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SECRETARY OF STATE

NEWS

ILLINOIS SECRETARY OF STATE

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**General Assembly Approves White's Initiative To Reduce
The Fraudulent Use of Disability Placards & License Plates**

SPRINGFIELD —The Illinois House of Representatives sent Secretary of State Jesse White's legislative initiative to reduce the fraudulent use of disability placards and license plates to Governor Ryan this week.

"This plan will reduce the fraudulent use of disability parking placards and disability license plates in order to make parking accessible for those who truly need it," said White. "I'm pleased to have received such strong support from the General Assembly on this issue."

White's legislation, House Bill 846, would:

- Refine the current definition on the application from "Cannot walk 200 feet without stopping to rest" to one of five specific medical conditions
- Allow law enforcement to seize any placard and the Secretary of State to revoke the placard if abuse occurs
- Issue 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
- Make it illegal to park in the striped access aisle of a reserved parking space or for two vehicles to share one accessible parking space

In addition to the legislation, White has also proposed administrative changes to the program including:

- Redesigning disability placards:
 - Permanent placards will have a new punch card expiration with a hologram, making them more difficult to tamper with. The placard would also indicate by code the holder's gender, birth month and birth year to help law enforcement officials determine abuse.
 - 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.
- Formatting a new Disabilities License Plate/Placard Unit, which will handle and process all permanent placard and plate requests.
- Initiating a public awareness campaign to educate the general public, medical community and law enforcement agencies about disability parking issues and guidelines.
- Implementing a personnel policy 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.

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) and Sen. Kathleen Parker (R-Northbrook) sponsored the legislation.

The bill now awaits final approval from the Governor.