

CHAPTER 304
HB 1415-FN - FINAL VERSION

19Feb2026... 0602h
05/07/2026 1644s
4Jun2026... 2167EBA

2026 SESSION

26-3143
07/06

304:

HOUSE BILL

1415-FN

AN ACT

establishing a special veterans license plate and creating a fund and administrative programs from the proceeds of the sale of such plates and establishing the New Hampshire first for veterans program and authority.

SPONSORS:

Rep. Roy, Rock. 31; Rep. Devoid, Merr. 1; Rep. D. Mannion, Rock. 25; Rep. Rhodes, Ches. 17; Sen. Birdsell, Dist 19; Sen. Gannon, Dist 23

COMMITTEE:

Transportation

AMENDED ANALYSIS

This bill authorizes a special veterans license plate and establishes a fund and administrative programs from the proceeds of the sale of such plates.

This bill also establishes the first for veterans program, a program designed to attract, retain, and support veterans in the state.

Explanation:

Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics***.

Matter removed from current law appears [~~in brackets and struck through.~~]

Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

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STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty-Six

AN ACT establishing a special veterans license plate and creating a fund and administrative programs from the proceeds of the sale of such plates and establishing the New Hampshire first for veterans program and authority.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

1 304:1 Motor Vehicles; Certificates of Title and Registration of Vehicles; Conservation Number Plate
2 Fund. Amend the introductory paragraph of RSA 261:97-b, I to read as follows:

3 I. There is hereby established a conservation number plate fund under the administration of the
4 commissioner of safety. The fund shall be used for the promotion, protection, and investment in the
5 state's natural, cultural, and historic resources. The fund shall be nonlapsing ***and continually***
6 ***appropriated***. The commissioner of safety shall distribute the funds annually on August 1, except as
7 provided in paragraph I-a, as follows: \$5,000 of every \$100,000 received, up to a total of \$50,000, shall
8 be distributed to the department of transportation for the expanded wild flower establishment program for
9 use in planting lilacs and native wild flowers; \$1 for every new, renewal, and transfer of registration, up to
10 a total of \$50,000, shall be placed in a nonlapsing account for use by the department of natural and
11 cultural resources to promote the conservation number plate program; the remainder shall be distributed
12 as follows:

13 304:2 Motor Vehicles; Certificates of Title and Registration of Vehicles; Use of Funds. Amend RSA
14 261:97-c, VII to read as follows:

15 VII. Any funds transferred from the conservation number plate fund which remain unexpended at
16 the end of the fiscal year shall be nonlapsing ***and continually appropriated***.

17 304:3 New Subdivision; Special Veteran Number Plates and Special Veteran Number Plate Fund.
18 Amend RSA 261 by inserting after section 97-f the following new subdivision:

19 Special Veteran Number Plates and Special Veteran Number Plate Fund

20 261:97-g Special Veteran Number Plates.

21 I. The director is hereby authorized to issue special New Hampshire first for veterans number
22 plates, in lieu of other number plates. The design of these special plates shall be determined as provided
23 in RSA 261:97-k. The plates shall retain the "live free or die" logo. Such plates shall be issued only upon
24 application and upon payment of a \$60 fee that shall be in addition to the regular motor vehicle
25 registration fee and any other number plate fees otherwise required.

26 II. The commissioner is also authorized to issue vanity New Hampshire first for veterans number
27 plates. The fee for any such vanity New Hampshire first for veterans number plate shall be the fee as
28 provided in paragraph I, in addition to the fees for vanity plates which are otherwise established by law.
29 The vanity plate portion of the fee shall be distributed as provided in RSA 261:89 and RSA 263:52.

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1 III. Plates shall be renewed on an annual basis for \$30 per set, which shall be in addition to the
2 regular motor vehicle registration fee and any other number plate fees otherwise required. Of this sum,
3 the department shall retain an amount as is necessary to recover production and administrative costs as
4 approved by the fiscal committee of the general court. The remaining funds shall be paid to the state
5 treasurer and distributed as provided in RSA 261:97-h. The cost of replacement number plates shall be
6 identical to the cost of initial number plates and the revenue from replacement number plates shall be
7 distributed in the same manner as revenue derived from initial number plates.

8 IV. A person who qualifies for special number plates pursuant to this section may be issued an
9 additional plate for a motorcycle.

10 261:97-h New Hampshire First for Veterans Number Plate Fund.

11 I. There is hereby established a New Hampshire first for veterans number plate fund under the
12 administration of the commissioner of safety. The fund shall be used to promote the general welfare of
13 the state's veterans, service members and their families by providing quality services. The fund shall be
14 nonlapsing and continually appropriated. The commissioner of safety shall distribute the funds annually
15 on August 1 as follows: \$1 for every new, renewal, and transfer of registration, up to a total of \$50,000,
16 shall be placed in a nonlapsing account for use by the department of military affairs and veteran services
17 to promote the New Hampshire first for veterans number plate program; the remainder shall be provided
18 to the New Hampshire first for veterans fund and distributed based on designated programs and initiatives
19 prioritized by the governor and the state veterans council in order to promote the well being of veterans,
20 service members, and their families.

21 II. Each department and commission receiving funding from the New Hampshire first for veterans
22 number plate fund shall establish a line item in their budget. Moneys received from the New Hampshire
23 first for veterans number plate fund shall be in addition to any other sums appropriated and shall not
24 replace base funding received by any of these departments or commissions through the budget process.

25 261:97-i Use of Funds. The moneys in the fund shall be distributed as provided in RSA 261:97-h.
26 The proceeds shall be used as follows:

27 I. The funds transferred to the department of military affairs and veteran services shall be used to
28 promote the general welfare of the state's veterans, service members, and their families by providing
29 quality services for:

30 (a) Attracting and retaining veterans to the state, including transitioning service members to
31 relocate to the state through raising awareness of the state's veteran-friendly advocacy, policies, and
32 laws, making veteran employment support available, improving focus on veteran well-being, creating
33 strategic messaging and transition assistance programs, and reinforcing critical veteran, service member,
34 and family programs and initiatives.

35 (b) Military skills transfer, licensing, training, and certification programs, including
36 collaboration programs with the office of professional licensure and certification.

37 (c) Rewarding and gainful employment through collaborations with New Hampshire veteran-
38 friendly businesses, organizations, colleges, and schools that honor, fortify, empower, and positively
39 impact the lives of veterans, service members, and their families.

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- 1 (d) Promoting the well being and mental and physical health of veterans, including:
2 (1) Taking actions contributing to an increased enrollment of veterans with the U.S.
3 Department of Veterans Affairs.
4 (2) Participating in the ask the question campaign.
5 (3) Participating in the veterans' freedom to smile initiative.
6 (4) Participating in regional and statewide veteran suicide prevention coalitions.
7 (e) Programs and initiatives that contribute to ending veteran homelessness in New
8 Hampshire.
9 (f) Raising awareness of the GI Bill's educational benefits.
10 (g) Participating in programs and initiatives supporting justice-involved veterans.
11 (h) Participating in programs and initiatives that support the development of a better
12 understanding of the implications and create solutions for an aging veteran demographic in New
13 Hampshire.
- 14 II. Funds transferred to employment security shall be used to support transitioning service
15 members, veterans, and their spouses find meaningful employment.
- 16 III. Funds transferred to the department of administrative services shall be used to support
17 friendly programs and initiatives across state agencies that benefit veterans, their spouses, and
18 transitioning service members.
- 19 IV. Funds transferred to the department of business and economic affairs shall be used in
20 support of attracting and retaining veterans to New Hampshire.
- 21 V. Funds transferred to the department of safety shall be used for administering the New
22 Hampshire first for veterans program.
- 23 VI. Funds transferred to the department of health and human services shall be used in support of
24 promoting veteran, service members and family members, including physical and mental health, suicide
25 prevention, substance use disorder, housing stability, and age friendly services and support.
- 26 VII. Funds transferred from the New Hampshire first for veterans number plate fund which remain
27 unexpended at the end of the fiscal year shall be nonlapsing and shall be continually appropriated.
- 28 VIII. Agencies receiving funds pursuant to this subdivision shall mount signs at funded project
29 sites indicating that the project was funded by the New Hampshire first for veterans number plate
30 program. This requirement may be waived in the case of environmentally sensitive projects where
31 signage could be detrimental to the success of the project.
- 32 261:97-j Plate Use. Plates issued under this subdivision may be used on passenger motor vehicles
33 and recreation vehicles.
- 34 261:97-k New Hampshire First for Veterans Number Plate Advisory Commission.
- 35 I. There is established a New Hampshire first for veterans number plate advisory commission to
36 attract and retain veterans in New Hampshire and perform other tangential duties.
- 37 II. Notwithstanding RSA 14:49, II, the members of the commission shall be as follows:
- 38 (a) Two members of the house of representatives, appointed by the speaker of the house of
39 representatives.

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1 (b) Two members of the senate, appointed by the president of the senate.

2 (c) The commissioner of the department of military affairs and veteran services, or designee.

3 (d) The commissioner of employment security, or designee.

4 (e) The commissioner of the department of safety, or designee.

5 (f) The commissioner of the department of business and economic affairs, or designee.

6 III. Legislative members of the commission shall receive mileage at the legislative rate when
7 attending to the duties of the commission.

8 IV. The commission shall:

9 (a) Determine plate designs, with final approval of a design being approved by the
10 commissioner of the department of military affairs and veteran services. The commissioner of the
11 department of safety shall establish a numbering system and method of distribution.

12 (b) Register plate designs with the secretary of state.

13 (c) Oversee signage of projects funded pursuant to this subdivision.

14 V. The members of the commission shall elect a chairperson from among the members. The
15 committee chairperson shall appoint a secretary from the New Hampshire department of military and
16 veterans affairs to keep a detailed record of all commission proceedings. The first meeting of the
17 commission shall be called by the first-named house member. The first meeting of the commission shall
18 be held within 45 days of the effective date of this section. The commission shall meet at least once
19 annually. Four members of the commission shall constitute a quorum.

20 VI. The commission shall report its findings and any recommendations for proposed legislation to
21 the speaker of the house of representatives, the president of the senate, the house clerk, the senate clerk,
22 the governor, and the state library on or before November 1.

23 261:97-I Agency Reports.

24 I. The department of military affairs and veteran services, employment security, the department
25 of business and economic affairs, and the department of safety shall submit an annual report to the New
26 Hampshire first for veterans number plate advisory commission on or before October 1. The commission
27 chairperson shall compile the reports as a unified report and submit the unified report to the speaker of
28 the house of representatives, the president of the senate, the house clerk, the senate clerk, the governor,
29 and the state library on or before December 31.

30 II. The unified report shall contain the following:

31 (a) A report from the department of safety indicating:

32 (1) The total number of New Hampshire first for veterans number plates sold during the
33 preceding year, including the number of initial plates and the number of renewals.

34 (2) The gross revenue derived from the sale of plates.

35 (3) The amount retained by the department of safety to cover its administrative costs of
36 administering programs under this subdivision.

37 (4) The amount paid to the state treasurer for deposit into the New Hampshire first for
38 veterans number plate fund during the preceding fiscal year.

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(b) A report from the other 3 agencies receiving proceeds pursuant to this subdivision indicating:

- (1) The amount of proceeds received pursuant to this subdivision;
- (2) The total amount of funds expended;
- (3) Any accomplishments achieved as a result of this subdivision during the preceding fiscal year.
- (4) An outline of the projects and programs to be conducted in the ensuing fiscal year with proceeds from this subdivision.

304:4 New Subdivision; First for Veterans Program. Amend RSA 110-B by inserting after section 91 the following new subdivision:

First for Veterans Program

110-B:92 Declaration of Purpose. The general court declares it to be the purpose of this subdivision to:

- I. Maintain the state's ability to attract and retain veterans to New Hampshire and attain and maintain a position as the most veteran-friendly state.
- II. Acknowledge and address demand signals for critical resources, service, and support.
- III. Recognize the gaps and the importance of public and private partnerships to identify, develop, and resource solutions to facilitate overcoming barriers to veterans, service members and their families.
- IV. Learn, adapt, seek, and resource new and more transformational concepts that raise awareness of the state's veteran-friendly advocacy, policy, and laws.
- V. Develop veteran employment support and improve focus on veteran well-being.
- VI. Provide strategic messaging and transition assistance programs and reinforce critical gaps, including mental health care access, suicide prevention, substance use disorder, physical well being, employment, and housing stability.

110-B:93 Definitions. In this subdivision:

- I. "Authority" means the New Hampshire first for veterans authority.
- II. "Board" means the board of directors of the New Hampshire first for veterans authority.
- III. "Grant obligations" means the legal obligation arising from the use of program funds.

110-B:94 New Hampshire First for Veterans Program Established.

I. There is hereby established the New Hampshire first for veterans program. The program shall provide funding to promote the general welfare of the state's veterans, service members and their families by providing quality services.

II. The program will prioritize efforts that:

- (a) Contribute to ending veteran homelessness in New Hampshire;
- (b) Attract and retain veterans to New Hampshire and match their unique skills with veteran-friendly businesses and organizations and provide them with employment support;
- (c) Improve access to physical and mental health care, suicide prevention measures, oral health care options, and substance use disorder treatment;
- (d) Support military skills transfer, training, and certification; and

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1 (e) Address a broad range of educational opportunities, including institutions of higher
2 learning, on-the-job training, and apprenticeships and initiatives focused on the trades.

3 110-B:95 New Hampshire First For Veterans Authority.

4 I. There is hereby established the New Hampshire first for veterans authority, which shall act as
5 both a public and private entity. The authority shall be constituted as a public instrumentality of the state.
6 The authority and power conferred by this subdivision shall be deemed and held to be the performance of
7 public and essential governmental functions. The authority shall be a nonprofit corporation organized
8 under RSA 292.

9 II. The authority shall be governed by a board of directors composed of 11 members. A
10 chairperson shall be elected from among the members.

11 III. Board members shall be as follows:

12 (a) One member of the senate, appointed by the president of the senate.

13 (b) Two members of the house of representatives, appointed by the speaker of the house of
14 representatives.

15 (c) Five members of the veterans council, appointed by the governor.

16 (d) The commissioner of the department of military affairs and veteran services, or designee.

17 (e) The chair of the New Hampshire state veterans advisory committee, or designee.

18 (f) A member of the New Hampshire military leadership team, appointed by the adjutant
19 general.

20 IV.(a) The terms of state agency members, member of the senate, and members of the house of
21 representatives shall be coterminous with their respective terms in office.

22 (b) Members appointed by the governor may be removed from office for cause by the
23 governor. Cause for removal shall include incapacity or failure to perform a member's duties. Vacancies
24 shall be filled for the unexpired term of the office in the same manner as the original appointment.
25 Legislative members shall be entitled to mileage reimbursement at the legislative rate.

26 V. Five members shall constitute a quorum. Decisions shall be made by a majority of those
27 present and voting. The board shall meet quarterly and at such other times as may be deemed necessary
28 by the chairperson.

29 VI. Board members shall not be subject to civil liability for acts performed in accordance with their
30 duties under this subdivision.

31 110-B:96 Powers and Duties of the Authority. The authority shall have all the powers necessary and
32 convenient to carry out and effectuate the purposes and provisions of this subdivision and shall:

33 I. Adopt bylaws for the regulation of its affairs and the conduct of its business.

34 II. Adopt criteria and guidelines for:

35 (a) The acquisition of resource assets;

36 (b) The restoration or rehabilitation of cultural and historical buildings or structures; and

37 (c) The stewardship and monitoring of resource assets on which program funds are
38 expended.

39 III. Adopt policies deemed important or necessary to carry out the purposes of this subdivision.

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1 IV. Oversee and direct the expenditure of funds deposited in the New Hampshire first for
2 veterans fund in accordance with the purposes of this subdivision, which shall include the authority to
3 draw upon funds for program purposes and for administrative costs of the program.

4 V. Make and execute contracts for services necessary to carry out the purposes of this
5 subdivision.

6 VI. Enforce grant obligations through contract, acceptance of rights to enforcement, or other legal
7 actions as necessary to carry out the purposes of this subdivision.

8 VII. Prepare an annual report to be presented and filed, by no later than December 1, to the
9 president of the senate, the speaker of the house of representatives, the governor, and the state library.
10 The report shall detail the activities and administrative costs of the authority, as well as a complete
11 financial accounting of the funds established under RSA 110-B:99 and 110-B:100. The report shall also
12 include a historical summary of the program's activities to date. A copy of the report shall be made
13 available by the authority to any interested person.

14 VIII. Conduct an independent audit by a certified public accountant of its books and accounts
15 each fiscal year.

16 IX. Should the authority deem it appropriate:

17 (a) Adopt an official seal.

18 (b) Maintain an office and hire staff.

19 (c) Apply for, or accept from any source, gifts and donations of:

20 (1) Money, including money from appropriate fundraising activities;

21 (2) Labor, equipment, and supplies;

22 (3) Federal, local, private, and other matching funds and incentives; and

23 (4) Other assets to be deposited in the fund that may aid the authority in the conduct of
24 its affairs.

25 (d) Employ or retain, as independent contractors attorneys, accountants, and other advisors,
26 consultants, or agents as may be necessary without regard to any personnel or civil service law of the
27 state to prescribe their duties and qualifications, and to fix and pay their compensation, if any.

28 (e) Appoint qualified individuals to serve as unpaid volunteers under such terms and
29 conditions as deemed necessary. Said volunteers or advisors may be paid a stipend and/or reimbursed
30 for any incidental expenses determined by the authority to be necessary and incurred while performing
31 the business of the authority.

32 110-B:97 Executive Director. The board of directors shall nominate one for appointment by the
33 governor to serve as an executive director. The executive director shall serve a term of 5 years, with
34 reappointment or a vacancy to be filled in the same manner as the original appointment. At the request of
35 the board, the governor may remove the executive director for cause. The chairperson of the authority
36 shall not serve concurrently as the executive director. The executive director shall:

37 I. Coordinate the activities of state agencies directly involved with the administration of the
38 program in accordance with this subdivision.

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1 II. Evaluate the eligible resources proposed for protection or restoration under this program, and
2 determine if these resources meet the criteria of the program, subsequent to instruction by the board.

3 III. At the direction of the board, administer the affairs of the program and be directly responsible
4 for executing all policies of the board.

5 110-B:98 Status of Employees.

6 I. The authority may hire, fix, and pay compensation, prescribe duties and qualifications, and
7 establish personnel policies without regard to any personnel or civil service law or personnel or civil
8 service rule of the state. The employees of the authority shall not be classified employees of the state
9 within the meaning of RSA 21-I:49. Any individual employed by the authority shall be deemed an
10 employee at will and shall serve at the pleasure of the authority.

11 II. Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph I, any individual employed by the authority whose
12 employment calls for 30 hours or more work in a normal calendar week, and whose position is anticipated
13 to have a duration of 6 months or more, shall be entitled to elect to receive such health, dental, life
14 insurance, deferred compensation, and retirement benefits as are afforded to classified employees of the
15 state provided, however, that the election is made in writing within 30 days of the start of employment.
16 Upon election by such individual, the authority shall pay from its revenues the state's share of such
17 benefits. Any remaining costs of health, dental, life insurance, deferred compensation, and retirement
18 benefits which an individual elects to receive pursuant to this section, shall be withheld from such
19 individual's salary as a payroll deduction. Written notice of the availability of these benefit options shall be
20 provided to each individual upon employment by the authority.

21 110-B:99 Trust Fund Established; Administration.

22 I. There is established in the office of the state treasurer the New Hampshire first for veterans
23 trust fund. Moneys in the fund and any interest earned on the fund shall only be used for the purpose of
24 this subdivision. The trust fund shall be non-lapsing interest bearing funds and shall be continually
25 appropriated to the department of military affairs and veterans services.

26 II. The state treasurer shall invest the sums deposited in the fund in a prudent manner consistent
27 with the purposes of this subdivision. Interest earned on moneys in the fund shall accrue to the fund to
28 the extent allowed under law.

29 III. No funds of any state agency shall be transferred to the trust fund without authorization from
30 the general court. Federal funds accepted by the joint fiscal committee or governor for purposes similar to
31 those of this subdivision may be deposited in the trust fund.

32 110-B:100 Administrative Fund.

33 I. There is established in the authority a separate fund to be known as the first for veterans
34 administrative fund. The total revenues generated to the administrative fund from this source shall not
35 exceed \$200,000 for each fiscal year. Any revenue generated from this source in excess of the \$200,000
36 maximum per year shall be credited by the New Hampshire first for veterans trust fund in RSA 110-B:99.
37 In its annual report, the authority shall include the amount of revenues exceeding the maximum which are
38 credited to the New Hampshire first for veterans trust fund.

39 II. All sums so credited shall be appropriated to the authority for the following purposes:

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1 (a) To pay the costs of administering and operating the authority, including all wages,
2 salaries, benefits, and other expenses authorized by the board or the executive director. The authority
3 may enter into a contract or agreement for provision of services to withhold on a monthly basis all payroll
4 and benefit costs for employees.

5 (b) For the payment of all expenses incident to the management and operation of the
6 authority consistent with its statutory purpose and as the board or the executive director may determine.

7 III. This fund shall constitute a continuing appropriation for the benefit of the authority. Any
8 amount remaining to the credit of the authority at the close of any fiscal year, and any interest accrued,
9 shall be nonlapsing and shall be carried over and credited to the fund for the succeeding year.

10 110-B:101 Program Administration; Matching Funds.

11 I. The authority shall distribute funds to further the purposes of this subdivision only to eligible
12 applicants. Eligible applicants shall include:

13 (a) Municipalities or other political subdivisions of the state; and

14 (b) Publicly-supported nonprofit corporations exempt from federal income taxation under
15 section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code.

16 II. Other parties wishing to participate in the program may partner with one or more eligible
17 applicants. At the option of eligible applicants and with the approval of the board, state agencies may
18 hold rights in resource assets acquired through the program by eligible applicants. The applicant must
19 demonstrate the commitment of the owner of the assets to participate in the proposed action.

20 III. Financial assistance to eligible applicants shall be provided through grants, block grants, and
21 loans. Up to 50 percent of financial assistance provided each year may be provided through loans.
22 Principal and interest paid on such loans shall be deposited in the New Hampshire first for veterans
23 number plate fund established in RSA 261:97-h. Financial assistance may only be expended on eligible
24 resources for the following purposes:

25 (a) Ending veteran homelessness in New Hampshire;

26 (b) Attracting and retaining veterans to New Hampshire;

27 (c) Matching veteran skills with workforce development needs;

28 (d) Businesses and organizations that honor and positively impact veterans, service
29 members, and their families;

30 (e) Employment support;

31 (f) Improving access to physical and mental health care;

32 (g) Suicide prevention measures;

33 (h) Providing oral health care options;

34 (i) Substance use disorder treatment;

35 (j) Support military skills transfer, training, and certification; or

36 (k) Addressing a range of educational opportunities including institutes of higher learning, on
37 the job training, apprenticeships and initiatives focused on the trades.

38 304:5 New Subparagraphs; The State and Its Government; State Treasurer; Application of Receipts.
39 Amend RSA 6:12, I(b) by inserting after subparagraph (410) the following new subparagraphs:

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1 (411) Moneys deposited into the New Hampshire first for veterans trust fund established
2 in RSA 110-B:99.

3 (412) Moneys deposited into the first for veterans administrative fund established in RSA
4 110-B:110.

5 304:6 Effective Date. This act shall take effect 60 days after its passage.

Approved: July 10, 2026
Effective Date: September 08, 2026

