

Christopher O'Brien
7 Brookdale St. Apt. 5
Wolcott CT 06716

cobrien7@hotmail.com
203-558-5817

Members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee,

I am writing in **OPPOSITION** to **HB 5050**, *An Act Modernizing the Symbol of Access for Persons with Disabilities*.

By means of an introduction, I am a driver, taxpayer and lifelong resident of Connecticut. I do not have anything that would be considered a physical, visual, or hearing impairment, disability or limitation. I am primarily opposed to this bill for two reasons:

1. The proposed new symbol for handicapped parking and markings introduces emotion to our signscape. Most signage is of a neutral tone and does not give any bias for the reader towards the subject it refers. For example, all green highway signs denote simply the names of a destination. Yellow signage give information in a straightforward fashion. Brown designated attraction signs do not show emotion that could be enjoyed at a beach, ski or golf resort, amusement park, lodging, or the satisfaction of finding a restroom facility or restaurant. Changing the handicapped sign would invite these changes that would border upon marketing style advertising. This brings us to another thought. If a private business wanted to add emphasis to the special designation of a parking space, then they should be allowed to. Pregnancy or veterans spaces come to mind. However, they should not be forced to.

2. The artistic style of the sign could very well invite more artistry. Signs are famous for defacement. Look at any "stop" sign around your town, and surely your municipality has a small budget allocated to replace signs that are defaced or what we can call "artistically enhanced" by graffiti artists.

While I have no objection to more art in our communities, and the humoristic points of view they could portray, I don't think we want that on a sign that is restricted or reserved specifically for those who sometimes really need them. Because it this symbol is much more artistic than the traditional sign, it will invite graffiti.

3. Signs need to show an official purpose, no more, no less. They should not force political agendas or correctness. I don't see many wheelchair basketball players jumping out of their vehicles. If they are so athletic, why don't they just park halfway down the parking lot like everyone else?

If anything, we should change the sign to show a handicapped person moving slowly in crutches, carefully looking both ways and hobbling slowly across the driveway into the grocery store. This is the more commonly used reason for these spaces. These spaces offer the dual purpose of convenience for the user, as well as a safety reminder for other vehicles passing these visually larger spaces to exercise caution.

As a former parking attendant at my college university, cracking down on people illegally parking in handicapped spaces was always an issue. Many would "idle" their cars idling thinking that it was legal as well. Sorry, but an occupied space is an occupied space. Changing the symbol to someone

with crutches would better emphasize the need that these spaces are intended for. Too often, people who USED to have a temporary disability still have handicapped permits and can walk fine. Their doctors are committing fraud to allow them to keep the permits.

We should crack down on the real problem rather than create politically correct solution to a cosmetic issue that really affects no one except in their own mind. Please vote no on this unnecessary legislation.