



**House
Legislative
Analysis
Section**

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HANDICAPPED PARKING SIGNS

Senate Bill 547 (Substitute H-2)
First Analysis (11-18-92)

Sponsor: Sen. Mat J. Dunaskiss
Senate Committee: Transportation &
Tourism
House Committee: Transportation

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

Public Act 62 of 1956 allows municipalities to adopt the Michigan Uniform Traffic Code to provide for the regulation of vehicles within a municipality's borders. Under the uniform traffic code, the design of signs is regulated by reference to specifications found in the Michigan Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MMUTCD). The MMUTCD standards are based on national standards set by the Federal Highway Administration. For handicapped parking signs, the MMUTCD requires that the signs be a minimum of 12 inches by 18 inches, and have a white background, green lettering and a blue square containing a white wheelchair symbol in the middle.

It has been pointed out that not all signs are made to these specifications. Those that aren't usually use the international handicapped symbol: an all blue background with a white wheelchair in the center. While international signs are most often used to denote handicapper access to bathrooms, buildings, and the like, they also are used sometimes on street signs or the sides of buildings to denote handicapper parking. (It has been estimated that over 95 percent of all handicapper signs display either the international version or the version required under the traffic code.) Some people argue that, because the international handicapped symbol does not meet the requirements of the uniform traffic code, a person who was ticketed for illegally parking in a handicapper parking space where such a sign was used technically would not be in violation of the code. Legislation has been proposed that would permit either type of handicapper parking sign to be used.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

The bill would amend Public Act 62 of 1956 to provide that, notwithstanding the requirements of the uniform traffic code, a handicapped parking sign

would have to be 12 inches by 18 inches or larger, and would have to at least contain blue with the international handicapped symbol in white in the center of the sign.

The act currently requires that provisions of the uniform traffic code related to driving while under the influence of alcohol or driving while impaired must be "identical" to certain provisions of the Michigan Vehicle Code. The bill would modify this language to say that provisions within the code that relate to the enforcement provisions of operating a vehicle under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance would have to "substantially correspond" to the enforcement provisions of the vehicle code.

MCL 257.951

HOUSE COMMITTEE ACTION:

The House Transportation Committee adopted Substitute H-2 for the bill that includes technical amendments to the Senate-passed version of the bill.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

The Department of State Police says the bill would not affect state or local budget expenditures. (11-13-92)

ARGUMENTS:

For:

The bill would eliminate any confusion that exists over what a sign must contain in order to designate a handicapped parking space. Currently, though the uniform traffic code specifies that a handicapped parking sign must be white, with green lettering, and have a blue square that contains a white

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wheelchair, many signs used to designate a space contain the international symbol (blue background with a white wheelchair in the middle). Though most people know what either of these signs means, a person who parked in a space marked by the international symbol technically would not be in violation of the law, as specified in the uniform traffic code. By allowing either sign to be used to designate a handicapper parking space, the bill would promote the enforcement of handicapped parking laws and help to ensure that handicapped parking spaces are available for those who need them.

POSITIONS:

The Department of State Police supports the bill.
(11-13-92)