



Jesse White

SECRETARY OF STATE

NEWS

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Jesse White Announces Sting Targeting Holiday Shoppers Who Abuse Disability Parking Laws

Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White announced holiday shoppers will not be getting a bargain if they illegally park in a disability parking space at their local malls on the busiest shopping day of the year. White directed Secretary of State police to crack down on people abusing the disability parking program at Woodfield and Orland Park Malls on Friday, November 25th. He warned similar efforts would take place statewide throughout the season.

“The holiday season is a time of giving and sharing, not a time of taking,” White said. “Let’s try to make sure we are treating others with care and respect and reserve the parking spaces for those truly in need.”

Those caught abusing the program will face a \$100 minimum fine and a possible driver’s license suspension. Anyone in possession of a fraudulent placard will face felony charges.

Secretary White has also designated a phone number within the office where people can call to report abuse of parking spaces. The number is 217-785-0309. Callers should be prepared to report placard and license plate numbers as well as locations of vehicles. The effort will continue through the holiday season.

Recent sting operations conducted by the Secretary of State’s Police Department and other police agencies indicate that many people still consider it worth the risk to abuse the laws reserving parking spaces for persons with disabilities or use a placard or disability plate without the authorized holder present.

White also announced the results of a month-long effort by Secretary of State police to crack down on disability parking offenses. That initiative has netted 113 violators.

In 2002, Secretary White initiated legislation to reduce the abuse of placards by creating three placards featuring identifying information about their holders as well security features to curb fraud. In addition, a disability placard unit was created and limits were put on the number of placards available to individuals.

This year White initiated legislation that will take effect January 1, 2006. Under the new law, those caught improperly parking in a disability parking space could face a fine of up to \$500 and a driver’s license suspension. It also increases penalties against those who illegally alter or fraudulently manufacture disability placards or plates.

The office will also begin the re-certification process of all permanent disability placards, to update, review and purge files.

Currently, there are 612,000 disability placards and 83,000 disability license plates registered in Illinois.