

**DEPARTMENT OF SERVICES FOR PERSONS
WITH DISABILITIES**

CITY OF NEW HAVEN

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Mayor John DeStefano, Jr.

February 2, 2007

The Honorable Antonio Guerrero
The Honorable Andrew M Maynard
Transportation Committee
Room 2300, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: Opposition to Proposed Bill No. 710 An Act Repealing the Renewal Requirement for Parking Placards
Support of Proposed Bill No. 5952 An act Reducing Fraud and Abuse of the Motor Vehicle Handicap Permit System
Support of Proposed Bill No 722 An Act Concerning the Placement of Placards
Support of Proposed Bill No. 6190 An Act Concerning the Penalty for Unauthorized Parking

Dear Members of the Transportation Committee:

On behalf of the residents of New Haven who have disabilities I respectfully request your support and approval of Proposed Bill Numbers 722, 5952, and 6190; and opposition of Proposed Bill Number 710.

We oppose Proposed Bill Number 710 because we believe that the renewal requirement in the existing statute helps create more parking opportunities for individuals with disabilities. In the past when the Department of Motor Vehicle issues a handicapped placard, it is often was a lifetime permit. Such an issuance does not take into account changes in disability status, the incentive of others to exploit a lifetime permit, and the unlimited benefit it provide permit thieves. Renewal requirements help alleviate the problem of individuals who no longer are disabled from the continued use of the permit. It also hinders the continued use of a permit by family members of a person with a disability who is deceased or no longer needs such a permit and who has failed to turn the permit in to DMV. Renewal requirements also limit benefits to those that have stolen a valid permit, making it useless after the expiration date rather than having the thieves benefit indefinitely. Such a requirement gives the state more control over who has the permits, how long they have them and can regularly assess whether they are actually disabled under the requirements of the statute. Removal of this renewal process will be detrimental to the disability community and should be opposed.

In support of Proposed Bill Number 5952 we assert that adding photo identification to the permits will improve enforcement of disability parking laws. There is an ongoing problem of identification of the person to whom the permit is issued, making enforcement difficult

for police and businesses. If there was a photo on the permit, enforcement of the parking laws would be easier. With only a tracking number on the permit, law enforcement has a difficult time determining to whom the permit is actually issued. While law enforcement can check the identification number with the state, the system is not simple and is often time consuming for law enforcement, which may deter law enforcement from commencing disability parking enforcement. Additionally, many times enforcement is not left to law enforcement but to the businesses the accessible parking spaces serve. Law enforcement is sometimes reluctant to enter private property to issue a ticket and leave the enforcement to the merchant or business, who has no access to the state database. Forcing businesses and merchants to go on how "disabled" one may look, could possibly leading to unwelcome behavior or comments towards those with non-apparent disabilities. Having identification on the permit will give those seeking to enforce the disability parking laws a tool to treat individuals with disabilities that rightly possess a permit in a respectful way and not going on society's stereotypes on what a person with a disability should look like. It will also give individuals with disabilities with a non-apparent disability an easy way to demonstrate that the permit is rightly issued to them. Making enforcement easier for police and businesses will only benefit those that rightly possess a handicapped parking permit.

Proposed Bill Number 722 will allow for the easy identification that a vehicle has proper authorization to park in an accessible space. We believe this bill can only improve the enforcement of existing laws.

In support of Proposed Bill Number 6190 we assert that this may provide some additional deterrence to individuals who may be tempted to illegally park in a handicapped space. But the only way this bill can be truly effective is it enforced the penalty to not only those who have no permit and illegally park in a handicapped space but also individuals that misappropriate use of someone else's permit to park in a handicapped space when that individual is not in the vehicle. We support complete enforcement.

With the passage of 722, 5952, and 6190 and defeat of 710, abuse and exploitation of the handicapped parking permit program will be diminished. With less abuse, more accessible parking will be available to those that truly need it. On behalf of New Haven's residents with disabilities I encourage you to vote favorably for Proposed Bill Numbers 722, 5952, and 6190 and reject Proposed Bill Number 710. Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michelle M. Duprey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Michelle M. Duprey