

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

C.S.H.B. 4861  
By: Wilson  
Defense & Veterans' Affairs  
Committee Report (Substituted)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Specialty license plate recipients contend that current law does not easily allow for the creation of new specialty license plates for eligible military members. C.S.H.B. 4861 seeks to address this issue by providing for the issuance of certain new specialty license plates and for the authority of the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles to consider design recommendations for military specialty license plates from persons who are eligible to be issued a military specialty license plate.

### **CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

### **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**

C.S.H.B. 4861 amends the Transportation Code to authorize the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (TxDMV) to consider design recommendations for the design of military specialty license plates from persons who are eligible to be issued a military specialty license plate. The bill requires TxDMV to issue the following specialty license plates:

- those for recipients of the Texas Homeland Defense Service Medal that include a depiction of the medal's emblem and the words "Texas Homeland Defense Service Medal" at the bottom of each plate;
- those for recipients of the Texas Superior Service Medal that include a depiction of the medal's emblem and the words "Texas Superior Service Medal" at the bottom of each plate;
- those for recipients of the Lone Star Distinguished Service Medal that include a depiction of the medal's emblem and the words "Lone Star Distinguished Service Medal" at the bottom of each plate;
- those for recipients of the Texas Outstanding Service Medal that include a depiction of the medal's emblem and the words "Texas Outstanding Service Medal" at the bottom of each plate; and
- specialty license plates for recipients of the Texas Medal of Merit that include a depiction of the Texas Medal of Merit emblem and the words "Texas Medal of Merit" at the bottom of each plate.

The bill includes one emblem from these license plates among those that may be included on request on a specialty license plate issued to veterans with disabilities.

C.S.H.B. 4861 requires TxDMV to issue one set of these specialty license plates without the payment of the requisite vehicle registration fee for the first registration period for which the vehicle is registered with the plates. The bill clarifies that such an exemption for the issuance of one set of specialty license plates for recipients of the following military medals applies for the first registration period for which the vehicle is registered and for each renewal of registration for which the vehicle is registered:

- the Distinguished Flying Cross medal and Distinguished Flying Cross medal with Valor;
- the Army of Occupation Medal;
- the Defense Superior Service Medal; and
- certain medals or recognition for extraordinary military service.

C.S.H.B. 4861 establishes legislative intent to harmonize the bill's provisions with another act of the 88th Legislature, Regular Session, 2023, relating to nonsubstantive additions to and corrections in enacted codes.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2023.

### **COMPARISON OF INTRODUCED AND SUBSTITUTE**

While C.S.H.B. 4861 may differ from the introduced in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

The substitute includes requirements absent from the introduced for TxDMV to issue specialty license plates for recipients of the following military medals that include the corresponding emblem and name at the bottom of each plate:

- the Texas Homeland Defense Service Medal;
- the Texas Superior Service Medal;
- the Lone Star Distinguished Service Medal;
- the Texas Outstanding Service Medal; and
- the Texas Medal of Merit.

With respect to those license plates, the substitute includes provisions that did not appear in the introduced requiring TxDMV to issue one set without the payment of the vehicle registration fee for the first registration period for which the vehicle is registered, and including the applicable emblems among those that may be included on request on a specialty license plate issued to veterans with disabilities.

The substitute includes a provision absent from the introduced that clarifies that the fee exemption for the issuance of one set of license plates for recipients of the following military medals applies to the first registration period for which the vehicle is registered and to each renewal of registration:

- the Distinguished Flying Cross medal and Distinguished Flying Cross medal with Valor;
- the Army of Occupation Medal;
- the Defense Superior Service Medal; and
- certain medals or recognition for extraordinary service.

The substitute includes a provision absent from the introduced that establishes legislative intent to harmonize the bill's provisions with another act of the 88th Legislature, Regular Session, 2023, relating to nonsubstantive additions to and corrections in enacted codes.