

House Republican Press Release

May 31, 2007
Press Office: 860-240-8700

Rep Burns: Bill Strengthening Handicapped Parking Law Signed into Law



New Law Cosponsored by Rep. Burns Increases Fines for First Offenses to \$150

A measure that will significantly increase fines for people who violate Connecticut's handicapped parking law has been signed into law by Governor M. Jodi Rell, state Representative Ron Burns, who cosponsored the legislation, said today.

"On any given day, you can drive through a parking lot and observe vehicles without handicapped parking permits using spaces reserved for the disabled," said Representative Burns, R-77th District. "While it may save a minute or two for people who knowingly violate the law, it creates real hardships for people who use walkers or wheelchairs and can't find a handicapped space because cars without permits are parked in them. For the disabled, having to walk or wheel themselves for even a few hundred yards can push them to the limits of their endurance."

"When people who depend on wheelchairs to get around can't find a handicapped space because someone else is parked there illegally, it means they have to extricate themselves from their vehicles and get into wheelchairs in parking spaces that are too narrow to accommodate them. I'm delighted that Governor Rell has signed this bill into law. The stiffer fines the new law imposes will make it a far more effective deterrent for anyone tempted to willfully violate Connecticut's handicapped parking laws," Representative Burns said.

Currently, violations of the handicapped parking law are infractions with a fine of not less than \$85. The new law eliminates the designation as an infraction and increases the fine to \$150 for a first violation and \$250 for a subsequent violation.

The new law (Public Act 07-52), takes effect October 1, 2007.

Violations of the handicapped parking law that are subject to the higher fines include:

- Parking in a space designated for a handicapped person.
- The unauthorized display of a special license plate or placard issued to a disabled person.
- Failure to return a temporary handicapped parking plate or placard to the state Department of Motor Vehicles when the permit expires.
- Failure to provide designated spaces for handicapped persons as required by state law.

State law requires that fines assessed for violations of the handicapped parking law be remitted by the state to the municipalities in which the violations took place.