

Chairman Green, Vice Chair McClain, Ranking Member Sheehy, and members of the House Transportation Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to offer proponent testimony on House Bill 787.

My name is Anne Harmody and I am resident of Solon, OH. My daughter is 18 and was born with a congenital birth defect called spina bifida. While her mobility has fluctuated over the years (forearm crutches or wheelchair) she has always required a handicapped parking placard for short distance walking or ambulation. Troubles with ADA accessibility can run the gambit from Northeast Ohio to Columbus but one thing remains true in most areas, handicapped accessible parking violations are rampant all over the state. From my local Giant Eagle grocery store to the convention center in Columbus, I see people violate handicapped parking all the time. Mostly, it is people who have placards who CLEARLY do not have a disability, and what are you going to do? Question them on their disability where they come up with some asinine answer or worse, come back at you with some disrespectful language about some fake disability they have? I hold the doctors partially responsible for writing prescriptions for placards that are simply not necessary or worse, family members using them for their own benefit when the handicapped person is not in the car. There have been many times when I have driven around a parking lot, looking for an appropriate parking spot for my daughter, only to have an able bodied person walk out of the grocery store and into their car and drive away. This infuriates me to no end! Societally, we have lost sight of who handicapped parking is for and worse, we have made it impossible for police to truly track it and write tickets for violation. People think it is the same as using a handicapped toilet stall...if no handicapped person is around, it alright to use it. However, when a handicapped person walks into the restroom and really needs to use that stall, it is unavailable. People have lost sight of who the benefactors are believe it is equal for all people. Fairness doesn't equate equality and handicapped people across the state of Ohio deserve better. I respectfully ask for your support of this legislation. Thank you all for your time and I am happy to answer any questions at this time.

Sincerely,

Anne M Harmody

Solon, OH