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BILL



ANALYSIS

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House Bill 4463 (Substitute S-1 as reported)
Sponsor: Representative David Robertson
House Committee: Transportation
Senate Committee: Transportation

Date Completed: 2-4-04

RATIONALE

According to the American Cancer Society (ACS), cancer is the second-leading cause of death in the United States. Half of all men and one-third of all women in this country will develop cancer during their lifetime. The ACS also reports that millions of people are living with cancer or have been cured of the disease; the sooner a cancer is found and treatment begins, the better a patient's chances are. It has been suggested that a cancer awareness license plate should be created to help raise funds for organizations that promote public awareness of cancer, conduct cancer research, and provide treatment and care for patients.

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Michigan Vehicle Code to require the Secretary of State to develop a cancer awareness fund-raising specialty license plate and matching collector plate; create the "Cancer Awareness Fund"; and provide for the distribution of proceeds to three organizations. The bill is tie-barred to Senate Bill 785, which would require a \$15,000 start-up fee for a new fund-raising license plate and set sales goals for fund-raising plates.

Under House Bill 4463 (S-1), the Secretary of State could issue a cancer awareness fund-raising registration plate, instead of a standard registration plate, to an applicant for use on the passenger motor vehicle, pickup truck, van, motor home, hearse, bus, trailer coach, or trailer for which the plate was issued. The Secretary of State would have to design the plate, and it would have to include a pink ribbon emblem.

The Secretary of State would have to disburse to the State Treasurer cancer awareness fund-raising donations collected under Sections 811f and 811g. (Under Section 811f, an application for an original fund-raising plate must be accompanied by a \$25 fund-raising donation, payment of the regular registration tax, and a \$10 service fee. An application for renewal of a fund-raising plate must be accompanied by payment of the regular registration tax and a \$10 donation. Section 811g requires a \$25 donation and a \$10 service fee for a collector plate.) The State Treasurer would have to credit the donation money to the Cancer Awareness Fund, which the bill would create within the State Treasury. The State Treasurer could receive money or other assets from any source for deposit into the Fund. He or she would have to direct investment of the Fund, and credit to it interest and earnings from Fund investments. Money in the Fund at the close of the fiscal year would remain in the Fund and not lapse to the General Fund.

The State Treasurer would have to disburse money in the Cancer Awareness Fund on a quarterly basis as follows:

- One-third to the Michigan Chapter of the American Cancer Society.
- One-third to the Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute.
- One-third to the Michigan Hospice and Palliative Care Organization.

Each recipient would have to report annually to the Department of Treasury an accounting of money received and used under the bill.

Proposed MCL 257.811q

ARGUMENTS

(Please note: The arguments contained in this analysis originate from sources outside the Senate Fiscal Agency. The Senate Fiscal Agency neither supports nor opposes legislation.)

Supporting Argument

The Secretary of State may issue fund-raising license plates that support many causes, including Michigan universities, lighthouse preservation, and water quality. It would be appropriate also to issue one that would raise funds to help save lives and help those afflicted with incurable cancer to die with dignity. Because one-third of the money collected would be donated to the Michigan Hospice and Palliative Care Organization, Michigan's plate would be the first to recognize that many people will not live to see a cure for their cancer. The license plate would create a moving billboard to help find a cure, so that some day such plates would no longer be necessary. In addition, raising public awareness could lead some people to seek medical assistance and treatment at an early stage of the disease, avoiding more radical, costlier treatment and perhaps death.

Opposing Argument

Multiple license plate designs can create confusion for law enforcement officers and the public. Although fund-raising plates might support worthy causes, the ultimate purpose of a license plate is vehicle registration and identification. A person can send a direct donation to an organization he or she wishes to support without purchasing a specialty license plate.

Legislative Analyst: Julie Koval

FISCAL IMPACT

Revenue generated for special causes from the sale of seven fund-raising plates in FY 2002-03 totaled \$1.3 million (from original and renewal transactions). The sale of university fund-raising plates generated \$1.1 million in FY 2002-03. The revenue that would be generated from the sale of a cancer awareness plate is not determinable. The Department of State's cost to develop the new plate would be covered by the \$15,000 paid by the organization requesting the plate, pursuant to Senate Bill 785.

Fiscal Analyst: Bill Bowerman

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.