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Legislative District 47
Prince George's County

PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

Executive Nominations Committee

Education, Energy and the
Environment Committee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 5, 2024

Senate Bill 907 - Motor Vehicles - Disability Parking Placards - Photo Identification

Dear Colleagues,

I am pleased to present **Senate Bill 907 - Motor Vehicles - Disability Parking Placards - Photo Identification**, which proposes important enhancements to our state's motor vehicle administration practices concerning parking placards. I believe firmly in the necessity of efficient and equitable transportation systems that cater to the needs of all citizens, including those with disabilities.

Senate Bill 907 aims to address a *crucial* aspect of parking placard issuance and enforcement by mandating the inclusion of an embedded color photograph on these placards. This provision ensures greater accountability and security in the use of parking placards, ultimately benefiting both individuals with disabilities and the community at large. The requirement for a color photograph embedded on parking placards serves multiple purposes. Firstly, it facilitates easier identification of the placard holder, enhancing the efficiency of law enforcement officers and authorized personnel in verifying the legitimacy of parking privileges. This can help deter misuse and abuse of parking placards, a practice that unfortunately occurs all too frequently.

Secondly, the inclusion of a privacy sleeve that allows individuals to freely display or conceal the photograph adds an extra layer of privacy protection. It respects the dignity and privacy of placard holders, addressing concerns regarding the potential misuse of personal information associated with the placard. It's worth noting that similar legislation has been successfully enacted in other states, including *Massachusetts*, *New Mexico*, and *South Carolina*, underlining the effectiveness and feasibility of such measures. By aligning our state's practices with these precedents, we demonstrate our commitment to adopting best practices and ensuring consistency in enforcement across jurisdictions.

In South Carolina, legislation (S.C. Stat. § 56-3-1960) mandates that disabled parking placards adhere to Americans with Disabilities Act specifications, include the International Symbol of Access, and be color-coded for user status. Blue and red placards in the state require the user's photograph, sourced from their driver's license, with exemptions for agencies. The issue of stolen placards is addressed by Illinois, where a tiered pricing and time limit system based on disability severity replaced the previous free parking system. Baltimore introduced a similar approach, modifying meters for disabled use and allocating dedicated spaces, subjecting users to the regular meter fee. Connecticut law outlines eligibility criteria and placard renewal procedures, emphasizing exclusivity for the disabled person's use.

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Massachusetts and New Mexico respond to privacy concerns by concealing photographs on placards through optional security sleeves or flaps. In New Mexico, the photograph is placed on the inside of the placard, covered by a flap (N.M.S.A. § 66-3-16 (E) (4)).

I have been actively collaborating with the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) to coordinate efforts related to this legislation. Throughout this process, I have consistently worked to ensure alignment with the department's recommendations and have proactively incorporated their suggestions into the legislative framework, fostering a cohesive partnership with the Department of Motor Vehicles for the benefit of all stakeholders involved.

Senate Bill 907 empowers the Motor Vehicle Administration to establish procedures for capturing and embedding the color photograph on parking placards. This provision enables the MVA to tailor the implementation process to our state's specific needs and capabilities, ensuring a smooth transition and effective execution of the new requirements. This piece of legislation represents a vital step towards enhancing the integrity and effectiveness of our state's parking placard system. By incorporating an embedded color photograph and providing necessary safeguards for privacy, we can foster greater accountability, deter misuse, and ensure equitable access to parking facilities for individuals with disabilities.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. I urge the committee to give a **favorable** report for **Senate Bill 907 - Motor Vehicles - Disability Parking Placards - Photo Identification**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Malcolm Augustine".

Senator Malcolm Augustine