

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5410

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Transportation, February 6, 2025

Title: An act relating to parking privileges for veterans.

Brief Description: Concerning parking privileges for veterans.

Sponsors: Senators Braun, Boehnke, Chapman, Conway, Dozier, King, Lias, Lovick, Salomon, Warnick, Wellman and Wilson, J..

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/03/25, 2/06/25 [DPS].

Brief Summary of First Substitute Bill

- Authorizes veterans who have a 70 percent or higher disability rating from either the United States Armed Forces or United States Department of Veterans Affairs and who use a service animal as defined in federal law to apply for special parking privileges for persons with disabilities.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5410 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Lias, Chair; Lovick, Vice Chair; Ramos, Vice Chair; King, Ranking Member; Goehner, Assistant Ranking Member; Chapman, Christian, Cortes, Fortunato, Harris, Holy, Krishnadasan, Lovelett, MacEwen, Nobles, Shewmake, Valdez and Wilson, J..

Staff: Brandon Popovac (786-7465)

Background: A person with a disability who meets at least one of the following conditions, as determined and authorized by a licensed physician, advanced nurse

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practitioner, or physician assistant, may apply for special parking privileges to the Department of Licensing (DOL):

- cannot walk 200 feet without stopping to rest;
- is severely limited in ability to walk due to arthritic, neurological, or orthopedic condition;
- requires the use of or assistance from a brace, cane, another person, prosthetic device, wheelchair, or other assistive device to walk;
- uses portable oxygen;
- is restricted by lung disease to a certain extent;
- is impaired by cardiovascular disease or cardiac condition to a certain extent;
- has 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;
- has limited mobility and no vision, or whose vision with corrective lenses is extremely limited;
- has an eye condition of a progressive nature that may lead to blindness; or
- is restricted by a form of porphyria to the extent that the applicant would significantly benefit from a decrease in exposure to light.

Authorization from a health care professional must be provided to DOL on a tamper-resistant prescription pad or paper, on office letterhead, or by electronic means.

If a person is granted a special parking privilege, DOL must provide the person, at no cost, with special license plates or parking placards, or both, containing the international symbol of access and an identification card.

Special parking privileges for persons with disabilities must be renewed at least every five years, with signed written authorization from a health care practitioner provided in the renewal application.

Disability ratings for veterans are based on the severity of their service-connected disability or disabilities, which is expressed as a percentage reflecting how much the disability or disabilities decrease overall health and ability to function. The disability rating is determined in 10 percent increments and informs the disability compensation rate.

Summary of Bill (First Substitute): Veterans who have a 70 percent or higher disability rating from the United States Armed Forces or the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and who use a service animal, as defined in federal law, may apply for special parking privileges for persons with disabilities.

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 a person 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 person's disability.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (First Substitute):

- Clarifies that to be eligible to apply for special parking privileges a veteran must have at least a 70 percent disability rating from the U.S. Armed Forces of Department of Veteran Affairs.
- Adds an effective date of October 1, 2025.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: The bill was proposed last year and stakeholdering has occurred since to improve the bill, including clarifying the service animal component. Veteran Affairs reports service animal use has doubled recently. Veterans often encounter unique challenges and risks, including narrow parking spaces, vehicles parked too close for service animals to enter or exit vehicles, hot pavement, and parking lot debris. Service animals are lifelines for veterans and reduce PTSD by up to 82 percent. Veterans often leave service animals at home due to safety concerns. Use of physical aid devices is already an eligible use for parking privilege purposes. Extra parking space can mean the difference between safety and danger for the service animal. Eight percent of the state's population are veterans, with an estimated 100,000 or more with a service-related disability rating over 70 percent. Service animals help protect veterans from unforeseen circumstances and adverse weather.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator John Braun, Prime Sponsor; Dan Regester, K9 Kavalry (501c3); Tobey Bolinger; Allen Acosta, Veterans Legislative Coalition; Scott Bigger.

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