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Senate Bill 1060 (Substitute S-1 as passed by the Senate)  
Senate Bill 1061 (as passed by the Senate)  
Sponsor: Senator Stephanie Chang (S.B. 1060)  
Senator Ed McBroom (S.B. 1061)  
Committee: Transportation and Infrastructure

Date Completed: 12-26-24

## **CONTENT**

**The bills would amend Chapter VII (Registration Fees) of the Michigan Vehicle Code to prohibit personalized license plates from bearing specified content, such as obscenities, explicit imagery, drug and alcohol use, illegality, and hatred or violence.**

The bills are tie-barred.

Upon registering a motor vehicle, the registrant may apply for a special registration plate. Section 803b of the Code allows the Secretary of State (SOS) to issue one personalized vehicle registration plate to be used on a vehicle instead of a standard issued plate, and Section 803m allows the SOS to issue two special organization vehicle registration plates for the same use.<sup>1</sup> The bill would prohibit a personalized plate and a special organization plate from bearing a configuration of letters, numbers, or letters and numbers that conflicted with the regular license plate numbering system or was any of the following:

- Carrying a profane or obscene connotation.
- A swear word or the depiction of a swear word.
- Sexually-explicit or graphic.
- Excretory-related.
- Used to describe an intimate body part or genitals.
- Used to describe alcohol, alcohol use, drugs, drug culture, or drug use.
- Used to describe an illegal activity or illegal substance.
- Used to substantially interfere with law enforcement's plate identification.
- Used to disparage or promote or condone hate or violence directed at any type of business, group, or persons.
- A foreign word that was substantially similar to a configuration not permitted above.

MCL 257.803b (S.B. 1060)  
257.803m (S.B. 1061)

## **BRIEF RATIONALE**

In 2023, the SOS issued more than 48,000 personalized license plates to Michigan residents.<sup>2</sup> These plates allow vehicle owners to display their personalities and interests, but some

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<sup>1</sup> Generally, special organization registration plates bear the symbol or emblem of an organization. To qualify for the plate, the organization must be a nonprofit or public service organization that certifies it has at least 500 members who will apply for the plate, among other requirements.

<sup>2</sup> Dixon, Jennifer, "Michigan has banned more than 26,000 vehicle license plates", *Detroit Free Press*, August 13, 2024.

requests may contain inappropriate material. As license plates are issued by the State and publicly visible, the SOS must decide which requests to disapprove. The SOS has developed guidelines to this end, which some have suggested should be codified into State law.

Legislative Analyst: Abby Schneider

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The bills would have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

Fiscal Analyst: Joe Carrasco, Jr.

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.