wheelchair icon." At the current time, however, the design of three plates prevents inclusion of the ISA. Per TxDOT, those plates are the Congressional Medal of Honor plate, the Legion of Valor plate, and the Texas Guard plate.

As a result, Texans with disabilities who qualify for a disabled license plate and want one of the three specialty plates must choose one other the other: a specialty license plate or a disabled license plate. This will undoubtedly impact veterans before any other citizen, as only veterans will apply for these specialty license plates.

Instead, these veterans must apply for a disabled person placard to hang from their rearview mirror, which costs \$5. There is no fee, however, for a Congressional Medal of Honor plate or a Texas Guard plate, and the Legion of Valor plate currently carries a \$3 charge. Furthermore, there is no fee for a disabled person license plate. As a result, disabled veterans must bear an added cost when they are forced to purchase the disabled person placard.

As proposed, HB 3208 requires that all specialty license plates be designed in a manner that they can incorporate the ISA for Texans who would qualify for a disabled license plate.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Section 504.201 of the Transportation Code is amended by adding Subsection (h) to read as follows:

(h) The department shall include the international symbol of access, as defined by Section 681.001, on a specialty license plate issued under this chapter to a person who is eligible for a license plate issued under this section.

SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2007.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2007.