

SB 883

RELATING TO SPECIAL NUMBER PLATES.

Designates a new special design Gold Star Family plate for children, parents, spouses, and siblings of fallen soldiers and to be provided not later than October 1, 2011.

STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF VETERANS' SERVICES
TESTIMONY ON S.B. No. 883, RELATING TO SPECIAL NUMBER PLATES

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, AND
MILITARY AFFAIRS

February 3, 2011

Good afternoon Chair Will Espero, Vice Chair Michelle Kidani, and members of the Senate Committee on Public Safety, Government Operations, and Military Affairs.

The interim Director of the Office of Veterans' Services (OVS), Mr. Mark Moses, appreciates this opportunity to support the intent of S.B. No. 883, as long as it does not replace or adversely impact priorities established in the Executive Biennium Budget Request. The intent of this measure, which is to provide a special license plate for Gold Star family members, is an excellent way to recognize these family members who experienced the loss of a loved one.

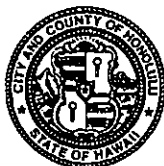
We defer to the director of finance of the city and county of Honolulu who has direct responsibility for program implementation.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak on behalf of Hawaii's veteran community.

I will respond to questions from the committee.

DEPARTMENT OF CUSTOMER SERVICES
CITY & COUNTY OF HONOLULU
DIVISION OF MOTOR VEHICLE, LICENSING AND PERMITS
ADMINISTRATION
P.O. BOX 30300
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PETER B. CARLISLE
MAYOR



GAIL Y. HARAGUCHI
DIRECTOR

DENNIS A KAMIMURA
LICENSING ADMINISTRATOR

February 1, 2011

The Honorable Will Espero, Chair
and Committee Members
Committee on Public Safety, Government
Operations and Military Affairs
The Senate
State of Hawaii
State Capitol, Room 231
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Espero and Committee Members:


Subject: S.B. No. 883, Relating to Special Number Plates

The City and County of Honolulu has no objections to S.B. No. 883, which will allow the issuance of the Gold Star Family license plates to qualified applicants.

The letter numeral combination that will be used will not duplicate any other issued license plates.

The City and County of Honolulu urges your favorable consideration of S.B. NO. 883.

Sincerely,


for Gail Y. Haraguchi
Director

TESTIMONY OF ALLEN K. HOE
COMBAT VETERAN - VIETNAM
GOLD STAR FATHER

of
1LT NAINOA K. HOE
KIA, IRAQ 2005

IN SUPPORT OF SB 883

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS and MILITARY AFFAIRS

February 3, 2011

Aloha Chairman Espero, Vice-Chair Kidani and Members of the Committee

I am a Veteran. I had the honor and the privilege of serving our country during the Vietnam War. The legislation pending before you today proposes to amend the Hawaii Revised Statutes, Section 249-9.2 which authorizes the issuance of Special License Plates.

As a Combat Wounded Veteran of the Vietnam War, I am authorized under that statute to utilize on my personal vehicle a "Purple Heart" license plate instead of a numbered plate. I have used my Combat Wounded License Plate 373 on the 3 different vehicles I have owned the past 15 + years. It is something I am very proud of and deeply grateful to the legislature for authorizing its use.

Six years ago, I acquired another title, in addition to combat veteran, I became a Gold Star Father. It is a title, which I would not wish upon any of you sitting here today. It represents perhaps the highest honor one can achieve in service to their country for it means that one has given his life in combat or in service to a higher calling in the cause of liberty and freedom.

Yes, it hardly seems possible but, six years ago on January 22, 2005 my oldest son Nainoa, following in a long family tradition of military service, lost his life on the battle field of Mosul, Iraq, giving his last full measure of devotion in his nations cause of freedom. He understood fully the risks, yet he choose to lead warriors in combat, not as a political statement of any sort, but simply because his country had asked him to do so.

Nainoa's legacy is part of a special "Hawaii" tradition. Our keiki kane and wahine serving their country, it's goals and ideals of freedom and democracy; my kupuna's service in WWI, my father's in WWII, and my cousins in Korea and Vietnam. From the historic legacy of the Go For Broke Warriors of the 100th Battalion, to the many young men who comprised the All Hawaii Company of the 60s our warrior culture and traditions are strong.

Senate Bill 883 proposes to add an additional provision which would establish a "Gold Star" category which would allow all of Hawaii to recognize and honor the family members who have given up one of their own upon that most sacred alter of freedom.

The gold star legacy is part of the traditions of our country which is traced back to WWI when an Army Capt. Robert Queissner of the 5th Ohio Infantry created the flags to honor his two sons serving on the front lines in 1917. The flags were quickly adopted by families with sons in the army. With President Wilson's support the Council of National Defenses proposal permitting mothers who had lost a child serving in the war to wear a gold star on a black arm band while in mourning. The black arm band was exchanged for a small flag and the gold star was outlined in a thin blue outline signifying that the service member had died in battle.

Service flags were widely used in World War II, as most families had at least one member serving in the military. Though it was common to see flags containing one star, the most famous gold star flag had five stars – one for each of the Sullivan brothers who perished on the U.S.S. Juneau, a light cruiser. Albert, Francis, George, Joseph and Madison Sullivan of Waterloo, Iowa, were all on the Juneau when it was sunk during a battle with Japanese naval ships in November 1942 near the Solomon Islands in the South Pacific.

The single most important aspect of the adoption of SB 883 will be the Legislature's declaration that the Gold Star License Plate represents a life that has been lost and to remind everyone that freedom is not free. What better way to honor the lives of all of our fallen warriors so that they will never be forgotten.

Our Legislature has a remarkable record of support for Hawaii's service members and their families. The Purple Heart, Combat Veteran, Pearl Harbor Survivor, Prisoner of War License Plate and the precedent setting creation of the Hawaii State Medal of Honor, presented to the next of kin of those who died in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

With that legacy in mind, I humbly request that SB 883 be approved.

Respectfully,

Allen K. Hoe

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