



**DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY  
AND VETERANS AFFAIRS**

Soldiers and Sailors Building  
425 East Capitol Avenue  
Pierre, South Dakota 57501  
OFFICE: 605.773.8242  
FAX: 605.773.5380  
<http://mva.sd.gov>

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For more information, contact: Audry Ricketts at 605-773-8242 [audry.ricketts@state.sd.us](mailto:audry.ricketts@state.sd.us)  
(South Dakota Department of Military and Veterans Affairs)

**NEW LAWS BENEFIT VETERANS AND FAMILIES**

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Department of Military and Veterans Affairs reminds all veterans of two new South Dakota laws that take effect July 1, 2010, -- property tax benefits to surviving spouses of certain disabled veterans, and expansion of the eligibility for the gold star special license plates.

Implementation of the property tax benefit legislation allows the surviving spouse of a veteran who was rated as permanently and totally disabled from a service-connected disability to receive the same property tax exemption that the veteran received prior to his/her death. If the director of equalization determines that the surviving spouse receives an exemption for the dwelling pursuant to this section of law, the surviving spouse retains that exemption until such time as property ownership is transferred, the surviving spouse does not occupy the dwelling, the surviving spouse remarries, or the property has a change in use.

Expansion of the eligibility for the gold star special license plates permits any resident owner of a motor vehicle who is a parent, spouse, sibling, or child of a United States Armed Forces member who died while in service to this country or who died as a result of the service, as certified by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, to receive a maximum of two sets of special license plates to honor the person as a gold star family member. Previously, state law only permitted parents to use the gold star plates.

“Passage of this legislation was one way to preserve the memories and sacrifices of our bravest citizens,” said Steve Harding, Deputy Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.

Harding encourages all travelers when following vehicles with the “gold star” license plates, to take time to reflect on those who’ve given their lives to defend our freedoms.

“We must never allow ourselves to forget that America, as we know it, exists because of the sacrifices of our veterans,” he said.

Veterans and/or family members with questions about the changes are encouraged to contact their local County or Tribal Veterans Service Officer or the South Dakota Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (605-773-4981).