

Accessible Parking Signs (HB 265) - 2014

Designated parking spaces for people with disabilities and other mobility impairments were created as part of the original Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which was signed into law in 1990.

The US Census Bureau estimates there are 1.5 million Ohioans with a disability. This represents 13.6 percent of the state's population. Recent news reports also indicate that in 2013, there were 1.31 temporary hang tags issued to Ohio drivers for access to designated parking spaces for people with mobility impairments.

Currently, designated parking spaces for people with disabilities are marked "Handicapped Parking".

People with disabilities believe the use of the term "handicap" is derogatory and insulting.

Ohio has already taken steps to remove derogatory language from state law. In 2009, the legislature passed Senate Bill 79, which changed the name of the state department that serves individuals with developmental disabilities, and in 2013, with the passage of the state budget, the General Assembly changed statute references about "disabled" to "people with disabilities".

House Bill 265 was recently introduced on behalf of people with disabilities who believe the old, outdated reference to "handicapped" should be changed to more respectful language.

The bill proposes to change the use of "handicapped" in several sections of the Ohio Revised Code to the term "accessible" when talking about designated parking spaces created by the ADA. The bill also changes references to "handicapped" electors to electors who are people with a disability that limits or impairs their ability to walk.

House Bill 265 would only require signs that are erected after the effective date of the law to designate a special parking location as "Accessible" rather than as "Handicapped". Signage that is already in place will not have to be changed. However, should a sign be replaced, it would need to include the new terminology.

Several political subdivisions of the state have already taken steps in their areas to require the use of the term "accessible" or to delete the term "handicapped" entirely and to rely solely on the universal sign for access.

House Bill 265 has had two hearings in the House Health & Aging Committee.

The bill is supported by individuals with disabilities and by a majority of superintendents of county boards of developmental disabilities.

Person First Talking Points:

There is a bill in the House of Representatives (House Bill 265) that would get rid of the word “Handicapped” on parking signs and change it to “Accessible”. This bill would not change signs that are already in place today, but would fix any new sign that goes up.

Listed below are examples of what you can say to your legislator about this issue:

Hi, my name is _____.

I live in _____.

People with disabilities do not like to be labeled “Handicapped”.

This and many other words that are used about people with disabilities are old and not very nice.

Changing the words helps everyone see us as people first instead of our disability first.

House Bill 265 would help fix this problem by changing the word to “Accessible” on parking signs.

The bill will not cost any money because it is only for new or replaced signs.

