

TWENTY-THIRD NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH

LEGISLATURE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Regular Session, 2023

H. B. 23-58

A BILL FOR AN ACT

To amend 9 CMC § 2116 to provide for the identification of combat veteran, combat disabled veteran, purple heart, gold star family, & silver star veterans on the vehicle license plate; and for other purposes.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE 23RD NORTHERN MARIANAS
COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE:**

1 **Section 1. Findings and Purpose.** The Commonwealth Legislature finds
2 that the freedom and security we enjoy today are the direct result of the courageous
3 service and sacrifices made by our combat veterans, combat disabled veterans,
4 Purple Heart veterans, Gold Star family, and Silver Star veterans. Recognizing the
5 need to honor these exceptional individuals, the Legislature acknowledges that
6 several states across the United States, including Texas, Florida, California,
7 Virginia, and Ohio, have implemented specialized license plates to pay tribute to
8 their extraordinary contributions. These license plates serve as a visible symbol of
9 gratitude and appreciation, underscoring the importance of acknowledging and

1 commemorating the selfless dedication, valor, and sacrifices made by these
2 distinguished individuals.

3 The Legislature further recognizes that by incorporating combat veterans,
4 combat disabled veterans, Purple Heart veterans, Gold Star family, and Silver Star
5 veterans license plates into our legislation, the Commonwealth of the Northern
6 Mariana Islands can align itself with these statutes and join the nationwide effort to
7 recognize the exceptional service of our veterans. Through the introduction of
8 specialized license plates, we aim to demonstrate our unwavering support and deep
9 appreciation for the selfless men and women who have served our nation in the face
10 of adversity. Furthermore, the Legislature acknowledges that by offering these
11 specialized license plates, we provide an avenue for our community to actively
12 participate in honoring and supporting our veterans. These license plates will serve
13 as a constant reminder of the valor and sacrifices made by these remarkable
14 individuals, and they will help promote a greater understanding and appreciation
15 for their service among our citizens, both young and old.

16 In light of these findings, it is the purpose of this legislation to establish and
17 authorize the issuance of combat veterans, combat disabled veterans, Purple Heart
18 veterans, Gold Star family, and Silver Star veterans license plates in the
19 Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Through this initiative, we aim

1 to demonstrate our deep respect and appreciation for the service and sacrifices made
2 by our veterans while fostering a sense of unity and community support.

3 **Section 2. Amendment.** 9 CMC § 2116 is hereby amended to read as
4 follows:

5 **“§ 2116. Veteran or Disabled Veteran, Combat Veteran, Combat**
6 **Disabled Veteran, Purple Heart Veteran, Gold Star family, and Silver**
7 **Star Veteran License Plates.**

8 (a) Definition.

9 (1) For purposes of this Act, the term “veteran” means a person who
10 served
11 in active duty in the United States military service in the Army, Navy,
12 Marine Corp, Coast Guard, Air National Guard, or active reserve
13 component of the Army, Air Force, or Navy, and who was discharged or
14 released under conditions other than dishonorable.

15 (2) “Disabled Veteran” means a person who served in active duty in the
16 United States military service in the Army, Navy, Marine Corp, Coast
17 Guard, Air National Guard, or active reserve component of the Army, Air
18 Force, or Navy, and who was discharged or released under conditions
19 other than dishonorable and certified as having at least 10% disability due
20 to service- related injury.

- 1 (3) “Combat Veteran” means a person who served in active duty in the
2 United States military service and was deployed to a combat zone during
3 their service.
- 4 (4) “Combat Disabled Veteran” means a person who served in active duty
5 in the United States military service and deployed to a combat zone during
6 their service and certified as having a service-connected disability.
- 7 (5) “Purple Heart Veteran” means a person who received the Purple Heart
8 medal for wounds sustained in combat while serving the United States
9 military service.
- 10 (6) “Gold Star Family” means a person who is a parent, inclusive of
11 mother, father, stepmother, stepfather, and mother through adoption,
12 father through adoption, and foster parents who stood in loco parentis,
13 spouses, siblings, and children of a member of the Armed Forces of the
14 United States who died while serving our country.
- 15 (7) “Silver Star Veteran” means a person who received the Silver Star
16 medal for gallantry in action while serving the United States military
17 service.
- 18 (b) Application.
- 19 (1) In lieu of the license plates contracted on behalf of the Bureau of

1 Motor Vehicles, in order to qualify for a veteran's license or disabled
2 veteran's license plate the applicant must submit the following along with
3 the application for vehicle registration:

4 (i) Copy of the Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty from
5 the Department of Defense (DD214);

6 ~~(ii) Individuals otherwise qualified under subsection (a)(1) of this section~~
7 ~~shall obtain certification from the Military and Veterans Affairs Office,~~
8 ~~provided that he/she produces documents, if DD214 is not available,~~
9 ~~which signifies proof that he/she served in the U.S. military services; or~~
10 Valid military identification card or Common Access Card (CAC) issued
11 by the Department of Defense.

12 ~~(iii) Individuals otherwise qualified under subsection (a)(2) shall obtain~~
13 ~~certification from the Military and Veterans Affairs Office, provided that~~
14 ~~he/she produces documents, if DD214 is not available, which signifies~~
15 ~~proof that he/she has at least 10% disability due to service related injury.~~

16 Individuals otherwise qualified under subsection (a)(1) of this section shall
17 obtain certification from the Military and Veterans Affairs Office,
18 provided that he/she produces documents, if DD214 and military I.D. are
19 not available, which signifies proof that he/she served in the U.S. military
20 services;

- 1 (iv) Individuals otherwise qualified under subsection (a)(2) shall obtain
2 certification from the Military and Veterans Affairs Office, provided that
3 he/she produces documents, if DD214 and military I.D. are not available,
4 which signifies proof that he/she has at least 10% disability due to service-
5 related injury;
- 6 (v) Individuals otherwise qualified under subsection (a)(3) shall obtain
7 certification from the Military and Veterans Affairs Office, provided that
8 he/she produces documents, if DD214 and military I.D. are not available,
9 which signifies proof of deployment to a combat zone during their service;
- 10 (vi) Individuals otherwise qualified under subsection (a)(4) shall obtain
11 certification from the Military and Veterans Affairs Office, provided that
12 he/she produces documents, if DD214 and military I.D. are not available,
13 which signifies proof of deployment to a combat zone during their service
14 and certification of a service-connected disability;
- 15 (vii) Individuals otherwise qualified under subsection (a)(5) shall obtain
16 certification from the Military and Veterans Affairs Office, provided that
17 he/she produces documents, if DD214 and military I.D. are not available,
18 which signifies proof of receiving the Purple Heart medal; (viii)
- 19 Individuals otherwise qualified under subsection (a)(6) shall obtain
20 certification from the Military and Veterans Affairs Office, provided that

1 he/she produces documents, if DD214 and military I.D. are not available,
2 which signifies proof of being a Gold Star Family;

3 (ix) Individuals otherwise qualified under subsection (a)(7) shall obtain
4 certification from the Military and Veterans Affairs Office, provided that
5 he/she produces documents, if DD214 and military I.D. are not available,
6 which signifies proof of receiving the Silver Star medal.

7 (2) Disabled veteran’s license plates cannot be used to park at disabled
8 parking spaces. For disabled parking privileges, a veteran must obtain a
9 person with disabilities placard issued under 9 CMC § 5653.

10 (c) Color and Design. A veteran or disabled veteran license plate shall be
11 the same standard size and shape as regular passenger vehicle license
12 plates with the additional features as follows:

13 (1) Below the line “Hafa Adai” will be the word “VETERAN”,
14 “DISABLED VETERAN”, “COMBAT VETERAN”, “DISABLED
15 COMBAT VETERAN”, “PURPLE HEART”, “SILVER STAR”, and
16 “GOLD STAR FAMILY” (in black lettering) bordered on the left by the
17 United States Flag and on the right by the CNMI Flag;

18 (2) On the next line, centered on the license plate, will be the license plate
19 number (in blue lettering) in alpha numeric format designating branch of
20 service and numerical sequence. For example, A001 (Army), NG045
21 (National Guard), or R610 (Reserves). For a qualified person with a

1 disability, the veteran license plate shall display the International Symbol
2 of Accessibility in the same size as the letters and numbers on the license
3 plate.

4 (3) Any additional regulations or design specifications needed to
5 implement the provisions of this section shall be prescribed by the
6 Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety or his designee.

7 (d) Fee. Veterans who are first-time registrants shall be eligible for a one-
8 time 25% discount upon their initial registration and subsequent renewal.
9 Veterans, receiving a 10% disability rating and above, who are first-time
10 registrants shall be eligible for a one-time 50% discount upon their initial
11 registration and subsequent renewal. The fee for the issuance of a veteran
12 ~~or disabled veteran license plate for first time registration and renewal(s)~~
13 ~~shall be 25% less than the fee charged for a similar license plate for the~~
14 ~~same class of vehicle. Additionally, no fee shall be charged for the~~
15 ~~issuance of a veteran or disabled veteran license plate to a veteran rated by~~
16 ~~the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs at a 100% permanent and total~~
17 ~~disability~~ No fee shall be charged for a 100% permanent and total
18 disability veteran. The veteran or disabled veteran, combat veteran,
19 combat disabled veteran, Purple Heart veteran, Gold Star family, and a
20 Silver Star veteran license plate must be for a non-commercial vehicle
21 registered to the veteran, or legal guardian applying for benefits under this

1 applying for benefits under this section. A copy of the decision letter
2 issued by the Regional Veterans Affairs Office which indicates approved
3 disability rating must be furnished to the Department of Public Safety and
4 the Department of Finance in order to waive the veteran or disabled
5 veteran license plate fees.

6 (e) Issuance. A veteran or disabled veteran, combat veteran, combat
7 disabled veteran, Purple Heart veteran, Gold Star family, and a Silver Star
8 veteran license plate shall be issued only to the registered owner or lessee
9 of the vehicle on which they are to be displayed.

10 (1) Registration for a veteran or disabled veteran, combat veteran, combat
11 disabled veteran, Purple Heart veteran, Gold Star family, and a Silver Star
12 veteran license plate shall not be limited to one vehicle per veteran.

13 (2) Veteran or disabled veteran, combat veteran, combat disabled veteran,
14 Purple Heart veteran, Gold Star family, and a Silver Star veteran license
15 plates issued under this section shall not be transferable to any other
16 person, provided that the Commissioner of the Department of Public
17 Safety or his designee shall allow the survivor of the qualified person,
18 upon request, to retain the front license plate as a memorial.

19 (3) Veteran or disabled veteran, combat veteran, combat disabled veteran,
20 Purple Heart veteran, Gold Star family, and a Silver Star veteran license
21 plates shall be assigned to non- commercial passenger motor vehicles and

1 non-commercial motorcycles.

2 (f) The Department of Public Safety shall commence planning for the
3 design and issuance of the veteran and disabled veteran license plates and
4 shall implement the distribution of veteran and disabled veteran license
5 plates within 90 days after the effective date of PL 20-37.

6 (g) Special Gold Star Family License Plates. The Bureau of Motor
7 Vehicles shall, upon application, issue gold star license plates. The type
8 and style of gold star license plates shall be determined by the Director of
9 the Bureau of Motor Vehicles and the Office of Veterans Affairs, except
10 that a gold star shall appear on one side of the plate. Applicants shall apply
11 on forms prescribed by the Director of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, and
12 the applicant's eligibility will be certified by the Office of Veterans
13 Affairs. The plates shall be re-issued to the original holder of the plates.
14 The Director of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles may adopt rules to
15 implement the provisions of this section. Except for a new or renewed
16 registration, applications for the issuance of gold star family license plates
17 shall not exceed the fee charged for a similar license plate for the same
18 class of vehicle.

19 (h) Eligibility for the Issuance of a Gold Star Family License Plate. Gold
20 Star Family License Plates shall only be issued to parents, inclusive of
21 mother, father, stepmother, stepfather, and mother through adoption,

1 father through adoption, and foster parents who stood in loco parentis,
2 children, stepchildren, children through adoption, brothers, sisters, half
3 brothers, and half sisters of a member of the Armed Forces of the United
4 States, spouses, widows and widowers.”

5 **Section 3. Severability.** If any provisions of this Act or the application of
6 any such provision to any person or circumstance should be held invalid by a court
7 of competent jurisdiction, the remainder of this Act or the application of its
8 provisions to persons or circumstances other than those to which it is held invalid
9 shall not be affected thereby.

10 **Section 4. Savings Clause.** This Act and any repealer contained herein
11 shall not be construed as affecting any existing right acquired under contract or
12 acquired under statutes repealed or under any rule, regulation, or order adopted
13 under the statutes. Repealers contained in this Act shall not affect any proceeding
14 instituted under or pursuant to prior law. The enactment of the Act shall not have
15 the effect of terminating, or in any way modifying, any liability, civil or criminal,
16 which shall already be in existence on the date this Act becomes effective.

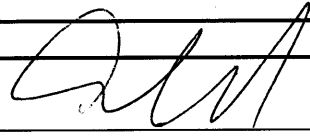
17 **Section 5. Effective Date.** This Act shall take effect upon its approval by
18 the Governor, or its becoming law without such approval.

Prefiled: 6/16/2023

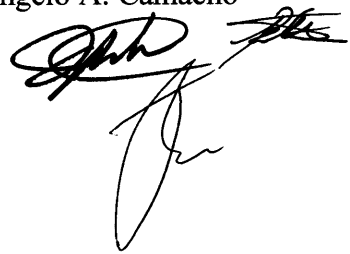
HOUSE BILL 27-58

Date: _____

Introduced by: _____



Rep. Angelo A. Camacho



Reviewed for Legal Sufficiency by:

Jimmy 6-16-23
House Legal Counsel