

Senate Transportation Committee

Vivian Hall 271-3091

SB 151-FN, relative to accessible parking permit verification and fraud prevention.

Hearing Date: February 4, 2025

Time Opened: 1:17 p.m.

Time Closed: 2:17 p.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Ricciardi, McConkey, Ward, Fenton and Prentiss

Bill Analysis: This bill requires that walking disability placards contain certain driver's license information, creates a penalty for a disabled driver who parks in a restricted parking space without displaying their placard, and increases fines for parking in restricted spaces without a placard.

Sponsors:

Sen. Abbas

Sen. Innis

Sen. Gannon

Sen. Avard

Sen. Lang

Sen. Rochefort

Rep. Panek

Rep. Tenczar

Who supports the bill: Senator Daryl Abbas; Grant Bosse, Deputy Chief of Staff, New Hampshire Senate; Luciana Petz; Lori Safford; Ben Safford; Sam Safford; Lydia Safford; Daniel Richardson; Patrick Moeschen, Kyra Aboujaoude; Nicholas Aboujaoude; Quaid Goerge; Cathy Spinney.

Who opposes the bill: Representative Janet Lucas; Krysten Evans, Director of Policy, Able New Hampshire; Vanessa Blais, Director, Policy and Planning, New Hampshire Council on Developmental Disabilities; Patricia Anastacia,

Who is neutral on the bill: Liz Michaud, Bureau Chief, Registration, New Hampshire Division of Vehicles.

Summary of testimony presented in support:

Grant Bosse:

- Grant Bosse introduced Senate Bill 151 to enforce handicap parking regulations.

- The bill would increase fines from \$250 to \$500, boosts local enforcement incentives up to 50%, and includes a reduced fine for failing to display a placard.
- A proposed amendment removes paragraph 4, which addresses driver information.

Senator Abbas:

- Senator Abbas stressed that violations of the law are unacceptable and advocated for higher fines, increased local municipality percentages, and better police enforcement.
- Senator Ricciardi suggested that individuals could purchase a plastic sleeve to cover placard identification, addressing privacy concerns and potentially reducing the fiscal impact. He responded that he was indifferent to that, noting that using a privacy sleeve would undermine the effectiveness of enforcement.

Luciana Petz:

- Ms. Petz moved her 13-year-old son, Logan, who has Muscular Dystrophy, to New Hampshire for treatment at Boston Children's Hospital..
- She voiced concern for the lack of enforcement of handicap laws, as people often park in handicapped spots without consequences despite fines for misuse.
- Senator Ricciardi concurred that the lack of enforcement is egregious.

Lisa Beaudoin, Strategies For Disability Equity:

- Ms. Beaudoin expressed that families with disabilities face limited access to handicapped parking due to fraudulent use of placards and lack of enforcement, despite existing fines.
- She supports amending RSA 265 to require a photo ID on placards, making it easier for officers to verify eligibility and discourage misuse.
- Ms. Beaudoin emphasized the need for stronger enforcement, higher fines, and accountability to protect the rights of people with disabilities and ensure access to essential services.
- Senator Prentiss asked if she had talked to the police chiefs about conveying the message of this issue to their officers. Ms. Beaudoin confirmed the Deputy Chief of Salem agreed that during their roll call, they would highlight this issue more. Senator Prentiss stated that she would be happy to make the connection since there is a morning check-in to convey the message to all police officers.
- Ms. Beaudoin stated there is confusion regarding the slash lines, which are designated for wheelchair for van unloading.. Seniors with placards accidentally park in these spaces occasionally. She recommended law enforcement should be informed during roll call.

- McConkey inquired whether placards are standardized for individuals in rehabilitation and other disabled individuals. Ms. Beaudoin clarified that five-year permanent placards expire and are replaced with new IDs to integrate smoothly into the existing system, allowing for a phased implementation. Senator McConkey suggested a QR code for a semi-permanent placard would be helpful.
- Senator Ricciardi noted that private entities may fund this idea but expressed concern about its feasibility, even if there is unanimous support.

Laurie Safford

- Ms. Safford shared her frustration over limited accessible parking, broken lifts, and blocked spaces by regular vehicles and delivery drivers.
- Despite ongoing complaints to law enforcement, the issue persists.

Ben Safford:

Mr. Safford has Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy and struggles with parking due to limited accessible spots, often needing to park far away to avoid being blocked in, which worsens his respiratory issues in the cold.

Sam Safford:

- Mr. Safford read Cathy Spinney's written testimony in support of the bill.

Summary of testimony presented in opposition:

Krysten Evans, Director of Policy, Able New Hampshire

- Director Evans voiced concern over the compromise of privacy, especially for individuals with invisible disabilities.
- She urged exploration of alternative enforcement methods that respect the privacy of people with disabilities, indicating support if amendments are made.

Vanessa Blais, Director, of Policy and Planning, New Hampshire Council on Developmental Disabilities

- Director Blais stressed that disabled individuals should not have to give up their right to privacy.
- She suggested an amendment to address privacy concerns to support this bill.

Neutral Information Presented:

Liz Michaud, Bureau Chief, Registration, New Hampshire Division of Vehicles

- Ms. Michaud emphasized that Law Enforcement can look up who a placard is assigned to in all municipalities because their systems are linked.

- Senator McConkey inquired about the difference between Division of Motor Vehicle-issued permanent placards and those issued by doctors. She clarified that Division of Motor Vehicle placards are permanent and require a doctor's support, while temporary placards are valid for six months and are red.
- Senator McConkey asked if they could send a copy of what the placards look like, and she indicated they can.

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Date Hearing Report completed: February 10, 2025