**South Carolina General Assembly**

125th Session, 2023-2024

**A178, R220, H4674**

**STATUS INFORMATION**

General Bill

Sponsors: Rep. Erickson

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Introduced in the House on January 9, 2024

Introduced in the Senate on January 31, 2024

Last Amended on May 9, 2024

Currently residing in the House

Governor's Action: May 20, 2024, Signed

Summary: License plates

**HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS**

 Date Body Action Description with journal page number

 12/14/2023 House Prefiled

 12/14/2023 House Referred to Committee on **Education and Public Works**

 1/9/2024 House Introduced and read first time (House Journal‑page 119)

 1/9/2024 House Referred to Committee on **Education and Public Works** (House Journal‑page 119)

 1/24/2024 House Committee report: Favorable **Education and Public Works** (House Journal‑page 7)

 1/30/2024 House Read second time (House Journal‑page 26)

 1/30/2024 House Roll call Yeas-112 Nays-0 (House Journal‑page 27)

 1/31/2024 House Read third time and sent to Senate (House Journal‑page 24)

 1/31/2024 Senate Introduced and read first time (Senate Journal‑page 6)

 1/31/2024 Senate Referred to Committee on **Transportation** (Senate Journal‑page 6)

 4/4/2024 Senate Committee report: Favorable with amendment **Transportation** (Senate Journal‑page 5)

 4/17/2024 Senate Committee Amendment Adopted (Senate Journal‑page 70)

 4/17/2024 Senate Read second time (Senate Journal‑page 70)

 5/7/2024 Senate Amended (Senate Journal‑page 27)

 5/7/2024 Senate Read third time and returned to House with amendments (Senate Journal‑page 27)

 5/7/2024 Senate Roll call Ayes-44 Nays-0 (Senate Journal‑page 27)

 5/9/2024 House Senate amendment amended (House Journal‑page 10)

 5/9/2024 House Roll call Yeas-91 Nays-0 (House Journal‑page 15)

 5/9/2024 House Returned to Senate with amendments (House Journal‑page 10)

 5/9/2024 Senate Concurred in House amendment and enrolled (Senate Journal‑page 62)

 5/15/2024 Ratified R 220

 5/20/2024 Signed By Governor

 5/29/2024 Effective date 11/20/24

 5/29/2024 Act No. 178

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**VERSIONS OF THIS BILL**

[12/14/2023](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess125_2023-2024/prever/4674_20231214.docx)

[01/24/2024](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess125_2023-2024/prever/4674_20240124.docx)

[04/04/2024](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess125_2023-2024/prever/4674_20240404.docx)

[04/17/2024](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess125_2023-2024/prever/4674_20240417.docx)

[05/07/2024](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess125_2023-2024/prever/4674_20240507.docx)

[05/09/2024](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess125_2023-2024/prever/4674_20240509.docx)

(A178, R220, H4674)

AN ACT TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 56‑3‑1240, RELATING TO THE DISPLAY OF LICENSE PLATES, SO AS TO PROVIDE THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SECTION APPLY, TO PROVIDE HOW LICENSE PLATES MUST BE FASTENED TO VEHICLES, TO MAKE TECHNICAL CHANGES, AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE DISPLAY OF TEMPORARY LICENSE PLATES ON LARGE COMMERCIAL MOTOR VEHICLES; BY ADDING SECTION 56-3-15020 SO AS TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF “HEARING IMPAIRED” SPECIAL LICENSE PLATES; BY ADDING ARTICLE 150 TO CHAPTER 3, TITLE 56 SO AS TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF “SOUTH CAROLINA EQUINE INDUSTRY” SPECIAL LICENSE PLATES; BY AMENDING SECTION 56‑3‑7340, RELATING TO THE ISSUANCE OF “NATIVE AMERICAN” SPECIAL LICENSE PLATES, SO AS TO PROVIDE THESE LICENSE PLATES MAY BE ISSUED TO OWNERS OF MOTORCYCLES; BY ADDING ARTICLE 151 TO CHAPTER 3, TITLE 56 SO AS TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF “CATAWBA NATION” SPECIAL LICENSE PLATES; BY ADDING ARTIClE 152 TO CHAPTER 3, TITLE 56 SO AS TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF “CHEROKEE INDIAN NATION” SPECIAL LICENSE PLATES; BY ADDING ARTICLE 153 TO CHAPTER 3, TITLE 56 SO AS TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF “SOUTH CAROLINA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION” SPECIAL LICENSE PLATES; BY AMENDING SECTION 56-3-14210, RELATING TO THE ISSUANCE OF “UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA 2017 AND 2022 WOMEN’S BASKETBALL NATIONAL CHAMPIONS” SPECIAL LICENSE PLATES, SO AS TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF “UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA 2017, 2022, AND 2024 WOMEN’S BASKETBALL CHAMPIONS” SPECIAL LICENSE PLATES; BY ADDING ARTICLE 60 TO CHAPTER 3, TITLE 56 SO AS TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF “AUTISTIC AND NEURODIVERGENT” SPECIAL LICENSE PLATES; BY ADDING ARTICLE 154 TO CHAPTER 3, TITLE 56 SO AS TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF “SOUTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION FOR PUPIL TRANSPORTATION” SPECIAL LICENSE PLATES; BY AMENDING SECTION 56-3-14910, RELATING TO THE ISSUANCE OF SPECIAL LICENSE PLATES REFLECTIVE OF VALOROUS AWARDS CONFERRED UPON ACTIVE OR PRIOR SERVICE MEMBERS, SO AS TO INCLUDE THE ISSUANCE OF THESE LICENSE PLATES TO RECIPIENTS OF NAVY AND MARINE CORPS MEDALS; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 56-3-14990, RELATING TO ALLOWING SURVIVING SPOUSES TO APPLY FOR OR TRAnSFER CERTAIN MILITARY SPECIAL LICENSE PLATES, SO AS TO PROVIDE A SURVIVING SPOUSE OF A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL GUARD MAY APPLY FOR OR TRANSFER CERTAIN MILITARY LICENSE PLATES.

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

Display of license plates

SECTION 1. Section 56-3-1240 of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 Section 56-3-1240. (A) Unless the provisions of this section apply, license plates issued for motor vehicles must be attached to the outside rear of the vehicle, open to view. License plates must always be fastened securely in a horizontal and upright position to the vehicle for which it was issued so as to prevent the plate from swinging.

 (B) License plates for truck tractors and road tractors must be attached to the outside front of the vehicle provided that single-unit commercial motor vehicles with a gross vehicle weight rating in excess of twenty-six thousand pounds may have the license plate on either the outside front or rear of the vehicle. During the forty-five days, an intrastate-only large commercial motor vehicle may operate on a temporary license plate issued pursuant to Section 56-3-212, the vehicle owner may display a motorcycle-sized temporary license plate securely in the front, passenger-side windshield of the vehicle provided the unique identifying license plate text faces the exterior of the vehicle. The owner must position the temporary license plate to not obstruct the driver’s view.

 (C) When a motorcycle is equipped with vertically mounted license plate brackets, its license plate must be mounted vertically with its top fastened along the right vertical edge. The bottom of the plate must be at a height of not less than twelve inches from the ground in a place and position clearly visible as provided in Section 56-5-4530, and it must be maintained free from foreign materials and in a clearly legible condition.

 (D) No other license plate, lighting equipment, except as permitted in Section 56-5-4530, tag, sign, monogram, tinted cover, or inscription of metal or other material may be displayed above, or upon the plate other than that which is authorized and issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles for the purpose of validating the plate. It is not unlawful to place a decal or a frame on the license plate if it does not obscure any letters or numbers. A motor vehicle owner may attach a trailer hitch to a motor vehicle provided the hitch does not obscure more than two inches of the license plate issued to the motor vehicle. It is unlawful to operate or drive a motor vehicle with the license plate missing and a person who is convicted for violating this section must be punished as provided by Section 56‑3‑2520.

Hearing impaired special license plates

SECTION 2. Chapter 3, Title 56 of the S.C. Code is amended by adding:

 Section 56-3-15020. The Department of Motor Vehicles may issue “Hearing Impaired” special motor vehicle license plates to owners of private passenger-carrying motor vehicles or motorcycles registered in their names who are hearing impaired. The application for this special motor vehicle license plate must include an original certificate from a licensed physician, as defined in Section 40‑75‑5, that certifies that the applicant has a permanent, uncorrectable hearing loss of forty decibels or more in one or both ears. The fee for each special license plate is the regular motor vehicle license fee set forth in Article 5. The department may issue this special license plate six months following approval of its design. Each special license plate must be of the same size and general design of regular motor vehicle license plates. Each special license plate must be issued or revalidated for a biennial period which expires twenty-four months from the month the special license plate is issued.

South Carolina equine industry special license plates

SECTION 3. Chapter 3, Title 56 of the S.C. Code is amended by adding:

Article 150

South Carolina Equine Industry Special License Plates

 Section 56-3-16000. (A) The Department of Motor Vehicles may issue “South Carolina Equine Industry” special license plates to owners of private passenger-carrying motor vehicles or motorcycles registered in their names. Each special license plate must be issued or revalidated for a biennial period that expires twenty-four months from the month the special license plate is issued.

 (B) This special license plate must be the same size and general design as regular motor vehicle license plates. The department may issue this special license plate six months following approval of its design.

 (C) The requirements for production, collection, and distribution of fees for the plate are those set forth in Section 56-3-8100. The biennial fee for each special license plate is thirty dollars plus the regular motor vehicle license fee set forth in Article 5, Chapter 3, Title 56. Any portion of the thirty-dollar fee in excess of the costs of production and distribution of the license plates must be distributed to the Department of Agriculture for the purpose of promoting the equine industry in the State.

Native American special license plates

SECTION 4. Section 56-3-7340 of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 Section 56-3-7340. (A) The Department of Motor Vehicles may issue “Native American” special license plates to owners of private passenger motor vehicles or motorcycles registered in their names. The requirements for production and distribution of the plate are those set forth in Section 56-3-8100. The biennial fee for this plate is the regular registration fee set forth in Article 5, Chapter 3 of this title plus an additional fee of thirty dollars. Any portion of the additional thirty-dollar fee not set aside by the Comptroller General to defray costs of production and distribution must be distributed to the Native American Prison Program of South Carolina.

Catawba Nation special license plates

SECTION 5. Chapter 3, Title 56 of the S.C. Code is amended by adding:

Article 151

Catawba Nation Special License Plates

 Section 56-3-16010.  (A) The Department of Motor Vehicles may issue “Catawba Nation” special license plates. Each special license plate must be issued or revalidated for a biennial period that expires twenty‑four months from the month the special license plate is issued.

 (B) The Catawba Nation shall submit to the department for approval the design, emblem, seal, logo, or other symbols it desires to be used for this special license plate. The department may issue this special license plate six months following approval of its design.

 (C) This special license plate is exempt from the provisions contained in Section 56-3-8100.

 (D) The biennial fee for each special license plate is forty dollars plus the regular motor vehicle license fee set forth in Article 5, Chapter 3, Title 56. The forty‑dollar fee must be distributed to the Catawba Nation.

Cherokee Indian Nation special license plates

SECTION 6. Chapter 3, Title 56 of the S.C. Code is amended by adding:

Article 152

Cherokee Indian Nation Special License Plates

 Section 56-3-16110. The Department of Motor Vehicles may issue “Cherokee Indian Nation” special license plates to owners of private passenger motor vehicles or motorcycles registered in their names. Only members of the Cherokee Indian Nation are eligible to receive a license plate produced pursuant to this section. A member of the Cherokee Indian Nation applying for the license plate must produce with the license plate application an official document from the Cherokee Indian Nation verifying membership. The requirements for production and distribution of the plate are those set forth in Section 56-3-8100. The department may issue this special license plate six months following approval of its design. The biennial fee for this plate is the regular registration fee set forth in Article 5, Chapter 3 of this title plus an additional fee of thirty dollars. Any portion of the additional thirty-dollar fee not set aside by the Comptroller General to defray costs of production and distribution must be distributed to the to the Museum of the Cherokee in Oconee County.

South Carolina Beekeepers Association special license plates

SECTION 7. Chapter 3, Title 56 of the S.C. Code is amended by adding:

Article 153

South Carolina Beekeepers Association Special License Plates

 Section 56-3-16210. (A) The Department of Motor Vehicles may issue “South Carolina Beekeepers Association” special license plates to owners of private passenger-carrying motor vehicles, as defined in Section 56-3-630, or motorcycles registered in their names. Each special license plate must be issued or revalidated for a biennial period that expires twenty-four months from the month the special license plate is issued.

 (B) This special license plate must be the same size and general design as regular motor vehicle license plates. The department may issue this special license plate six months following approval of its design.

 (C) The requirements for production, collection, and distribution of fees for the plate are those set forth in Section 56-3-8100. The biennial fee for each special license plate is forty dollars plus the regular motor vehicle license fee set forth in Article 5, Chapter 3, Title 56. Any portion of the forty-dollar fee not set aside by the Comptroller General to defray costs of production and distribution of the license plates must be distributed to the South Carolina Beekeepers Association to be used for research and education.

University of South Carolina 2017, 2022, and 2024 Women’s Basketball National Champions special license plates

SECTION 8. Section 56‑3‑14210 of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 Section 56‑3‑14210. (A) The Department of Motor Vehicles shall issue “University of South Carolina 2017, 2022, and 2024 Women’s Basketball National Champions” special license plates to owners of private passenger motor vehicles, as defined in Section 56‑3‑630, or motorcycles as defined in Section 56‑3‑20, registered in their names.

 (B) The University of South Carolina may submit to the department for its approval the emblem, seal, or other symbol it desires to be used for its respective special license plate. The department may issue this special license plate six months following approval of its design.

 (C) The requirements for production, collection, and distribution of fees for the plate are those set forth in Section 56‑3‑8100. The biennial fee for this plate is the regular registration fee set forth in Article 5, Chapter 3 of this title plus an additional fee of seventy dollars. Any portion of the additional seventy‑dollar fee not set aside to defray costs of production and distribution must be distributed to the fund established for the University of South Carolina pursuant to Section 56‑3‑3710(B) used for the purposes provided in that section.

 (D) License number “1” for the “University of South Carolina 2017, 2022, and 2024 Women’s Basketball National Champions” license plate is reserved for the University of South Carolina Women’s Basketball Coach.

 (E) The department must issue to registrants who have a license plate commemorating only the 2017 Women’s Basketball National Championship or only the 2017 and 2022 Women’s Basketball National Championships, the license plate commemorating the 2017, 2022, and 2024 national championships once both the 2017 and the 2017 and 2022 license plates reach the end of their ten‑year lifecycles. This subsection does not apply to registrants who choose to switch to the “2017, 2022, and 2024” license plate on their own.

Autistic and Neurodivergent special license plates

SECTION 9. Chapter 3, Title 56 of the S.C. Code is amended by adding:

Article 60

Autistic and Neurodivergent Special License Plates

 Section 56-3-7100. The Department of Motor Vehicles may issue “Autistic and Neurodivergent” special motor vehicle license plates to owners of private passenger-carrying motor vehicles registered in their names who are autistic or neurodivergent or who are parents of children who are autistic or neurodivergent. The application for this special motor vehicle license plate must include an original certificate from a licensed physician that certifies the applicant or his child is autistic or neurodivergent. The fee for each special license plate is the regular motor vehicle license fee set forth in Article 5. Each special license plate must be of the same size and general design of regular motor vehicle license plates and contain the “Just Bee” icon as identification for autistic or neurodivergent individuals. The department may issue this special license plate six months following approval of its design. Each special license plate must be issued or revalidated for a biennial period which expires twenty-four months from the month the special license plate is issued.

South Carolina Association for Pupil Transportation special license plates

SECTION 10. Chapter 3, Title 56 of the S.C. Code is amended by adding:

Article 154

South Carolina Association for Pupil Transportation Special License Plates

 Section 56-3-16310. (A) The Department of Motor Vehicles may issue “South Carolina Association for Pupil Transportation” special license plates. Each special license plate must be issued or revalidated for a biennial period that expires twenty-four months from the month the special license plate is issued.

 (B) The South Carolina Association for Pupil Transportation shall submit to the department for approval the design, emblem, seal, logo, or other symbols it desires to be used for this special license plate. The department may issue this special license plate six months following approval of its design.

 (C) The requirements for production, collection, and distribution of fees for a special license plate under this section must meet the requirements in Section 56-3-8100.

 (D) The biennial fee for each special license plate is twenty-five dollars plus the regular motor vehicle license fee set forth in Article 5, Chapter 3, Title 56. The twenty-five-dollar fee must be distributed to the South Carolina Association for Pupil Transportation.

Valorous Awards special license plates

SECTION 11. Section 56-3-14910(A) of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 (A) The department may issue the following special license plates reflective of valorous awards for private passenger vehicles and motorcycles to active or prior service members who received the following awards:

 (1) Medal of Honor- Army

 (2) Medal of Honor- Navy

 (3) Medal of Honor- Air Force

 (4) Distinguished Service Cross- Army

 (5) Distinguished Service Cross- Navy

 (6) Distinguished Service Cross- Air Force

 (7) South Carolina Medal of Valor

 (8) Silver Star

 (9) Bronze Star (with valor)

 (10) Soldier’s Medal

 (11) Navy and Marine Corps Medal.

Issuance of special license plates to surviving spouses

SECTION 12. Section 56-3-14990 of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 Section 56-3-14990. (A) Upon the death of an award recipient, a surviving spouse may apply to the department for a license plate issued under the provisions of Section 56-3-14910, 56-3-14920, or 56‑3‑14930(A)(3). The surviving spouse may apply to the department to transfer a license plate previously issued to the award recipient under the provisions of Section 56-3-14910, 56-3-14920, or 56-3-14930(A)(3) pursuant to Section 56-3-210(G). The surviving spouse must turn the plate into the department when the surviving spouse is no longer eligible for surviving spouse military benefits.

 (B) Upon the death of a member of the National Guard, a surviving spouse may apply to the department for a license plate issued under the provisions of Section 56-3-14970(A) (10), (11), or (12). The surviving spouse may apply to the department to transfer a license plate previously issued to a member of the National Guard under the provisions of Section 56-3-14970(A)(10), (11), or (12) pursuant to Section 56-3-210(G). The surviving spouse must turn the plate into the department when the surviving spouse is no longer eligible for surviving spouse National Guard benefits.

Time effective

SECTION 13. This act takes effect six months after approval by the Governor.

Ratified the 15th day of May, 2024.

Approved the 20th day of May, 2024.

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