



LICENSE TO ROAM:
VANITY LICENSE PLATES AND THE GR8 STORIES THEY TELL™
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VANITY PLATES BOOK AUTHOR STEFAN LONCE DESIGNS FIRST "VANITIZED" POLITICAL CAMPAIGN POSTER

Stefan Lonce is an author and graphic designer who is very proud that he designed the first political campaign poster to incorporate a vanity license plate that has a campaign slogan.

The New York vanity plate is **TONY 4DA**, and the candidate is Tony Castro, who is running for District Attorney in Westchester County, where Lonce lives, in the Democratic Primary on September 15, 2009. Lonce suggested that Castro "vanitize" with the **TONY 4DA** plate, and Lonce designed a Castro poster that incorporates a modified depiction of the plate, and the slogan, "**THE REAL DEMOCRAT 4 D.A.**"

"I wanted to design a completely new kind of political poster, which uses **red**, **white** and **blue**, in a different way. I made sure that '**DEMOCRAT**' was in **blue type**; and I used **red type** for the most important messages: '**CASTRO**,' '**REAL**,' and '**PRIMARY DAY SEPT. 15TH**.' I think that I have designed the first political campaign poster ever to incorporate an image of a vanity license plate," Lonce said.

Lonce is working on a book, *LCNS2ROM: LICENSE TO ROAM: VANITY LICENSE PLATES AND THE GR8 STORIES THEY TELL*. According to Lonce, "Vanity license plates are message platforms that have empowered 9.3 million American motorists to tell the shortest of stories, in eight or fewer characters, or to promote causes, including themselves." His web site is: www.vanityplatesbook.com.

In November 2007, Lonce and the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators, which represents the DMVs, released the first-ever *Vanity License Plates Survey*, which found that there are 9.3 million "vanitized" motor vehicles in the U.S. New York ranks 35th in the *Survey*, with about 287,000 vanitized motor vehicles (2.4% of motor vehicles).

Effective 9/1/09, the New York DMV charges \$31.25 per year for a vanity plate, plus a \$50 application fee. New York allows up to eight characters on a vanity plate.

The DMVs screen vanity plates to prevent "offensive" plate messages, and on July 5, 2008, Lonce published an op-ed article in *The New York Times*, suggesting a better way for DMVs to screen "offensive" vanity plates while complying with the First Amendment's right to freedom of speech, which the Supreme Court has held applies to license plates.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/05/opinion/05lonce.html>

DMV officials all over the United States like Lonce's idea. The *Times* even included Lonce's favorite neologism, "vanitize," which means, "to embellish a motor vehicle with a vanity license plate or plates." "I hope that other candidates choose to vanitize, and use their vanity plates in their campaigns," Lonce said.

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