

FINAL BILL REPORT

2SSB 6190

C 294 L 98

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Strengthening laws on disabled persons' parking permits.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Oke, Goings, Bauer, Haugen, Wood and Fraser).

Senate Committee on Law & Justice

Senate Committee on Transportation

House Committee on Transportation Policy & Budget

Background: The disabled parking placard was created to respond to the unique needs of individuals with disabilities that limit or impair their ability to walk. When the parking placard is displayed on a vehicle's rearview mirror, the vehicle is entitled to free, unlimited on-street parking and may be parked in spaces reserved for permit holders. Because the placard has no identification qualities which would link it to the legal permit holder, the fraudulent use of disabled parking placards may be quite widespread, particularly in urban areas where parking places are scarce and expensive.

Due to other law enforcement priorities, violations of the disabled parking statutes are not strictly enforced. Additionally, the penalty for fraudulent obtainment or misuse of a parking placard is only a misdemeanor which may lessen the incentive for those in the criminal justice system to actively pursue such violators.

It has been suggested that the disabled parking statutes need to be rewritten to provide greater permit identification, stricter issuance and renewal procedures, revised penalties, and more options for local government enforcement.

Summary: Each permit holder receives a parking placard and an identification card bearing the picture, name and date of birth of the permit holder, as well as the placard's serial number.

Permanent permit holders are required to submit a written request to receive an additional parking placard. Temporary permit holders are not eligible to receive additional placards. For permanent permits, a five-year maximum permit renewal cycle is required. The Department of Licensing is required to verify the status of permit holders by matching their disabled permit database with available death record information. Based on the results, the database will be purged of all permits belonging to deceased permit holders.

Unauthorized use of a parking placard, license plate or picture identification card is a traffic infraction with a monetary penalty of \$250. Obtaining a parking placard, license plate or identification card in a manner other than that established under law is a traffic infraction with a monetary penalty of \$250. Blocking the access aisle located adjacent to a space reserved for physically disabled persons is a parking infraction with a monetary penalty of

\$250. The fine for parking in a disabled parking place is increased to \$250. Second or subsequent violations of disabled parking laws carry the additional penalty of serving a minimum of 40 hours of community service. Failure of a property owner to sign and/or maintain parking spaces reserved for physically disabled persons is a class 2 civil infraction. Failure to ensure that the parking spaces are accessible is a class 2 civil infraction as well. Knowingly providing false information on a disabled parking permit application is a gross misdemeanor with a penalty of up to one year in jail and a fine of up to \$5,000 or both. The court may not suspend more than one half of the amount of most fines.

Local law enforcement agencies are authorized to appoint volunteers with a limited commission to issue notices of infractions for violations of disabled parking laws. Local jurisdictions are authorized to impose, by ordinance, time restrictions of no less than four hours on the use of on-street parking spots by vehicles displaying a parking placard. A minimum time limit standard for the use of on-street parking spaces reserved for physically disabled persons is set at four hours. It is required that all time restrictions be clearly posted.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	49	0	
House	97	0	(House amended)
Senate			(Senate refused to concur)

Conference Committee

House	96	0
Senate	48	0

Effective: June 11, 1998