



March 29, 2022

House Special Legislative Committee
Rhode Island House of Representatives
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Subject: House Bill 7824 (Purple Heart Medal License Plates)

Chairman Kathleen A. Fogarty et al,

The purpose of this letter is to state my support for House Bill 7824 sponsored by State Representatives James M. McLaughlin (District 57), Raymond A. Hull (District 6), Joseph M. McNamara (District 19), Arthur J. Corvese (District 55), David A. Bennett (District 20), and Teresa A. Tanzi (District 34).

I fully support the Purple Heart Medal plates being transferred to the surviving spouse upon the veteran's death or the language that allows the veteran's next of kin to retain one of the plates provided they do not display them upon any motor vehicle or any other form of transportation owned or operated by the family member.

Given that House Bill H7811 (False Representation of Military Status) has been introduced into the House and referred to the House Judiciary Committee, I would recommend the deletion of the language contained in paragraph (f) and replacing it with the same penalty listed in that bill. In other words, displaying Purple Heart Medal plates on a vehicle to which the registered owner, or their surviving spouse, was not eligible to do would be a misdemeanor, punishable by imprisonment of not more than a year, or a fine of one thousand dollars (\$1,000), or both.

I would also recommend adding language that would require the applicant for a Purple Heart Medal plate to show the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) an original copy of their DD-214 which lists the Purple Heart Medal as one of their personal awards. DMV would be required to make a copy of the original DD-214 and return the original to the applicant. This would help to prevent stolen valor and ensure that only those individuals who qualify for this special plate receive it. The DMV copies of the DD-214s could be scanned and shared with the Rhode Island Office of Veteran Services (RIOVS).

I ask that you vote in favor of sending this bill to the House floor for consideration and passage by your fellow representatives.

Thank you!

Very respectfully,

Matthew Baldwin McCoy
State Adjutant (2021 – 2022)

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