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Kevin D. Miller  
State Representative

Chair Kunze, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the Senate Transportation Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide sponsor testimony on HB 194, which will create an innovative and optional specialty license plate program with a secondary benefit of generating additional revenue for our drug taskforces across the state.

For decades, personalized and specialty license plates have been a popular accessory for American drivers. Today, it is estimated that between 15-20 million American's have personalized or specialty plates on their vehicles.

This legislation is modeled on a successful program first launched in Texas some 14 years ago. It is a public/private partnership which has resulted in over 600,000 additional specialty plate sales generating more than \$165 million for the state's general revenue fund. In fact, it is currently generating over 24 million annually. But most notably, the program operates without any cost to the state or corresponding agencies.

House Bill 194 brings forward this unique opportunity to expand the choices for Ohioans when purchasing their license plates. This bill will allow the Bureau of Motor Vehicles to contract with a private vendor to operate a specialty license plate program. The vendor, who will be chosen through the competitive bidding process, will be responsible for the designs and marketing of new specialty plates.

What this means for consumers is for a premium, they will now have options not currently available through the BMV like additional professional and collegiate sports teams, historical designs and other color schemes. All proposed plates under the program must be approved by the Registrar of Motor Vehicles before being sent for final approval to JCARR. This will allow us to maintain our legislative oversight.

The additional premium, paid only by consumers who wish to purchase one of the newly created specialty plates, will be used to compensate the vendor and a portion will also be dedicated to the drug taskforce fund located within the Department of Public Safety. This additional revenue, at no cost to the state, will be a game changer for our underfunded drug taskforces who are on the front lines of the fentanyl war.

Several important points about this new program are worth noting:

- It does not change our legislative authority to create and introduce plates as we currently do.
- The program will not have any impact on existing fees collected and will not impact any existing specialty plate.
- The program is purely voluntary. The fees created under this new program fall only on those who choose to participate. No other taxpayers are affected.
- The BMV and Registrar's responsibilities remain the same.
- The Deputy Registrar's responsibilities also remain the same.
- In fact, nothing changes in the current process or authority that's in place today.

In closing, this is an excellent opportunity to provide Ohioans with additional license plate options while simultaneously providing much needed funding to our drug taskforces. Thank you again for allowing me to provide sponsor testimony on HB 194 and I am more than happy to take any questions the committee may have.