

**Gaetano, Carolyn**

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**From:** Shelagh McClure <shelagpmcclure@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 21, 2016 6:44 PM  
**To:** GAETestimony  
**Subject:** House Bill 5050

Testimony of Shelagh McClure, Chair  
Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities  
Before the Government Administration and Elections Committee  
On House Bill 5050  
February 22, 2016

**Submitted to: [gaetestimony@cga.ct.gov](mailto:gaetestimony@cga.ct.gov)**

Senator Cassano, Representative Jutila, members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in favor of House Bill 5050, An Act Modernizing Parking Signs for People with Disabilities.

I am Chair of the Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities, a public agency whose mission is to promote independence and full inclusion of individuals with developmental disabilities in their communities, and to foster capacity building and system change. I am also the parent of a 25-year old son with an intellectual disability who lives at home with my husband and me.

The Council favors this bill because it would change the icon on the sign to from a stick-figure in a wheelchair to a figure leaning forward, showing movement. This suggests the independence and engagement of those with accessibility needs. This symbol of greater independence and engagement in community life is consistent with the mission and goals of the Council, and more accurately reflects the lives of people with mobility challenges in today's world. The Council strongly supports the updated icon.

We also support substituting the word "Reserved" for the current term "handicapped". The word "handicapped" is outdated and offensive to many. It indicates helplessness and those with accessibility needs are anything but helpless.

Use of the updated icon and the word "Reserved" will assist in changing attitudes toward people with disabilities and those with accessibility challenges. The Council can attest that modernizing attitudes of the general public toward people with disabilities and accessibility challenges is a work in progress, and we should take every opportunity to advance a positive message of the competence and independence of people with disabilities.

This bill does not require the immediate expenditure of funds, and therefore, would not cost taxpayers anything extra. The new signs would only be required for new construction or to replace older, worn-out signs.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.