



**House  
Legislative  
Analysis  
Section**

Olds Plaza Building, 10th Floor  
Lansing, Michigan 48909  
Phone: 517/373-6466

**HANDICAPPER VEHICLE REG'N.**

**Senate Bill 860 with House committee  
amendments  
First Analysis (3-8-94)**

**Sponsor: Sen. Doug Carl  
Senate Committee: Transportation &  
Tourism  
House Committee: Transportation**

***THE APPARENT PROBLEM:***

Currently, the Michigan Vehicle Code allows a 50 percent discount on the cost of registering a van for which handicapper registration plates are issued, provided the van is owned and operated by a person who uses a wheelchair. This apparently has led to situations in which a person in a wheelchair who purchases a van but must have someone else drive it is not eligible for the half-price registration fee. And others have pointed out that the act fails to accommodate persons who own a van specifically for transporting a person who lives with them who uses a wheelchair. Amendments have been requested that would enable these persons to qualify for the 50 percent discount, too.

***THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:***

The bill would amend the Michigan Vehicle Code to provide that a van owned by someone who used a wheelchair or by someone who transported a resident of his or her household who used a wheelchair, and for which handicapper registration plates had been issued, would have to be assessed 50 percent of the act's registration fee.

The bill also would include language relating to the registration fee that applies to vehicles used for harvesting wood and other forest materials. (This language is intended to ensure that the bill would not annul the provisions of House Bill 4557, which proposes to amend the same section of the act, assuming both bills were enacted and Senate Bill 860 were enacted last. House Bill 4557 is currently pending before the Senate Transportation and Tourism Committee.)

MCL 257.801

***HOUSE COMMITTEE ACTION:***

The House Transportation Committee adopted two amendments to the bill that would enable a person who owned a van for transporting a wheelchair user who lived with him or her to qualify for the 50 percent discount on the handicapper registration fee. The committee also adopted amendments that relate to the registration fee that applies to vehicles used for harvesting wood and other forest materials.

***FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:***

The Department of State says the bill would result in a minimal revenue loss to the Michigan Transportation Fund. According to departmental records, 631 vans were registered to handicappers in fiscal year 1991-92. The extent of the revenue loss would depend on the number of vans that are owned, but not operated, both by individuals who use wheelchairs and by those who transport a wheelchair-user who resides in their household and who do not currently receive the 50 percent discount on registrations. (3-3-94)

***ARGUMENTS:***

***For:***

The installation of a lift in a van, and the necessary interior remodeling to accommodate a wheelchair, is an expensive undertaking. Reportedly, the provision that allows a handicapper who uses a wheelchair to obtain an annual vehicle registration at 50 percent off the full cost was designed to give persons who purchase such a van some relief. It seems unfair to require that a handicapper who owns such a customized van must also operate it in order to obtain the discounted registration fee. Current law also fails to accommodate someone who owns a special van specifically for transporting a household member who uses a wheelchair and cannot drive him- or herself. The bill would extend

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to a handicapper who both needs a van and someone to drive it, as well as to someone who owns a van specifically to transport a wheelchair-bound member of his or household, the same privilege as a handicapper who not only owns his or her own van but can operate it, too.

***POSITIONS:***

The Michigan Protection and Advocacy Service supports the bill. (3-4-94)

The Department of State has no position on the bill. (3-3-94)