



Maryland License Plates Could Honor National Anthem

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ANNAPOLIS (Jan. 21, 2010) - A bit of history might be displayed across the bottom of standard Maryland license plates beginning this fall.

If Sen. Larry E. Haines, R-Carroll County, has his way, "Home of Our National Anthem" would grace all state license plates as a way to honor Maryland native Francis Scott Key's famous poem, written after watching the British bombard Fort McHenry almost 200 years ago.

Haines, who presented the bill to the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee Thursday, said 33 states have some type of motto or slogan on their standard plates.

Haines hopes the motto will help preserve history.

"I think that most everyone is familiar with our anthem," Haines said. "Maryland is the birthplace of our national anthem."

Haines believes now is the time to make the addition to state license plates with the bicentennial of the War of 1812 two years away. If the bill is enacted, all plates made starting Oct. 1 would bear the motto.

"I just believe it will keep history before the next generation," Haines said. "It's very, very important to keep history alive."

Sen. Lisa A. Gladden, D-Baltimore, suggested an amendment that would change the motto to "Birthplace of Our National Anthem," citing our entire nation, not just Maryland, is home to the anthem.

Haines said he had no problem with that, even saying it might be more appropriate. He also had no problem with leaving the new motto off of specialized plates, such as the popular agricultural and Chesapeake Bay license plates.

"Birthplace might make it crowded, that's the only thing," Haines said, referring to the small space between the two bolt holes at the bottom of license plates. "I'll be satisfied if it just went on the standard plate."

Capital News Service contributed to this report.