

House Republican Press Release

May 1, 2007
Press Office: 860-240-8700

House Passes Handicapped Parking Space Abuse Bill



HARTFORD –House Republican Whip Pamela Z. Sawyer (R-Bolton) today voted in favor of a measure that increases the penalty for violations of state law concerning the use of parking spaces that are designated for handicapped people. Sawyer spoke on the floor of the House this afternoon in favor of the measure.

“Having had the necessity of having to briefly use a temporary handicapped parking permit opened my eyes to the abuse of this law,” said Sawyer, referring to a recent injury that caused her to need such a permit for a brief time. “When I would go to the grocery store, needing easy access from the parking lot, I would see people pull into clearly marked handicapped spots to run into the store briefly. This experience made me keenly aware of how those who need these permits permanently must struggle with the constant abuse that takes place.”

Sawyer introduced similar legislation this session, which was combined with other bills into this bill in the legislature’s Judiciary Committee.

The violations of handicapped parking laws that the bill increases fines for include parking in a handicapped space, unauthorized display of special license plates or placards issued to a disabled person, failure to return a plate or placard when required to do so by the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, and failure to provide designated spaces for handicapped persons that the law requires.

Under current state law, a violation is an infraction and results in a fine of not less than \$85. The bill passed today ceases to designate violation as an infraction, and increases the fine to \$150 for a first violation and \$250 for a subsequent violation. These fines are to be paid to the Centralized Infractions Bureau. A court appearance is not necessary if the violator chooses to mail in the fine.

“I wish we didn’t have to fine people, but this may be what it takes to make them more sensitive,” said Sawyer.

The bill will now head to the Senate for action there. This session of the Connecticut General Assembly will conclude at midnight, June 6th, 2007.