

House Bill No. 789

An act relating to specialty license plates; amending ss. 320.08056 and 320.08058, F.S.; creating the Stop Heart Disease license plate; providing for distribution to the Florida Heart Research Foundation, Inc., of annual use fees received from the sale of such plates; providing an effective date.

WHEREAS, heart disease is the leading cause of death and disability in this country and in the State of Florida, claiming the lives of more than 2,600 Americans every day, an average of one death every 33 seconds, and cardiovascular disease accounts for over 40 percent of all deaths, claiming more lives each year than the next seven leading causes of death combined, and

WHEREAS, more than 61 million Americans suffer from cardiovascular disease, including high blood pressure, coronary heart disease, stroke, congestive heart failure, and other conditions, and

WHEREAS, 25 percent of males and 38 percent of females who experience a heart attack die within 1 year, and

WHEREAS, 50 percent of men and 63 percent of women who die of sudden cardiac death experience no previous symptoms of coronary heart disease, and

WHEREAS, cardiovascular disease takes an astonishing toll on the economy through health care costs, lost work days, and lowered productivity, which costs are estimated to reach \$330 billion in 2002, and

WHEREAS, almost 20 percent of all Social Security disability payments are made to disabled Americans with heart disease, and

WHEREAS, men and women are at equal risk for cardiovascular disease and are also affected as husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, children, and friends of people suffering from cardiovascular disease, and

WHEREAS, in Florida, there will be over 65,000 deaths per year from cardiovascular disease, and hospitalization costs to care for Floridians with cardiovascular disease will top \$4.4 billion per year, and

WHEREAS, the only hope of ending this disease is through research aimed at discovering its cause, its cure, and, most importantly, its prevention, and

WHEREAS, the Florida Heart Research Foundation, Inc., was developed for cardiovascular research, education, and prevention programs throughout the State of Florida, NOW, THEREFORE,

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Paragraph (mm) is added to subsection (4) of section 320.08056, Florida Statutes, to read:

320.08056 Specialty license plates.—

(4) The following license plate annual use fees shall be collected for the appropriate specialty license plates:

(mm) Stop Heart Disease license plate, \$25.

Section 2. Subsection (39) is added to section 320.08058, Florida Statutes, to read:

320.08058 Specialty license plates.—

(39) STOP HEART DISEASE LICENSE PLATES.—

(a) The department shall develop a Stop Heart Disease license plate as provided in this section. Stop Heart Disease license plates must bear the colors and design approved by the department. The plate shall be designed to include a red, white, and blue background with a slanted heart shape in the middle of the plate. The word “Florida” shall appear at the top of the plate in yellow outlined in black, and the words “Stop Heart Disease” shall appear at the bottom of the plate in yellow.

(b) The department shall remit the proceeds of the annual use fee to the Florida Heart Research Foundation, Inc. The first \$80,000 of the use fee given to the Florida Heart Research Foundation, Inc., shall be used to pay startup costs, including costs incurred developing and issuing the plates. Thereafter, the Florida Heart Research Foundation, Inc., shall provide for a peer review grant solicitation and award process to distribute fees for cardiovascular disease research, education, and prevention within the state and shall make the funds available for any one or more of the following:

1. Quality research to pursue top quality cardiovascular research that will further understanding of heart disease and its cause, treatment, cure, and prevention. Accepted projects must conform to the highest standards of scientific research, be efficiently organized, and report updates continually to ensure research credibility and excellence.

2. Heart disease prevention programs to provide cardiovascular screenings to state residents.

3. Educational programs to offer educational programs, literature, seminars, or speakers for both clinicians and lay people so that the latest risk factors, technologies, treatments, methodologies, protocols, and preventive measures are well known and used in the state.

(c) In the first year in which the plate is issued, no more than 25 percent of the fees collected may be used for administrative costs directly associated with the operation of the Florida Heart Research Foundation, Inc., and marketing and promotion of the Stop Heart Disease license plate. In the second and subsequent years in which the plate is sold, no more than 20 percent of the fees collected may be used for administrative costs directly associated with the operation of the Florida Heart Research Foundation, Inc., and marketing and promotion of the Stop Heart Disease license plate.

Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2003.

Approved by the Governor June 25, 2003.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 25, 2003.