



Jesse White

SECRETARY OF STATE

NEWS

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White's Disability Placard Initiatives Approved By Governor

SPRINGFIELD — Secretary of State Jesse White's legislation to reduce the fraudulent use of disability placards and license plates has been signed into law by Governor George Ryan.

"I commend the governor for approving this valuable piece of legislation, which helps to ensure that the placards and plates are being used by those who are truly in need of them," said White.

The new legislative changes include:

- Changing the current definition on the application from "Cannot walk 200 feet without stopping to rest" one of five specific medical reasons
- Issuing only one permanent placard and/or one set of disability license plates
- Allowing law enforcement to seize any placard if abuse occurs, then allowing the Secretary of State to revoke the placard
- Issuing disability license plates to qualified applicants only if their name appears on the vehicle title or to a parent or legal guardian of a person with a disability
- Making it illegal to park in the access aisle of a reserved parking space or for two vehicles to share one accessible parking space

- Requiring a \$10 replacement fee for placards that are lost or stolen, with the exception of those who meet financial eligibility criteria set forth in the Circuit Breaker program

White has also initiated new administrative changes that include:

1. Creation of three new disability placards
 - Permanent placards will have new punch card expiration with a hologram, making them more difficult to tamper with. The placard holder's gender, birth month and birth year will also appear punched on the placard.
 - Temporary placards will also have a new punch card system for expiration with a hologram. They will also be coded by gender.
 - Organization placards, a new category, will also be included on a new punch card hologram system.
2. Formation of a new Disabilities License Plate/Placard Unit, which is handling and processing all permanent placard and plate requests. The unit is up and running in Springfield.
3. Initiation of a public awareness campaign to focus raising awareness of the parking program for people with disabilities. This campaign would center on the general public, medical community and law enforcement agencies.
4. Implementation of a personnel policy, the first of its kind, within the Secretary of State's office, that can result in disciplinary action including termination for any employee who violates the parking program for persons with disabilities during working hours.

"Those who abuse the system are violating the rights of people who genuinely need this vital program," White said. "It is imperative that we regard the rights of others and treat them with the respect they deserve."

Currently, there are 84,458 disability license plates, 507,851 permanent disability placards and 16,858 temporary disability placards (issued by the Secretary of State) in Illinois. There are 5,000 organizations that have been issued disability placards.

Rep. James D. Brosnahan (D-Evergreen Park) sponsored the

legislation.