

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## EHB 2003

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As of March 28, 2017

**Title:** An act relating to special parking privileges for certain organizations that dispatch taxicab vehicles or vehicles for hire that transport persons with disabilities.

**Brief Description:** Allowing special parking privileges for certain organizations that dispatch taxicab vehicles or vehicles for hire that transport persons with disabilities.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Kloba, Kagi, Ortiz-Self, Tarleton, McBride, Ormsby and Fey.

**Brief History:** Passed House: 3/07/17, 97-0.

**Committee Activity:** Transportation: 3/28/17.

### Brief Summary of Bill

- Adds companies that dispatch taxicab vehicles or vehicles for-hire to the list of organizations that may apply for special parking privileges.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

**Staff:** Kellee Keegan (786-7429)

**Background:** The Department of Licensing (DOL) must grant special parking privileges to a person with a disability who meets at least one condition of a specified list of criteria, as determined by a licensed physician, advanced nurse practitioner, or physician assistant. For individuals granted a special parking privilege, the DOL must provide either special license plates or parking placards containing the international symbol of access, and an identification card. Parking privileges for persons with disabilities must be renewed at least every five years. Parking placards and identification cards must be immediately returned to the DOL upon the placard holder's death.

Certain organizations that transport anyone who has a qualifying disability may also apply for special parking privileges including public transportation authorities, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, senior citizen centers, private nonprofit corporations, registered cabulance companies, and accessible van rental companies. Those organizations are responsible for ensuring that the parking placards and special license plates are not used improperly and are responsible for all fines and penalties for improper use.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Summary of Bill:** Companies that dispatch taxicab vehicles or vehicles for hire are added to the list of organizations that may apply for special parking privileges. The parking placards and special license plates for these companies are for vehicles equipped with wheelchair accessible lifts or ramps for the transport of persons with disabilities and that are regularly dispatched and used in the transport of such persons.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: Special parking placards or plates are available to people with disabilities. Wheelchair accessible taxi cabs, who serve this community, are currently unable to utilize special parking privileges. These are companies that serve the everyday communities. The people who use the wheelchair accessible taxicabs need the ability to get around to the doctor's office or pick up groceries. There are a limited number of wheelchair accessible taxis. There are only 53 in the state. Wheelchair accessible taxis are very well marked. Despite that, when these taxis go to pick up their customers, the person is inside the building. This requires the wheelchair accessible taxi driver to park and go in to find their rider. Wheelchair accessible drivers get tickets all the time while trying to pick up their riders as often they do not have very many options for parking. This is about helping people in need. As a driver, I do this daily. It is really tough driving a wheelchair accessible taxi and finding a place to park. Wheelchair accessible taxis are very different from other taxis. When I am trying to help my customer, I can't because there is not an accessible place to park. We only drive this for work, not for personal use. When a shift is over, the driver must go home. It is very difficult being in a wheelchair and when a driver has to drop you off in the middle of the parking lot because they cannot park closer to the building. This bill should be passed as it is very dangerous in the parking lot for people in wheelchairs. If wheelchair accessible taxis could park in the handicap spots, that would be great. I am a frequent customer of wheelchair accessible taxis (WATs). WATs should have their own designated parking placard or sticker. In addition to its having access to accessible parking spots making it more convenient for the customer, it is safer to have more room for unloading. The concerns around the potential for misuse are moot. These are not personal vehicles and the drivers are carefully regulated.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative Shelley Kloba, Prime Sponsor; Cindi Laws, Director, Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Assn of WA; Salah Mohamed, President, Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Assn of WA; Thomas Muething, citizen; Cristopher John, citizen.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.