**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND SECTION 56‑3‑1965, AS AMENDED, CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, RELATING TO FREE PARKING FOR HANDICAPPED PERSONS, SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT THIS PROVISION APPLIES TO PARKING SPACES OPERATED BY ALL GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES AND PARKING GARAGES OPERATED BY THESE ENTITIES; TO AMEND SECTION 56‑3‑1110, AS AMENDED, RELATING TO THE ISSUANCE OF SPECIAL LICENSE PLATES TO DISABLED WARTIME VETERANS, SO AS TO DECREASE THE DISABILITY RATING A VETERAN MUST POSSESS IN ORDER TO QUALIFY TO OBTAIN THIS LICENSE PLATE, TO PROVIDE THAT ONLY A TOTALLY AND PERMANENTLY DISABLED VETERAN LICENSE PLATE MAY DISPLAY A HANDICAPPED SYMBOL, AND TO PROVIDE THAT A PERSON WHO QUALIFIES FOR A LICENSE PLATE THAT CONTAINS THE HANDICAPPED SYMBOL DOES NOT HAVE TO APPLY FOR A HANDICAPPED PARKING PLACARD.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Section 56‑3‑1965 of the 1976 Code, as last amended by Act 24 of 2009, is further amended to read:

“Section 56‑3‑1965. Those ~~municipalities~~ governmental entities having marked parking spaces shall provide appropriately designated space or spaces reserved for the parking of handicapped persons. A person who is handicapped as defined in this article must be allowed to park in metered or timed parking places and parking garages operated by governmental entities without being subject to parking fees or fines. This section does not apply to areas or during times in which the stopping, parking, or standing of all vehicles is prohibited or to areas which are reserved for special types of vehicles. A vehicle must display a distinguishing license plate which must be issued by the department, or a distinguishing placard which must be issued by the department, pursuant to Section 56‑3‑1960 when parked in metered or timed parking places.”

SECTION 2. Section 56‑3‑1110 of the 1976 Code, as last amended by Act 398 of 2006, is further amended to read:

“Section 56‑3‑1110. (A) A wartime disabled veteran who is entitled to compensation for the loss, or loss of use of one or both legs or arms, or the permanent impairment of vision in both eyes to a degree as to constitute virtual blindness and is also entitled to a special monthly statutory award by reason thereof or any South Carolina veteran classified as ~~totally and permanently~~ at least seventy percent disabled due to service‑connected disabilities as determined from medical records on file with the Veterans Administration or a certificate signed by the county veterans affairs officer certifying the disability may make application for registration and license of his owned or leased private passenger motor vehicle to the Department of Motor Vehicles without accompanying the application with the usual fee for registration and license of a vehicle of similar type. The department shall issue the license plates upon the receipt of an application in the form required by the department. Not more than two disabled veteran license plates may be issued to a wartime disabled veteran. A veteran who is issued a license plate under the provisions of this section must provide a new certification as prescribed by this subsection at the time a new license plate is issued. A surviving spouse of such a veteran is also eligible to obtain such plate so long as the surviving spouse does not remarry. When a new license plate is issued to a surviving spouse, the spouse must certify on a form prescribed by the department that the spouse has not remarried.

(B) If a person who qualifies for the special license plate issued under this section is entitled to compensation for the loss, or loss of use of one or both legs or arms, or the permanent impairment of vision in both eyes to a degree as to constitute virtual blindness and is also entitled to a special monthly statutory award by reason thereof or any South Carolina veteran classified as totally and permanently disabled due to service‑connected disabilities as determined from medical records on file with the Veterans Administration or any certificate signed by the county veterans affairs officer certifying the disability and also qualifies for the handicapped license plate issued pursuant to Section 56‑3‑1960~~(1)~~, then the license plate issued pursuant to this section shall also include the distinguishing symbol used on license plates issued pursuant to Section 56‑3‑1960~~(1)~~, and the person is not required to submit an application for a parking placard pursuant to Section 56‑3‑1960. Until the department determines that the license plate shall be redesigned to include the symbol, the department shall develop a decal using a distinguishing symbol to be placed on the license plate which shall be issued to all persons who request the license plate authorized by this subsection, including persons for whom license plates were issued pursuant to this section on the effective date of this subsection.”

SECTION 3. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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