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OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

Office of Research
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Office

S.B. 229
136th General Assembly

Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

[Click here for S.B. 229's Bill Analysis](#)

Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsor: Sen. Romanchuk

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: No

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Highlights

- The bill creates the “Law Enforcement Purple Heart” license plate which will be issued at no cost to Law Enforcement Purple Heart recipients.
- The Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) will incur costs of at least \$6.35 to produce each “Law Enforcement Purple Heart” license plate issued.
- The Public Safety – Highway Purposes Fund (Fund 5TM0), used by the Department of Public Safety and certain local governments may experience a minimal decrease in revenue from the bill’s waiver of registration taxes and fees; to the extent that an applicant chooses to obtain a personalized license plate, the bill’s reduced personalization fees could result in some additional revenue loss for Fund 5TM0.
- The bill’s criminal penalties are not expected to have a discernible fiscal effect on any of the state’s political subdivisions.

Detailed Analysis

“Law Enforcement Purple Heart” license plate

The bill creates the “Law Enforcement Purple Heart” license plate, which is available to Ohio motorists who have been awarded the Law Enforcement Purple Heart generally without payment of any registration or service fee, or motor vehicle license tax.¹ When applicable, the

¹ Annual passenger vehicle registration costs total \$36 to \$66, which consists of a \$20 base tax, an \$11 BMV fee, and a \$5 deputy registrar fee, as well as \$0 to \$30 in permissive local motor vehicle license taxes, which vary based on district of registration. Beginning January 1, 2026, H.B. 96 of the 136th General

bill also requires that the “Law Enforcement Purple Heart” license plate display the international symbol of access. Specialty license plates are produced by the Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) via a digital print-on-demand process at a cost of \$6.35 for a single license plate, or \$7.70 for a pair.² As a result, the Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) will incur costs of at least \$6.35 to produce each “Law Enforcement Purple Heart” license plate issued.

By waiving the registration fees and license taxes associated with the “Law Enforcement Purple Heart” license plate, the bill may minimally reduce the amount of BMV registration fee revenue generated and credited to the state Public Safety – Highway Purposes Fund (Fund 5TMO), which is used by the Department of Public Safety in part to pay the BMV’s expenses related to titling motor vehicles, licensing drivers, and registering motor vehicles, and the amount of local tax distributions received by certain local governments.

The bill also provides Law Enforcement Purple Heart recipients who wish to obtain a personalized license plate the option to do so upon payment of 75% of the additional fees that apply to such license plates.³ To the extent that personalized “Law Enforcement Purple Heart” license plates are issued, the BMV will receive either \$18.75 or \$37.50, depending on the type of personalized license plate issued, \$6.25 to \$12.50 less than what is normally charged. Such revenue will be credited to Fund 5TMO.

According to the National Association of Chiefs of Police, a Law Enforcement Purple Heart may be issued to officers who are injured or disabled in the line of duty.⁴ There is no comprehensive list of Law Enforcement Purple Heart recipients in Ohio, but LBO assumes the number of applications for such license plates will be relatively small.

The “Law Enforcement Purple Heart” license plate is subject to existing law’s implementation procedure, meaning that the Registrar of Motor Vehicles may require that written statements from at least 150 people indicating their intent to apply for and obtain the license plate be submitted.⁵ However, the Registrar may opt to exempt these requirements.

Criminal penalties

The bill prohibits willfully and falsely representing eligibility as a Law Enforcement Purple Heart recipient to obtain the “Law Enforcement Purple Heart” license plate and knowingly owning a motor vehicle that bears a “Law Enforcement Purple Heart” license plate unless the owner is a Law Enforcement Purple Heart recipient. A violation of either provision is a fourth degree misdemeanor, which is subject to a fine of up to \$250, a jail term of not more than 30 days, or both. As previously mentioned, LBO assumes that the number of applicants for the “Law

Assembly increases the BMV fee to \$16 and the deputy registrar service fee to \$8, thus increasing annual passenger vehicle registration costs to \$44 to \$74.

² Under current law, a person registering a motor vehicle may elect to purchase a single license plate or a set of two plates.

³ Special state reserved license plate numbers are available for a \$25 fee and special reserved license plate numbers containing more than three letters or numerals are available for a \$50 fee. Those fees are in addition to all other motor vehicle registration taxes and fees.

⁴ nacoponline.org/awards-law-enforcement.

⁵ R.C. 4503.78.

Enforcement Purple Heart” license plate will be relatively small. As a result, the bill’s criminal penalties are not expected to have a discernible, if any, fiscal effect on local criminal justice systems.