

Chairman Peterson, Vice Chair Thomas, Ranking Member Humphrey, and members of the House Government Oversight Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide Proponent Testimony on House Bill 391.

I am a long time Ohioan, born with a disability called Spina Bifida which requires the use of a wheelchair, and an independent driver since 2016. Too many times I have witnessed misuse of what is known as handicap parking. From the spots used as "protection" for sport/luxury cars, to postal/delivery trucks blocking curb cuts for access to public buildings. Even motorcycles parked in the access aisles between handicap spots. And the list goes on.

There were two intended purposes for these spots and modifications when the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 was passed. First, to help improve the quality of life for individuals with physical impairments, by gaining the ability to function as part of society and access goods/services. Second and most importantly, their location and layout were strategically meant to enhance our overall safety. For example, my height sitting in my chair is 4.3 feet which is roughly as tall as the average able-bodied 9-year-old. The point being... in the average car alone (excluding SUV's & trucks) you might be lucky to see my head when looking at the rearview mirror, which means the more cars I would have to pass behind, the greater the risk. And the access aisle layout was strategically designed for unloading and loading of wheelchairs... not to be obstructed by motorcycles, construction dumpsters, or even snow during the winter. But as you can see by the photos collected, over 30 years have passed and not only does it remain a major issue in Ohio, but across the entire country as well.

Passing House Bill 391 will ensure the 2 purposes I had mentioned are truly used as intended for so many people like myself. I consider access to parking an important part of my civil rights. I respectfully ask for your support of this legislation. Thank you all for your time.