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Jesse White's Disability Parking Crackdown Results in More than 160 Citations Statewide Totaling over \$71,000 in Fines

Secretary of State Jesse White announced today that the Secretary of State Police issued 166 citations, totaling \$71,250 in fines, during a statewide crack down on people who illegally park in disability parking spaces at local malls. The enforcement kicked off on Black Friday, November 23rd and continued through the end of December.

Sixty-five people were issued tickets for improper use of a disability parking space or parking in a disability space without a placard or license plate during the holiday season. Ninety-two were cited with misuse of a disability parking placard, or using someone else's placard and nine people were cited with using a fraudulent placard. One hundred and three placards were confiscated and a total of 8,336 placards were checked.

"I'm pleased with the results of the disability parking enforcement efforts," said White. "As I've said before, our mission is not to give tickets, but to ensure the disability parking spaces are available to those who need them," White said. "Remember --if you don't belong there -- don't park there."

Secretary of State Police were enforcing the provisions of the Parking Program for Persons with Disabilities in 66 communities at malls and stores statewide including but not limited to: Chicago and various suburbs, Champaign, Carbondale, Fairview Heights, Marion, Peoria, Rockford and Springfield.

A law proposed by White to crack down on fraud and abuse of the state's disability parking program took effect January 1st. The new law includes toughening the penalties for those who abuse a deceased person's placard or disability license plate.

Public Act 97-844 strengthens the penalty for using a placard and/or disability license plates in which the person is now deceased, which under the previous law fell under the category of general misuse of a placard or plate. The law creates a new offense for this egregious act, making it a Class A Misdemeanor, which carries a minimum one-year driver's license revocation and a \$2,500 fine.

In addition, the license suspension periods for general misuse of a disability license plate or placard increases from 30 days to a six-month suspension for a first offense; from six months to a one-year suspension for a second offense as well as increasing the fine from \$750 to \$1,000, and from a one-year suspension to a minimum one-year revocation for a third offense. A license revocation requires the offender to meet with a Secretary of State Administrative Hearing officer at the end of their revocation period before driving privileges may be restored.

The fine for illegally using a placard or disability license plates without the authorized holder of the placard or disability license plates present is a maximum of \$500. The fine for parking in an accessible parking space without a parking placard or disability license plates can be a minimum of \$250 and a maximum of \$350.

Secretary White urged people to report abuse of accessible parking spaces via the Secretary of State's website at www.cyberdriveillinois.com and complete the Parking Program for Persons with Disabilities Abuse Complaint Form. People can also report abuse by calling 217-785-0309.

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