



Delaware County Board of Developmental Disabilities

To inspire, empower, and support people to achieve their full potential.

Proponent Testimony on House Bill 391

Kristine Hodge, Superintendent

Delaware County Board of Developmental Disabilities

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Chairman Peterson, Vice Chair Thomas, Ranking Member Humphrey, and members of the House Government Oversight Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of House Bill 391. My name is Kristine Hodge, and I am the Superintendent of the Delaware County Board of Developmental Disabilities, which supports over 2300 people with developmental disabilities.

As someone who cares deeply about inclusion in our communities, I believe that this legislation is critical in ensuring that individuals with disabilities have barrier-free access to businesses, libraries, parks, community organizations, and other places of public accommodation – access that many of us take for granted.

To illustrate the problems obstructing accessible parking lots can cause, consider the following examples:

- When vehicles block accessible parking spaces, individuals who rely on wheelchairs or mobility devices may be unable to exit their vehicles or access the facility or service they need
- Parking in access aisles, even with valid plates or placards, can make it impossible for wheelchair users to safely utilize ramps or lifts and exit their vehicles
- Obstructing curb cuts and accessible routes of travel can force wheelchair users and other individuals with mobility impairments to navigate unsafe terrain, increasing the risk of injury or falls

Although many gains have been made in the accessibility of our communities, ensuring the availability of accessible parking remains an ongoing challenge. The proposed modifications to ORC 4511.69 will address these problems by making it illegal to obstruct accessible parking spots, parking in the access aisle regardless of valid plates or placards, and by allowing citations to be left with unoccupied vehicles.

I urge you to support these modifications to ORC 4511.69 to help improve accessibility and enforcement of accessible parking spaces throughout Ohio. Thank you for your consideration.