

OPINION NO. 83-102**Syllabus:**

Ownership of a motor vehicle which has been manufactured without a front license plate mounting bracket is not an exception to the requirement, imposed by R.C. 4503.21, that an owner or operator of a motor vehicle display on the front and rear of such motor vehicle the distinctive number and registration mark, including any validation sticker, furnished by the Director of Highway Safety. Absent a legislative enactment, there is no authority for granting such exception.

To: Mark A. Ochsenbein, Jackson County Prosecuting Attorney, Jackson, Ohio
By: Anthony J. Celebrezze, Jr., Attorney General, December 21, 1983

I have before me your request for my opinion in response to the following question:

Is there a means of obtaining an exemption to R.C. 4503.21 for owners of vehicles which have been manufactured without a front license plate mounting bracket without the legislature amending the statute itself?

In your request you indicate that this issue arises out of the fact that a Jackson County resident owns a motor vehicle on which there are no mounting brackets for a front license plate.

R.C. 4503.21 provides:

No person who is the owner or operator of a motor vehicle shall fail to display on the front and rear of such motor vehicle the distinctive number and registration mark, including any validation sticker issued under section 4503.191 of the Revised Code, furnished by the director of highway safety, except that a manufacturer of motor vehicles or dealer therein, the holder of an in transit permit, and the owner or operator of a house trailer, trailer, or semitrailer shall display on the rear only. Such number plates shall be securely fastened so as not to swing. (Emphasis added.)

R.C. 4503.99 provides that whoever violates R.C. 4503.21 shall be guilty of a minor misdemeanor.

The sole exceptions recognized in R.C. 4503.21 are that for a manufacturer of motor vehicles or dealer, see R.C. 4501.01(W); the holder of an in transit permit, see R.C. 4503.33; the owner or operator of a house trailer, see R.C. 4501.01(O); trailer, see R.C. 4501.01(M); or semitrailer, see R.C. 4501.01(P).

Since R.C. 4503.21 specifically and expressly mentions these exceptions and no others, under the well accepted statutory rule of construction, "expressio unius est exclusio alterius," any other possible exceptions are excluded. See Wachendorf v. Shaver, 149 Ohio St. 231, 78 N.E.2d 370 (1948); Weirick v. Mansfield Lumber Co., 96 Ohio St. 386, 117 N.E. 362 (1917). Accordingly, absent further legislative action, there is no means for obtaining an exemption from these statutory requirements for owners of vehicles manufactured without a front plate mounting bracket.

It is my opinion, therefore, and you are advised, that ownership of a motor vehicle which has been manufactured without a front license plate mounting bracket is not an exception to the requirement, imposed by R.C. 4503.21, that an owner or operator of a motor vehicle display on the front and rear of such motor vehicle the distinctive number and registration mark, including any validation sticker, furnished by the Director of Highway Safety. Absent a legislative enactment, there is no authority for granting such exemption.