

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2003**

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**HOUSE BILL 1159*
Committee Substitute Favorable 4/23/03
Senate Finance Committee Substitute Adopted 5/15/03**

Short Title: Military Expiration of Drivers License. (Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

April 10, 2003

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A MILITARY DRIVERS LICENSE EXPIRATION
2 PROCEDURE WITHIN THE DIVISION OF MOTOR VEHICLES AND TO
3 ALLOW THE DIVISION OF MOTOR VEHICLES TO ISSUE CONFIDENTIAL
4 LICENSE PLATES AND DRIVERS LICENSES TO AGENTS OF THE
5 DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE.
6

7 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

8 **SECTION 1.** G.S. 20-7 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

9 "(q) Military Designation. – The Division shall develop a military designation for
10 drivers licenses that may, upon request, be granted to North Carolina residents on active
11 duty and to their spouses and dependent children. A drivers license with a military
12 designation on it may be renewed by mail no more than two times during the license
13 holder's lifetime. A license renewed by mail under this subsection is a permanent
14 license and does not expire when the license holder returns to the State. A drivers
15 license with a military designation on it issued to a person on active duty may be
16 renewed up to one year prior to its expiration upon presentation of military or
17 Department of Defense credentials."

18 **SECTION 2.** G.S. 20-7 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

19 "(r) Waiver of Vision Test. – The following license holders shall be exempt from
20 any required eye exam when renewing a drivers license by mail under either subsection
21 (f) of this section or subsection (q) of this section if, at the time of renewal, the license
22 holder is serving in a combat zone or a qualified hazardous duty zone:

23 (1) A member of the armed forces of the United States.

24 (2) A member of the national guard or of a reserve component of the
25 armed forces of the United States."

26 **SECTION 3.** G.S. 20-39.1(e) reads as rewritten:

27 "(e) Upon approval and request of the Director of the State Bureau of
28 Investigation, the Commissioner shall issue confidential license plates to local, State, or

1 federal law enforcement agencies, the Department of Crime Control and Public Safety,
2 ~~and agents of the Internal Revenue Service~~ Service, and agents of the Department of
3 Defense in accordance with the provisions of this subsection. Applicants in these
4 categories shall provide satisfactory evidence to the Director of the State Bureau of
5 Investigation of the following:

- 6 (1) The confidential license plate requested is to be used on a publicly
7 owned or leased vehicle that is primarily used for transporting,
8 apprehending, or arresting persons charged with violations of the laws
9 of the United States or the State of North Carolina;
- 10 (2) The use of a confidential license plate is necessary to protect the
11 personal safety of an officer or for placement on a vehicle used
12 primarily for surveillance or undercover operations; and
- 13 (3) The application contains an original signature of the head of the
14 requesting agency or department or, in the case of a federal agency, the
15 signature of the senior ranking officer for that agency in this State.

16 Confidential license plates issued under this subsection shall be issued on an annual
17 basis and the Division shall maintain a separate registration file for vehicles bearing
18 confidential license plates. That file shall be confidential for the use of the Division and
19 is not a public record within the meaning of Chapter 132 of the General Statutes. Upon
20 the annual renewal of the registration of a vehicle for which a confidential status has
21 been established under this section, the registration shall lose its confidential status
22 unless the agency or department supplies the Director of the State Bureau of
23 Investigation with information demonstrating that an officer's personal safety remains at
24 risk or that the vehicle is still primarily used for surveillance or undercover operations at
25 the time of renewal."

26 **SECTION 4.** G.S. 20-39.1(g) reads as rewritten:

27 "(g) The Commissioner may, upon the request of the Director of the State Bureau
28 of Investigation and to the extent necessary, lawfully provide local, State, and federal
29 law enforcement officers on special undercover assignments and to agents of the
30 Department of Defense with motor vehicle drivers licenses and motor vehicle license
31 plates under assumed names, using false or fictitious addresses. Fictitious license plates
32 shall only be used on publicly owned or leased vehicles. A request for fictitious licenses
33 and license plates by a local, State or federal law enforcement agency or department or
34 by the Department of Defense shall be made in writing to the Director of the State
35 Bureau of Investigation and shall contain an original signature of the head of the
36 requesting agency or department or, in the case of a federal agency, the signature of the
37 senior ranking officer for that agency in this State.

38 Prior to the issuance of any fictitious license or license plate, the Director of the
39 State Bureau of Investigation shall make a specific written finding that the request is
40 justified and necessary. The Director shall maintain a record of all such licenses, license
41 plates, assumed names, false or fictitious addresses, and law enforcement officers using
42 the licenses or license plates. That record shall be confidential and is not a public record
43 within the meaning of Chapter 132 of the General Statutes. The Director shall request
44 the immediate return of any license or registration that is no longer necessary.

1 Licenses and license plates provided under this subsection shall expire six months
2 after initial issuance unless the Director of the State Bureau of Investigation has
3 approved an extension in writing. The head of the local, State, or federal law
4 enforcement agency or the Department of Defense shall be responsible for the use of the
5 licenses and license plates and shall return them immediately to the Director for
6 cancellation upon either (i) their expiration, (ii) request of the Director of the State
7 Bureau of Investigation, or (iii) request of the Commissioner. Failure to return a license
8 or license plate issued pursuant to this subsection shall be punished as a Class 2
9 misdemeanor. At no time shall the number of valid licenses issued under this subsection
10 exceed two hundred nor shall the number of valid license plates issued under this
11 subsection exceed one hundred twenty-five unless the Director determines that
12 exceptional circumstances justify exceeding those amounts. However, fictitious licenses
13 and license plates issued to special agents of the State Bureau of ~~Investigation~~
14 ~~and Investigation~~, State alcohol law enforcement ~~agents~~ agents, and the Department of
15 Defense shall not be counted against the limitation on the total number of fictitious
16 licenses and plates established by this subsection and shall be renewable annually."

17 **SECTION 5.** Sections 1 and 2 of this act become effective January 1, 2004.
18 The remainder of this act is effective when it becomes law.