
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 279

AN ACT CONCERNING CERTIFICATION FOR REMOVABLE WINDSHIELD PLACARDS FOR PERSONS WHO ARE BLIND AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE ACCESSIBLE PARKING ADVISORY COUNCIL.

This bill makes changes to laws related to health care professionals' certification of eligibility for an accessible parking removable windshield placard. By law, applicants for windshield placards must submit a certification from specified health care professionals (or certain government officials), signed under penalty of false statement, stating that the applicant has a disability which limits or impairs the ability to walk, as defined under federal regulations, or is blind.

The bill requires health care professionals who certify placard applicants' eligibility to do so based on their professional opinion after completing a medically reasonable assessment of the applicant's medical history and current medical condition made in the course of a bona fide health care professional-patient relationship. It also prohibits health care professionals from making fees they charge to placard applicants contingent on certifying the applicant's eligibility and imposes a civil penalty of up to \$1,000 for violations.

Under the bill, a "health care professional" is a licensed physician, physician assistant, advanced practice registered nurse, psychiatrist employed by or under contract with the Department of Veterans Affairs, ophthalmologist, or optometrist. This definition corresponds to the health care professionals who are already authorized to certify eligibility for placards under existing law.

The bill also eliminates the requirement that the Transportation Committee House chairperson's appointment to the Accessible Parking Advisory Council be a municipal planner.

Lastly, the bill makes technical changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2024, except that the advisory council provision is effective upon passage.

PENALTY FOR CONTINGENT FEES

The bill prohibits health care professionals from charging a fee for services provided to a placard applicant that is contingent on the professional certifying the applicant as eligible for a placard. It also prohibits healthcare professionals from entering into a written or oral agreement or understanding with a person or entity using their services that makes or effectively makes the professional's commissions, fees, or charges contingent on certifying the applicant's eligibility.

Under the bill, violators face a civil penalty of up to \$1,000, and the attorney general, after receiving a complaint from the Department of Motor Vehicles commissioner, must institute a civil action to recover the penalty in the Superior Court for the Hartford judicial district.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Transportation Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 35 Nay 0 (03/20/2024)