

“CHOOSE LIFE” FUND-RAISING PLATE

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Senate Bill 163 as enrolled

Sponsor: Sen. Patrick J. Colbeck

House Committee: Transportation and Infrastructure

Senate Committee: Transportation

Complete to 12-26-18

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

(Vetoed by the Governor 6-30-17)

SUMMARY:

Senate Bill 163 would authorize the issuance of a “Choose Life” fund-raising license plate. Specifically, the bill would amend the Michigan Vehicle Code to require the Secretary of State (SOS), by June 1, 2018, to develop and issue a fund-raising plate recognizing the Choose Life Michigan Fund. The SOS would have to design the plate in conjunction with the board of the Choose Life Michigan Fund.

Money from the Fund would be distributed to *eligible nonprofit organizations*, exempt from taxation under the federal Internal Revenue Code.

Under the bill, *eligible nonprofit organizations* would include crisis pregnancy centers, homes for pregnant women, and other organizations that provide practical support to pregnant women, provide outreach to at-risk populations, and promote *life-affirming programs and projects*.

Life-affirming programs and projects would include media campaigns; specialty outreach to at-risk populations, including minorities, teenagers, and college-aged women; campaigns to promote adoption; and suicide prevention.

The bill would create the Choose Life Fund within the state treasury. The state treasurer could receive money or other assets from any source for deposit into the Fund and would direct the investment of the Fund and credit to it any interest and earnings from the investments. Money in the Fund at the close of the fiscal year would remain in the Fund and would not lapse to the general fund.

The Secretary of State would transfer the donation money from the sale of the fund-raising plates to the state treasurer, who would credit the money to the Choose Life Fund. On an annual basis, the state treasurer would be required to disburse the money in the Fund to the Choose Life Michigan Fund. The state treasurer would be the administrator of the Fund for auditing purposes.

The bill would take effect 90 days after its enactment.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Section 811e of the Michigan Vehicle Code requires a start-up fee, equal to a three-year average of the cost to the Secretary of State of developing a new fund-raising plate, to be paid to the Secretary of State to offset the start-up costs it incurs when developing new fund-raising plates. The start-up fee is then deposited into the Transportation Administration Collection Fund (TACF), which is used to support Department of State operations. Assuming the calculated start-up fee is equal to the actual costs to the department of developing the plate, this bill would have no fiscal impact on the department. The bill could otherwise have a negative or positive fiscal impact on the department, depending on how the start-up fee relates to the cost.

Prior to the February 28, 2017 effective date of Public Act 327 of 2016, the fund-raising plate start-up fee was set at \$15,000. According to the department, actual start-up costs at that time far exceeded \$15,000, at times reaching over \$100,000 per plate. As of May 8, 2017, the fund-raising plate start-up fee for this bill has not yet been determined, but the department expects it to be greater than \$15,000.

Vetoed 6-30-17:

In his veto message, Governor Snyder wrote: “The ‘Choose Life’ license plate is a political message that has the potential to bitterly divide millions of Michiganders and that, in my view, is not appropriate for a state-issued license plate.”

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House Fiscal Agency staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.