

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2015 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 124

(Senator Gladden)

Judicial Proceedings

Environment and Transportation

**Vehicle Laws - Special Registration Plates and Parking Placards for Individuals
With Disabilities - Licensed Physical Therapists**

This bill authorizes a licensed physical therapist to certify that an individual has specified medical conditions that allow the individual to apply to the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) for the assignment of a special disability registration number and plates, or a temporary or permanent disability parking placard. The bill requires the State Board of Physical Therapists to maintain a database that MVA can use to verify licensure of a physical therapist. The bill defines “licensed physical therapist” and specifies the six conditions that a physical therapist may certify for purposes of obtaining a disability registration number and plate, which correspond with the conditions that a licensed chiropractor or podiatrist may also certify under current law. However, for purposes of applying for a temporary or permanent parking placard, the bill authorizes a licensed physical therapist to certify any of the medical conditions listed in statute.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) expenditures increase minimally for MVA to contract with an outside vendor for computer reprogramming. The State Board of Physical Therapists can implement the bill with existing resources.

Local Effect: Local government revenues may decrease minimally to the extent that additional disability parking privileges are granted under the bill, which results in a loss in parking revenues.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: MVA may provide a special disability registration number and plates, or a temporary or permanent parking placard, to the owner of a vehicle who submits satisfactory proof of specified medical conditions. A certified nurse practitioner or a licensed physician, chiropractor, optometrist, or podiatrist must certify that the vehicle owner has a cardiovascular, lung, ambulatory, visual, or other specified disability in accordance with the Maryland Vehicle Law. The relevant board that licenses physicians, physician assistants, chiropractors, optometrists, or podiatrists must maintain a database that allows MVA to verify licensure.

The holder of special disability registration plates is afforded specified parking privileges, including the authorization to generally park for unlimited periods in parking zones restricted as to the length of parking time permitted.

State Expenditures: TTF expenditures may increase by up to \$1,500 for MVA to contract with a vendor for reprogramming of its Disability Placard System. The Department of Legislative Services advises that, if other legislation is passed requiring computer reprogramming changes, economies of scale could be realized and reduce the costs associated with this bill and the other legislation affecting MVA.

Additional Comments: The Department of Legislative Services advises that the bill authorizes a licensed physical therapist to certify the same medical conditions as a licensed physician, physician's assistant, nurse practitioner, podiatrist, optometrist, and chiropractor for purposes of an application for a temporary or permanent parking placard, whereas for purposes of an application for a special disability registration number or plates, only physicians, physicians' assistants, and nurse practitioners are authorized to certify *all* medical conditions listed in statute. Similarly, it is unclear whether the General Assembly intended to authorize podiatrists, optometrists, and chiropractors to certify all medical conditions listed in statute for purposes of applications for temporary or permanent parking placards. The General Assembly may wish to consider amending statute to clarify which medical conditions each licensed medical professional is authorized to certify, as it pertains to temporary and permanent parking placards.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: Although not designated as a cross file, HB 201 (Delegate Robinson – Environment and Transportation) is identical.

Information Source(s): Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Maryland
Department of Transportation, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 2, 2015
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Analysis by: Evan M. Isaacson

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510