

**As Introduced**

**135th General Assembly**

**Regular Session**

**2023-2024**

**H. B. No. 194**

**Representative Miller, K.**

**Cosponsors: Representatives Ghanbari, Cross, LaRe, Abrams, Swearingen**

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**A BILL**

To amend sections 4503.038, 4503.102, and 5502.68 1  
and to enact section 4503.261 of the Revised 2  
Code to authorize a contract with a private 3  
vendor for the issuance of specialty license 4  
plates. 5

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:**

**Section 1.** That sections 4503.038, 4503.102, and 5502.68 6  
be amended and section 4503.261 of the Revised Code be enacted 7  
to read as follows: 8

**Sec. 4503.038.** (A) Not later than ninety days after ~~the~~ 9  
~~effective date of this amendment~~ July 3, 2019, the registrar of 10  
motor vehicles shall adopt rules in accordance with Chapter 119. 11  
of the Revised Code establishing a service fee that applies for 12  
purposes of sections 4503.03, 4503.036, 4503.042, 4503.10, 13  
4503.102, 4503.12, 4503.182, 4503.24, 4503.261, 4503.65, 14  
4505.061, 4506.08, 4507.24, 4507.50, 4507.52, 4509.05, 4519.03, 15  
4519.05, 4519.10, 4519.56, and 4519.69 of the Revised Code. The 16  
service fee shall be five dollars. 17

(B) Not later than ninety days after ~~the effective date of~~ 18

~~this amendment July 3, 2019~~, the registrar shall adopt rules in accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code establishing prorated service fees that apply for purposes of multi-year registrations authorized under section 4503.103 of the Revised Code.

**Sec. 4503.102.** (A) The registrar of motor vehicles shall adopt rules to establish a centralized system of initial motor vehicle registration, vehicle registration renewal, and registration by mail or by electronic means. Any person owning a motor vehicle that was registered in the person's name during the preceding registration year shall renew the registration of the motor vehicle not more than ninety days prior to the expiration date of the registration either by mail or by electronic means through the centralized system of registration established under this section, or in person at any office of the registrar or at a deputy registrar's office.

(B) (1) Except as provided in division (B) (2) of this section, no less than forty-five days prior to the expiration date of any motor vehicle registration, the registrar shall mail a renewal notice to the person in whose name the motor vehicle is registered. The renewal notice shall clearly state that the registration of the motor vehicle may be renewed by mail or electronic means through the centralized system of registration or in person at any office of the registrar or at a deputy registrar's office and shall be preprinted with information including, but not limited to, the owner's name and residence address as shown in the records of the bureau of motor vehicles, a brief description of the motor vehicle to be registered, notice of the license taxes and fees due on the motor vehicle, the toll-free telephone number of the registrar as required under division (D) (1) of section 4503.031 of the Revised Code, a

statement that payment for a renewal may be made by financial 50  
transaction device using the toll-free telephone number, and any 51  
additional information the registrar may require by rule. The 52  
renewal notice shall not include the social security number of 53  
either the owner of the motor vehicle or the person in whose 54  
name the motor vehicle is registered. The renewal notice shall 55  
be sent by regular mail to the owner's last known address as 56  
shown in the records of the bureau of motor vehicles. 57

(2) The registrar is not required to mail a renewal notice 58  
if either of the following applies: 59

(a) The owner of the vehicle has consented to receiving 60  
the renewal notice by electronic means only. 61

(b) The application for renewal of the registration of a 62  
motor vehicle is prohibited from being accepted by the registrar 63  
or a deputy registrar by division (D) of section 2935.27, 64  
division (A) of section 2937.221, division (A) of section 65  
4503.13, division (B) of section 4510.22, or division (B)(1) of 66  
section 4521.10 of the Revised Code. 67

(3) If the owner of a motor vehicle has consented to 68  
receiving a renewal notice by electronic means only, the 69  
registrar shall send an electronic renewal notice to the owner 70  
that contains the information specified in division (B)(1) of 71  
this section at the time specified under that division. 72

(C) The owner of the motor vehicle shall verify the 73  
information contained in the notice, sign it either manually or 74  
by electronic means, and return it, either by mail or electronic 75  
means, or the owner may take it in person to any office of the 76  
registrar or of a deputy registrar. The owner shall include with 77  
the notice a financial transaction device number when renewing 78

in person or by electronic means but not by mail, check, or 79  
money order in the amount of the registration taxes and fees 80  
payable on the motor vehicle and a service fee equal to the 81  
amount established under section 4503.038 of the Revised Code, 82  
plus postage as indicated on the notice if the registration is 83  
renewed or fulfilled by mail, and an inspection certificate for 84  
the motor vehicle as provided in section 3704.14 of the Revised 85  
Code. For purposes of the centralized system of motor vehicle 86  
registration, the registrar shall accept payments via the toll- 87  
free telephone number established under division (D) (1) of 88  
section 4503.031 of the Revised Code for renewals made by mail. 89  
If the motor vehicle owner chooses to renew the motor vehicle 90  
registration by electronic means, the owner shall proceed in 91  
accordance with the rules the registrar adopts. 92

(D) If all registration and transfer fees for the motor 93  
vehicle for the preceding year or the preceding period of the 94  
current registration year have not been paid, if division (D) of 95  
section 2935.27, division (A) of section 2937.221, division (A) 96  
of section 4503.13, division (B) of section 4510.22, or division 97  
(B) (1) of section 4521.10 of the Revised Code prohibits 98  
acceptance of the renewal notice, or if the owner or lessee does 99  
not have an inspection certificate for the motor vehicle as 100  
provided in section 3704.14 of the Revised Code, if that section 101  
is applicable, the license shall be refused, and the registrar 102  
or deputy registrar shall so notify the owner. This section does 103  
not require the payment of license or registration taxes on a 104  
motor vehicle for any preceding year, or for any preceding 105  
period of a year, if the motor vehicle was not taxable for that 106  
preceding year or period under section 4503.02, 4503.04, 107  
4503.11, 4503.12, or 4503.16 or Chapter 4504. of the Revised 108  
Code. 109

(E) (1) Failure to receive a renewal notice does not 110  
relieve a motor vehicle owner from the responsibility to renew 111  
the registration for the motor vehicle. Any person who has a 112  
motor vehicle registered in this state and who does not receive 113  
a renewal notice as provided in division (B) of this section 114  
prior to the expiration date of the registration shall request 115  
an application for registration from the registrar or a deputy 116  
registrar and sign the application manually or by electronic 117  
means and submit the application and pay any applicable license 118  
taxes and fees to the registrar or deputy registrar. 119

(2) If the owner of a motor vehicle submits an application 120  
for registration and the registrar is prohibited by division (D) 121  
of section 2935.27, division (A) of section 2937.221, division 122  
(A) of section 4503.13, division (B) of section 4510.22, or 123  
division (B) (1) of section 4521.10 of the Revised Code from 124  
accepting the application, the registrar shall return the 125  
application and the payment to the owner. If the owner of a 126  
motor vehicle submits a registration renewal application to the 127  
registrar by electronic means and the registrar is prohibited 128  
from accepting the application as provided in this division, the 129  
registrar shall notify the owner of this fact and deny the 130  
application and return the payment or give a credit on the 131  
financial transaction device account of the owner in the manner 132  
the registrar prescribes by rule adopted pursuant to division 133  
(A) of this section. 134

(F) Every deputy registrar shall post in a prominent place 135  
at the deputy's office a notice informing the public of the mail 136  
registration system required by this section and also shall post 137  
a notice that every owner of a motor vehicle and every chauffeur 138  
holding a certificate of registration is required to notify the 139  
registrar in writing of any change of residence within ten days 140

after the change occurs. The notice shall be in such form as the registrar prescribes by rule. 141  
142

(G) The service fee equal to the amount established under 143  
section 4503.038 of the Revised Code that is collected from a 144  
person who renews a motor vehicle registration by electronic 145  
means or by mail, plus postage collected by the registrar and 146  
any financial transaction device surcharge collected by the 147  
registrar, shall be paid to the credit of the public safety - 148  
highway purposes fund established by section 4501.06 of the 149  
Revised Code. 150

(H) (1) Pursuant to section 113.40 of the Revised Code, the 151  
registrar shall implement a program permitting payment of motor 152  
vehicle registration taxes and fees, driver's license and 153  
commercial driver's license fees, and any other taxes, fees, 154  
penalties, or charges imposed or levied by the state by means of 155  
a financial transaction device for transactions occurring 156  
online, at any office of the registrar, and at all deputy 157  
registrar locations. The program shall take effect not later 158  
than July 1, 2016. The registrar shall adopt rules as necessary 159  
for this purpose, but all such rules are subject to any action, 160  
policy, or procedure of the board of deposit or treasurer of 161  
state taken or adopted under section 113.40 of the Revised Code. 162

(2) The rules adopted under division (H) (1) of this 163  
section shall require a deputy registrar to accept payments by 164  
means of a financial transaction device beginning on the 165  
effective date of the rules unless the deputy registrar contract 166  
entered into by the deputy registrar prohibits the acceptance of 167  
such payments by financial transaction device. However, 168  
commencing with deputy registrar contract awards that have a 169  
start date of July 1, 2016, and for all contract awards 170

thereafter, the registrar shall require that the proposer accept 171  
payment by means of a financial transaction device, including 172  
credit cards and debit cards, for all department of public 173  
safety transactions conducted at that deputy registrar location. 174

The bureau and deputy registrars are not required to pay 175  
any costs that result from accepting payment by means of a 176  
financial transaction device. A deputy registrar may charge a 177  
person who tenders payment for a department transaction by means 178  
of a financial transaction device any cost the deputy registrar 179  
incurs from accepting payment by the financial transaction 180  
device, but the deputy registrar shall not require the person to 181  
pay any additional fee of any kind in connection with the use by 182  
the person of the financial transaction device. 183

(3) In accordance with division (H) (1) of this section and 184  
rules adopted by the registrar under that division, a county 185  
auditor or clerk of a court of common pleas that is designated a 186  
deputy registrar shall accept payment by means of a financial 187  
transaction device, including credit cards and debit cards, for 188  
all department transactions conducted at the office of the 189  
county auditor or clerk in the county auditor's or clerk's 190  
capacity as deputy registrar. The bureau is not required to pay 191  
any costs incurred by a county auditor or clerk that result from 192  
accepting payment by means of a financial transaction device for 193  
any department transaction. 194

(I) For persons who reside in counties where tailpipe 195  
emissions inspections are required under the motor vehicle 196  
inspection and maintenance program, the notice required by 197  
division (B) of this section shall also include the toll-free 198  
telephone number maintained by the Ohio environmental protection 199  
agency to provide information concerning the locations of 200

emissions testing centers. The registrar also shall include a 201  
statement in the notice that a battery electric motor vehicle is 202  
not required to undergo emissions inspection under the motor 203  
vehicle inspection and maintenance program established under 204  
section 3704.14 of the Revised Code. 205

Sec. 4503.261. (A) (1) The registrar of motor vehicles 206  
shall use a competitive selection process to select a vendor for 207  
a contract to operate a specialty license plate program. Upon 208  
execution of the contract, the vendor shall design, market, 209  
sell, and issue specialty license plates, including specialty 210  
license plates required to be issued by the registrar under this 211  
chapter. The vendor also shall facilitate the initial and 212  
renewal registration of motor vehicles for owners and lessees 213  
who request specialty license plates and who choose to use the 214  
program for registration. In so doing, the vendor shall 215  
facilitate the issuance of validation stickers and the 216  
collection of taxes and fees associated with motor vehicle 217  
registration. The contract shall be for a period not to exceed 218  
two years and may be extended for additional two-year terms. 219

(2) A vendor selected under division (A) (1) of this 220  
section is exempt from section 4503.106 of the Revised Code. 221

(B) Any contract entered into under this section shall 222  
include, at a minimum, all of the following: 223

(1) A requirement that the vendor utilize electronic 224  
infrastructure that is compatible with infrastructure used by 225  
the bureau of motor vehicles such that a motor vehicle owner or 226  
lessee may submit a registration application and required 227  
payments and verify the owner or lessee's identifying 228  
information; 229



<u>(2) Provisions concerning the security of the information</u>	230
<u>exchanged through the electronic infrastructure utilized by the</u>	231
<u>registrar, the vendor, and any other third parties;</u>	232
<u>(3) Provisions allowing an owner or lessee to select the</u>	233
<u>combination of letters and numbers appearing on a license plate</u>	234
<u>in accordance with section 4503.40 or 4503.42 of the Revised</u>	235
<u>Code, subject to approval by the registrar;</u>	236
<u>(4) Subject to division (C) of this section, provisions</u>	237
<u>allowing an owner or lessee purchasing a specialty license plate</u>	238
<u>created by the vendor to select various design features of the</u>	239
<u>license plate;</u>	240
<u>(5) Subject to division (C) of this section, provisions</u>	241
<u>allowing the vendor to enter into an agreement with any person</u>	242
<u>for the marketing and sale of a specialty license plate that is</u>	243
<u>not offered by the registrar under this chapter. A person or</u>	244
<u>entity that has sponsored a specialty license plate offered by</u>	245
<u>the registrar under this chapter may create a new specialty</u>	246
<u>license plate through the private vendor.</u>	247
<u>(6) Provisions specifying that the vendor shall comply</u>	248
<u>with all applicable copyright and trademark laws;</u>	249
<u>(7) Authorization for the vendor to collect fees that are</u>	250
<u>in addition to any applicable motor vehicle registration taxes</u>	251
<u>and fees levied under Chapters 4503. and 4504. of the Revised</u>	252
<u>Code. The vendor shall remit those additional fees to the</u>	253
<u>registrar for deposit in the drug law enforcement fund created</u>	254
<u>in section 5502.68 of the Revised Code.</u>	255
<u>(8) Provisions requiring the vendor to comply with all</u>	256
<u>applicable requirements of the Revised Code and the Ohio</u>	257
<u>Administrative Code.</u>	258

(C) The registrar has final authority regarding the design 259  
and content of any specialty license plate and may disapprove 260  
any proposed specialty license plate that does not meet the 261  
standards of the bureau of motor vehicles. The registrar may 262  
consult with the superintendent of the state highway patrol 263  
regarding any special license plate regarding readability, 264  
reflectivity, and public safety. The registrar shall not 265  
restrict the background color, color combinations, or color 266  
alphanumeric license plate numbers of a specialty license plate 267  
proposed by the private vendor except for purposes of public 268  
safety. 269

(D) (1) If a contract with a vendor is entered into under 270  
this section, the owner or lessee of any passenger car, 271  
noncommercial motor vehicle, recreational vehicle, or other 272  
vehicle of a class approved by the registrar and the vendor may 273  
apply for registration of the vehicle and issuance by the 274  
registrar of a specialty license plate pursuant to this section. 275

(2) A specialty license plate available through the 276  
program and a validation sticker, or validation sticker alone, 277  
shall be issued by the registrar in coordination with the vendor 278  
to the owner or lessee upon receipt of a completed application 279  
under this section; payment of the regular license tax as 280  
prescribed under section 4503.04 of the Revised Code, any 281  
applicable motor vehicle tax levied under Chapter 4504. of the 282  
Revised Code, any applicable additional fee prescribed under 283  
section 4503.40 or 4503.42 of the Revised Code, any additional 284  
fees required by the vendor; and compliance with all other 285  
applicable laws relating to the registration of motor vehicles. 286

(E) Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the 287  
contrary, the registrar may execute all duties required by this 288

section and take all necessary actions to implement its 289  
requirements. 290

**Sec. 5502.68.** (A) There is hereby created in the state 291  
treasury the drug law enforcement fund. The fund consists of the 292  
following: 293

(1) Ninety-seven per cent of three dollars and fifty cents 294  
out of each ten-dollar court cost imposed pursuant to section 295  
2949.094 of the Revised Code ~~shall be credited to the fund.~~ 296

(2) Fees required to be deposited in the fund under 297  
section 4503.261 of the Revised Code. 298

Money in the fund shall be used only in accordance with 299  
this section to award grants to counties, municipal 300  
corporations, townships, township police districts, and joint 301  
police districts to defray the expenses that a drug task force 302  
organized in the county, or in the county in which the municipal 303  
corporation, township, or district is located, incurs in 304  
performing its functions related to the enforcement of the 305  
state's drug laws and other state laws related to illegal drug 306  
activity. 307

The division of criminal justice services shall administer 308  
all money deposited into the drug law enforcement fund and, by 309  
rule adopted under Chapter 119. of the Revised Code, shall 310  
establish procedures for a county, municipal corporation, 311  
township, township police district, or joint police district to 312  
apply for money from the fund to defray the expenses that a drug 313  
task force organized in the county, or in the county in which 314  
the municipal corporation, township, or district is located, 315  
incurs in performing its functions related to the enforcement of 316  
the state's drug laws and other state laws related to illegal 317

drug activity, procedures and criteria for determining 318  
eligibility of applicants to be provided money from the fund, 319  
and procedures and criteria for determining the amount of money 320  
to be provided out of the fund to eligible applicants. 321

(B) The procedures and criteria established under division 322  
(A) of this section for applying for money from the fund shall 323  
include, but shall not be limited to, a provision requiring a 324  
county, municipal corporation, township, township police 325  
district, or joint police district that applies for money from 326  
the fund to specify in its application the amount of money 327  
desired from the fund, provided that the cumulative amount 328  
requested in all applications submitted for any single drug task 329  
force may not exceed more than two hundred fifty thousand 330  
dollars in any calendar year for that task force. 331

(C) The procedures and criteria established under division 332  
(A) of this section for determining eligibility of applicants to 333  
be provided money from the fund and for determining the amount 334  
of money to be provided out of the fund to eligible applicants 335  
shall include, but not be limited to, all of the following: 336

(1) Provisions requiring that, in order to be eligible to 337  
be provided money from the fund, a drug task force that applies 338  
for money from the fund must provide evidence that the drug task 339  
force will receive a local funding match of at least twenty-five 340  
per cent of the task force's projected operating costs in the 341  
period of time covered by the grant; 342

(2) Provisions requiring that money from the fund be 343  
allocated and provided to drug task forces that apply for money 344  
from the fund in accordance with the following priorities: 345

(a) Drug task forces that apply, that are in existence on 346

the date of the application, and that are determined to be 347  
eligible applicants, and to which either of the following 348  
applies shall be given first priority to be provided money from 349  
the fund: 350

(i) Drug task forces that received funding through the 351  
division of criminal justice services in calendar year 2007; 352

(ii) Drug task forces in a county that has a population 353  
that exceeds seven hundred fifty thousand. 354

(b) If any moneys remain in the fund after all drug task 355  
forces that apply, that are in existence on the date of the 356  
application, that are determined to be eligible applicants, and 357  
that satisfy the criteria set forth in division (C) (2) (a) (i) or 358  
(ii) of this section are provided money from the fund as 359  
described in division (C) (2) (a) of this section, the following 360  
categories of drug task forces that apply and that are 361  
determined to be eligible applicants shall be given priority to 362  
be provided money from the fund in the order in which they apply 363  
for money from the fund: 364

(i) Drug task forces that are not in existence on the date 365  
of the application; 366

(ii) Drug task forces that are in existence on the date of 367  
the application but that do not satisfy the criteria set forth 368  
in division (C) (2) (a) (i) or (ii) of this section. 369

(D) The procedures and criteria established under division 370  
(A) of this section for determining the amount of money to be 371  
provided out of the fund to eligible applicants shall include, 372  
but shall not be limited to, a provision specifying that the 373  
cumulative amount provided to any single drug task force may not 374  
exceed more than two hundred fifty thousand dollars in any 375

calendar year. 376

(E) Any drug task force for which a grant is awarded by 377  
the division of criminal justice services under this section 378  
shall comply with all grant requirements established by the 379  
division, including a requirement that the drug task force 380  
report its activities through the El Paso intelligence center 381  
information technology systems. 382

(F) As used in this section, "drug task force" means a 383  
drug task force organized in any county by the sheriff of the 384  
county, the prosecuting attorney of the county, the chief of 385  
police of the organized police department of any municipal 386  
corporation or township in the county, and the chief of police 387  
of the police force of any township police district or joint 388  
police district in the county to perform functions related to 389  
the enforcement of state drug laws and other state laws related 390  
to illegal drug activity. 391

**Section 2.** That existing sections 4503.038, 4503.102, and 392  
5502.68 of the Revised Code are hereby repealed. 393