

Chairman Baldrige, Vice Chair McClain, Ranking Member Sheehy, and members of the House Transportation Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to offer proponent testimony on House Bill 31.

After finishing my freshman year of college, I was on vacation and dove into a sandbar in the ocean. At 19, my life was completely turned upside down when the doctors told me I had broken my neck at the C-5 level. With the diagnosis of a person with quadriplegia and being told I would need 24/7 assistance, I had a bleak view of what my future would hold. With this injury came the necessity of relying on others for many things I once did independently in my life. As I was able to adapt to life as a quadriplegic by doing more and more for myself, the most significant accomplishment was getting back behind the wheel of a van. Along with this came many challenges, many of which I have been able to solve myself. However, returning to my vehicle ready to leave wherever I am only to find an abuse of handicapped parking prevents me from getting into my ramp van stopped me dead in my tracks, and negates much of my newfound independence. Parking violations have happened to me upwards of 15 times per year. Many times, this is simply someone parking too close to my vehicle within the access aisle, whether they have a placard or not. This has caused me to miss appointments and creates other disruptions to my schedule. It is frustrating to find that there is no recourse for this infringement of my civil rights, which gives violators no motivation to correct their behavior in the future. I genuinely believe if these changes were made to the Ohio revised code, the individuals such as myself would have increased their quality of life from not having to fear being stranded anytime we park our vehicles. 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.