

**DEPARTMENT OF SERVICES FOR PERSONS
WITH DISABILITIES**

CITY OF NEW HAVEN

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Mayor John DeStefano, Jr.

March 11, 2009

Senator Donald DeFronzo
Representative Antonio Guerrero
Transportation Committee
Room 2300, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: Senate Bill 444 An Act Concerning Parking For Persons Who Are Blind And Persons With Disabilities Which Limit Or Impair The Ability To Walk and

Raised Bill 1093 An Act Providing Funds For Municipal Matching Grants For Demand-Responsive Transportation For Elderly Persons And Persons With Disabilities

The Department of Services for Persons with Disabilities for the City of New Haven would like to express its support for Senate Bill 444. The State's program for distributing accessible parking permits has been plagued with problems for years, leading to great difficulty for individuals with disabilities to actually access the handicapped parking spaces for which the permits were designed. Often spaces are occupied by vehicles with a permit but the person it was issued to is not in the vehicle or by individuals that no longer have a need for the permit.

By requiring renewals of permits, the State eliminates the re-use of permits after the person that it was issued to has passed away. Additionally individuals that no longer need a handicapped permit will no longer be allowed to use their permit indefinitely. This will assist in cutting down on abuses.

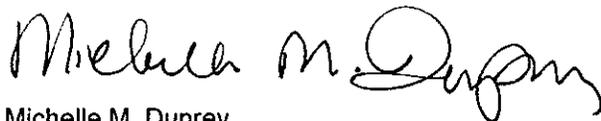
After consulting with a majority of New Haven's police officers, I believe the best way to aid enforcement of the laws related to permit use is to have identifiable information on the permit such as a license number or state identification number. This will allow officers to easily determine if the person using the permit is the person to whom the permit was issued. By passing this bill you will be making enforcement much easier for the police and more likely to happen.

Speaking on behalf of New Haven's residents with disabilities and as a person with a disability, it has become increasingly difficult to obtain an accessible parking space. All efforts to curb abuse and to more strictly evaluate to whom the State is issuing permits, is greatly needed and appreciated.

In reference to Raised Bill 1093, the City of New Haven supports any efforts to increase access to transportation for people with disabilities. This bill will provide funds so many communities can fill transportation gaps and provide more comprehensive options to the elderly and disability community. We strongly encourage you to support Raised Bill 1093.

Thank you for your efforts to make improvements that positively affect the lives of people with disabilities.

Very truly yours,



Michelle M. Duprey