



Ohio Revised Code

Section 4503.591 Professional sports team license plates.

Effective: April 7, 2023

Legislation: House Bill 45

(A) If a professional sports team located in this state desires to have its logo appear on license plates issued by this state, it shall enter into a contract with either a sports commission to permit such display, as permitted by division (E) of this section, or with a community charity, as permitted by division (G) of this section.

(B) The owner or lessee of any passenger car, noncommercial motor vehicle, recreational vehicle, or other vehicle of a class approved by the registrar of motor vehicles may apply to the registrar for the registration of the vehicle and issuance of license plates bearing the logo of a professional sports team that has entered into a contract described in division (A) of this section. The application shall designate the sports team whose logo the owner or lessee desires to appear on the license plates. Failure to designate a participating professional sports team shall result in rejection by the registrar of the registration application. An application made under this section may be combined with a request for a special reserved license plate under section 4503.40 or 4503.42 of the Revised Code. Upon receipt of the completed application and compliance by the applicant with divisions (C) and (D) of this section, the registrar shall issue to the applicant the appropriate vehicle registration and a set of license plates bearing the logo of the professional sports team the owner designated in the application and a validation sticker, or a validation sticker alone when required by section 4503.191 of the Revised Code.

In addition to the letters and numbers ordinarily inscribed thereon, professional sports team license plates shall bear the logo of a participating professional sports team, and shall display county identification stickers that identify the county of registration as required under section 4503.19 of the Revised Code.

(C) The professional sports team license plates and validation sticker, or validation sticker alone, as the case may be, shall be issued upon payment of the regular license tax as prescribed under section 4503.04 of the Revised Code, any applicable motor vehicle license tax levied under Chapter 4504. of the Revised Code, an additional fee of ten dollars, and compliance with all other applicable laws



relating to the registration of motor vehicles. If the application for a professional sports team license plate is combined with a request for a special reserved license plate under section 4503.40 or 4503.42 of the Revised Code, the license plates and validation sticker, or validation sticker alone, shall be issued upon payment of the taxes and fees described in this division plus the additional fee prescribed under section 4503.40 or 4503.42 of the Revised Code and compliance with all other applicable laws relating to the registration of motor vehicles.

(D) For each application for registration and registration renewal notice the registrar receives under this section, the registrar shall collect a contribution of twenty-five dollars. The registrar shall transmit this contribution to the treasurer of state for deposit into the license plate contribution fund created by section 4501.21 of the Revised Code.

The registrar shall transmit the additional fee of ten dollars, which is to compensate the bureau of motor vehicles for the additional services required in the issuing of professional sports team license plates, to the treasurer of state for deposit into the state treasury to the credit of the public safety - highway purposes fund created by section 4501.06 of the Revised Code.

(E) If a professional sports team located in this state desires to have its logo appear on license plates issued by this state and it desires to do so pursuant to this division, it shall inform the largest convention and visitors' bureau of the county in which the professional sports team is located of that desire. That convention and visitors' bureau shall create a sports commission to operate in that county to receive the contributions that are paid by applicants who choose to be issued license plates bearing the logo of that professional sports team for display on their motor vehicles. The sports commission shall negotiate with the professional sports team to permit the display of the team's logo on license plates issued by this state, enter into the contract with the team to permit such display, and pay to the team any licensing or rights fee that must be paid in connection with the issuance of the license plates. Upon execution of the contract, the sports commission shall provide a copy of it to the registrar, along with any other documentation the registrar may require. Upon receipt of the contract and any required additional documentation, and when the numerical requirement contained in section 4503.78 of the Revised Code has been met relative to that particular professional sports team, the registrar shall take the measures necessary to issue license plates bearing the logo of that team.

(F) A sports commission shall expend the money it receives pursuant to section 4501.21 of the



Revised Code to attract amateur regional, national, and international sporting events to the municipal corporation, county, or township in which it is located, and it may sponsor such events. Prior to attracting or sponsoring such events, the sports commission shall perform an economic analysis to determine whether the proposed event will have a positive economic effect on the greater area in which the event will be held. A sports commission shall not expend any money it receives under that section to attract or sponsor an amateur regional, national, or international sporting event if its economic analysis does not result in a finding that the proposed event will have a positive economic effect on the greater area in which the event will be held.

A sports commission that receives money pursuant to that section, in addition to any other duties imposed on it by law and notwithstanding the scope of those duties, also shall encourage the economic development of this state through the promotion of tourism within all areas of this state. A sports commission that receives ten thousand dollars or more during any calendar year shall submit a written report to the director of development, on or before the first day of October of the next succeeding year, detailing its efforts and expenditures in the promotion of tourism during the calendar year in which it received the ten thousand dollars or more.

As used in this division, "promotion of tourism" means the encouragement through advertising, educational and informational means, and public relations, both within the state and outside of it, of travel by persons away from their homes for pleasure, personal reasons, or other purposes, except to work, to this state or to the region in which the sports commission is located.

(G) If a professional sports team located in this state desires to have its logo appear on license plates issued by this state and it does not desire to do so pursuant to division (E) of this section, it shall do so pursuant to this division. The professional sports team shall notify a community charity of that desire. That community charity may negotiate with the professional sports team to permit the display of the team's logo on license plates issued by this state, enter into a contract with the team to permit such display, and pay to the team any licensing or rights fee that must be paid in connection with the issuance of the license plates. Upon execution of a contract, the community charity shall provide a copy of it to the registrar along with any other documentation the registrar may require. Upon receipt of the contract and any required additional documentation, and when the numerical requirement contained in section 4503.78 of the Revised Code has been met relative to that particular professional sports team, the registrar shall take the measures necessary to issue license plates



bearing the logo of that team.

(H)(1) A community charity shall expend the money it receives pursuant to section 4501.21 of the Revised Code solely to provide financial support to a sports commission for the purposes described in division (F) of this section and to nonprofit organizations located in this state that seek to improve the lives of those who are less fortunate and who reside in the region and state in which is located the sports team with which the community charity entered into a contract pursuant to division (G) of this section. Such organizations shall achieve this purpose through activities such as youth sports programs; educational, health, social, and community service programs; or services such as emergency assistance or employment, education, housing, and nutrition services.

The community charity shall not expend any money it receives pursuant to section 4501.21 of the Revised Code if the expenditure will be received by a nonprofit organization that will use the money in a manner or for a purpose that is not described in this division.

(2) The community charity shall provide a written quarterly report to the director of development and the director of job and family services detailing the expenditures of the money it receives pursuant to section 4501.21 of the Revised Code. The report shall include the amount of such money received and an accounting of all expenditures of such money.

(I) For purposes of this section:

(1) The "largest" convention and visitors' bureau of a county is the bureau that receives the largest amount of money generated in that county from excise taxes levied on lodging transactions under sections 351.021, 5739.08, and 5739.09 of the Revised Code.

(2) "Sports commission" means a commission consisting of at least fifteen members that is a nonprofit corporation organized under the laws of this state that is entitled to tax exempt status under section 501(c)(3) of the "Internal Revenue Code of 1986," 100 Stat. 2085, 26 U.S.C.A. 501, as amended, and whose function is to attract, promote, or sponsor sports and athletic events within a municipal corporation, county, or township.

A sports commission may provide all services related to attracting, promoting, or sponsoring such



events, including, but not limited to, the booking of athletes and teams, scheduling, and hiring or contracting for staff, ushers, managers, and other persons whose functions are directly related to the sports and athletic events the commission attracts, promotes, or sponsors.

(3) "Community charity" means a nonprofit corporation organized under the laws of this state that is entitled to tax exempt status under section 501(c)(3) of the "Internal Revenue Code of 1986," 100 Stat. 2085, 26 U.S.C. 501, as amended, and that enters into a contract with a professional sports team pursuant to division (G) of this section.

(4) "Nonprofit organization" means a nonprofit corporation organized under the laws of this state that is entitled to tax exempt status under section 501(c)(3) of the "Internal Revenue Code of 1986," 100 Stat. 2085, 26 U.S.C. 501, as amended, and that receives money from a community charity pursuant to division (H)(1) of this section.