



Senate Fiscal Agency
P. O. Box 30036
Lansing, Michigan 48909-7536

BILL ANALYSIS



Telephone: (517) 373-5383
Fax: (517) 373-1986

Senate Bill 758 (as enrolled)
 Sponsor: Senator Joe Conroy
 Committee: Transportation and Tourism

Date Completed: 2-29-96

RATIONALE

Under the handicapper parking provisions of the Michigan Vehicle Code, a person must have one or more specific physical characteristics to qualify as a "handicapper". The physical characteristics must be determined by a physician licensed to practice in this State, which includes medical doctors, osteopathic physicians, chiropractors, and other licensees, such as podiatrists. Since one of the qualifying characteristics is blindness, it has been suggested that optometrists also should be permitted to make this determination.

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Michigan Vehicle Code to redefine the term "handicapper" in the Code's handicapper parking provisions, to include a person who was determined by an optometrist licensed to practice in the State to have the physical characteristic of blindness.

MCL 257.19a

BACKGROUND

Public Act 104 of 1994 made a number of changes to the handicapper parking provisions of the Michigan Vehicle Code. Among other things, the Act required that a physician "licensed under part 170 of 175 of the public health code" determine whether someone had the physical characteristics to qualify as a handicapper. As a result, only a medical doctor or an osteopathic physician could make that determination. In order to allow other licensed practitioners to determine whether a person qualifies for handicapper parking privileges, Public Act 432 of 1994 amended the Code to refer to a physician "licensed to practice in this state".

ARGUMENTS

(Please note: The arguments contained in this analysis originate from sources outside the Senate Fiscal Agency. The Senate Fiscal Agency neither supports nor opposes legislation.)

Supporting Argument

Just as many people seek health care from chiropractors and podiatrists, rather than medical doctors or osteopaths, many people use the services of optometrists, rather than ophthalmologists, for their vision care. By allowing optometrists to make a determination of blindness for the purpose of qualifying patients as handicappers, the bill would enhance the ability of disabled individuals to obtain handicapper parking privileges. The bill also could save consumers and the health care industry money, since patients would not have to spend a higher amount to visit an ophthalmologist.

Legislative Analyst: S. Margules

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

Fiscal Analyst: B. Bowerman

A9596\S758A

This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.