

Good afternoon, I am writing to you today in support of the changes Lisa Followway is asking for in regards to handicap accessible parking.

My son is wheelchair dependent and will be for life, due to his Cerebral Palsy. We do our best to keep him active in the community. One of his favorite things to do is shopping. More often than not, when we go to almost any store, we run into some sort of parking issue.

We drive a side entry wheelchair van. The minimum space needed on the passenger side of our van is eight feet for ingress and egress. This eight feet accommodates our son in his wheelchair and the fully deployed ramp. Many times, when we look for accessible parking spaces with this eight feet of extra striped space they are filled with cars and many times the people using them are not utilizing any type of mode of transportation besides their feet. Other times, we arrive back to our van to find the vehicle next to us has parked in the extra striped space provided. In this case, as often times when I take my son by myself, I have to find a safe place to "park" him while he waits for me to move our van so he can have the proper space to enter. This can happen even if we utilize a no parking zone that may be next to the handicap parking space many see any space as an opportunity to park their car or motorcycle.

There are spaces with maybe 4 feet of extra space, these are sometimes the only option and they just won't work.

Once, we watched as a young man who had parked in a handicapped parking space, throw multiple forty-pound bags of rock salt into his car. I called the Medina county Sheriffs office and spoke to one of the officers about it. He stated that there was nothing he could do. The only way to give the person a citation was for the store owner/manager to call and make a complaint. I know that because a business is private property that there is no way a store manager is going to call the sherriff or police on ANY customer that violates something as simple as a handicap parking space. When word of this would get out, no doubt they would be chastised and possibly lose business. Giving the sherriff or police departments the power to enforce the violations would go a long way to stop the abuse of people parking without handicap parking placards. This one account is not the only one I have witnessed. Having a dedicated group to help the sherriff and police departments would help to enforce the handicap parking rules would help to put more teeth into the laws that essentially are not enforced by store owners.

I'm sure you have had this issue parking in the general population area, getting parked in, it sure isn't fun but probably doesn't happen as often as what we experience. It makes an outing stressful to have to worry about if, when we return to our van will there be space to enter our van or will I have to find a place to park him and move the van There are times when this area is full of a motorcycle as well.

Other times, people will use the extra space striped area to park their car so that their passenger can get out into the actual parking space instead of backing into the space so that the passenger opens their door into the extra space. This would allow the extra space striped to be used on either side of the striped area.

Getting a rear entry van is not really an answer either. I have a friend who has a rear entry van and while this style elevates the need for special parking, which is if available often full of cars not parked for rear entry and not noticing the way the parking stripes are painted; there is still a need for extra space for ingress and egress. That extra space is in the driving lane of a parking lot. Many times there are people

who are so full of themselves that they can't be bothered with a handicap child entering or exiting the van and zooms dangerously past them. I have been witness to this happening.

There is just not enough handicap spaces available that have extra space. The formula to set this amount needs to be adjusted and the laws for handicap parking need to be enforced. Too often, others only think of themselves and not that their actions though maybe unintended, has consequences for those around them. We always use the handicap spaces as intended, so that others can as well. We don't ever want to make someone feel like we often times do.

Thank you for your time in regards to the many matters involved with handicap parking.

Sincerely,

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