



Senate Fiscal Agency
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BILL ANALYSIS

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House Bill 5544 (Substitute H-1 as reported without amendment)

Sponsor: Representative Larry Julian

House Committee: Transportation

Senate Committee: Transportation

Date Completed: 11-15-04

RATIONALE

Under the Michigan Vehicle Code, the Secretary of State (SOS) may issue special registration plates indicating that a vehicle is used to transport a disabled person, which entitles the vehicle to special parking privileges. Currently, the plates may be issued for use on motor vehicles, including pickup trucks and vans weighing up to 5,000 pounds. Passenger vehicles weighing more than 5,000 pounds, however, have become more popular in recent years. It has been suggested that the maximum weight of a truck or van eligible for a disability plate be increased.

CONTENT

The bill would amend Section 801(1)(a) of the Michigan Vehicle Code to increase from 5,000 pounds to 8,000 pounds the maximum weight of a pickup truck or van subject to a specific vehicle registration tax schedule.

Under Section 803d of the Code, the SOS may issue to a disabled person special registration plates inscribed with the official international wheelchair symbol. Vehicles registered under Section 801(1)(a) may be issued the special registration plates. The fees for a registration plate bearing the wheelchair symbol correspond to the registration fees under the schedule in Section 801(1)(a). That section specifies that a van owned by an individual who uses a wheelchair, or by an individual who transports a resident of his or her household who uses a wheelchair, and for which registration plates are issued under Section 803d must be assessed at the rate of 50% of the tax provided for in the schedule.

MCL 257.801

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 provisions of the Code listing vehicle weights were first enacted approximately 50 years ago, when vehicles weighing more than 5,000 pounds typically were considered commercial vehicles. Over the last few years, however, several models of passenger vehicles weighing more than 5,000 pounds, such as the Cadillac Escalade and the Hummer H2, have been introduced and have gained a significant share of the market. Additionally, some pickup trucks, such as the Ford F-150, exceed the weight restriction when upgraded from a two-door model to a quad cab. The bill would update the Code to reflect the facts that heavier vehicles now are available to consumers, and that people with disabilities, or those who transport people with disabilities, might find these vehicles suitable to their needs.

Legislative Analyst: Julie Koval

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

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.