

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1371

As Amended by the Senate

Title: An act relating to parking privileges for veterans.

Brief Description: Concerning parking privileges for veterans.

Sponsors: House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Orcutt, Klicker, Couture, Jacobsen, Leavitt, Ley, Simmons, Shavers and Dufault).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 1/23/25, 1/29/25 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/12/25, 96-0.

Senate Amended.

Passed Senate: 3/26/25, 49-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Establishes eligibility for parking privileges for people with disabilities for veterans who have received a qualifying discharge with a 70 percent disability rating or higher from the United States (US) Armed Forces or the US Department of Veterans Affairs and who use a service animal.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 25 members: Representatives Fey, Chair; Bernbaum, Vice Chair; Donaghy, Vice Chair; Reed, Vice Chair; Barkis, Ranking Minority Member; Low, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Mendoza, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Schmidt, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bronoske, Dent, Duerr, Griffey, Hunt, Klicker, Ley, Nance, Orcutt, Paul, Ramel, Richards, Stuebe, Taylor, Timmons, Volz and Wylie.

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

Staff: Jennifer Harris (786-7143).

Background:

Eligibility to apply for special parking privileges for individuals with disabilities are available to people who:

- cannot walk 200 feet without stopping or resting;
- are severely limited in ability to walk due to arthritic, neurological, or orthopedic condition;
- require the use of or assistance from a brace, cane, another person, prosthetic device, wheelchair, or other assistive device to walk;
- use portable oxygen;
- are restricted by lung disease to an extent that forced expiratory respiratory volume is affected in certain specified ways;
- are impaired by cardiovascular disease or cardiac condition resulting in certain specified functional limitations;
- have a disability resulting from an acute sensitivity to automobile emissions that limits or impairs the ability to walk, and the disability is comparable to other qualifying disabilities;
- have limited mobility and no vision, or whose vision with corrective lenses is so limited that the person requires alternative methods or skills to efficiently do things;
- have an eye condition of a progressive nature that may lead to blindness; or
- are restricted by a form of porphyria to the extent that the applicant would significantly benefit from a decrease in exposure to light.

The disability must be determined by a licensed physician, a licensed advanced registered nurse practitioner, or a licensed physician assistant. A health care practitioner with prescriptive authority must provide a signed written authorization on a tamper-resistant prescription pad or paper or by electronic means.

Parking privileges for individuals with disabilities must be renewed at least every five years.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Veterans who have received a qualifying discharge with a 70 percent disability rating or higher from the United States (US) Armed Forces or the US Department of Veterans Affairs and use a service animal, as service animal is defined in federal law, are eligible to apply for special parking privileges for individuals with disabilities. To obtain or renew special parking privileges, the applicant must provide proof that the above criteria have been met.

A service animal is defined in federal law as any dog that is individually trained to do work or to perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability.

EFFECT OF SENATE AMENDMENT(S):

In comparison to the substitute bill, the Senate amendment:

- expires eligibility on October 1, 2035, for qualifying for parking privileges for US veterans with a disability rating of 70 percent or higher who use a service animal;
- requires rules adopted by the Department of Licensing (DOL) to administer these parking privileges to include rules for documentation or materials required to determine eligibility for the parking privileges; and
- requires the DOL to report to the appropriate committees of the Legislature the number of veterans who receive these parking privileges by December 31, 2026, and by December 31, 2034.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on October 1, 2025.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill addresses serious safety issues. Drivers in parking lots are on the lookout for people, but are not always on the lookout for dogs. Service animals have been trained to focus on their handlers and may not be aware of the danger of vehicles. There have been some near misses as a result. The longer service dogs have to walk, the more potential conflicts with vehicles there are.

The goal of this bill is to help military veterans across the state have better access to grocery stores and doctor visits, and to protect veterans and their dogs. Military personnel who have disabilities as a result of protecting our freedom and return should receive this accommodation. Veterans are increasingly using service dogs—the number has more than doubled in the last 10 years. Laws and reasonable accommodations have not kept pace with this change. The stress of crowded areas can impair a dog's ability to serve its owner.

Parking spaces are only 96 inches wide, which makes it difficult when a veteran has a larger dog. In many cases, vehicle doors are unable to open wide enough and dogs can fall out, resulting in injury to them or damage to other vehicles. Dogs may also have arthritis and it may be difficult for them to maneuver into a vehicle with a door not fully open. Handicapped spaces are 120 inches, and can provide an additional 24 inches of space.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is the sixth most common Veterans Administration disability claim. Dogs reduce PTSD by up to 82 percent. For veterans to be mobile, they need to be able to take their dogs with them. This comes with the same challenges as those that apply to maneuvering any large medical device.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Ed Orcutt, prime sponsor; Dan Register, K9 Kavalry; Xiomara Enriquez, K9 Kalvary; Allen Acosta, Veterans Legislative Coalition; Tobey Bolinger; and Holly Mehlenbeck.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.