

HB 646, HD1

RELATING TO PARKING FOR DISABLED PERSONS.

Allows individuals who are blind or visually handicapped to apply for and obtain a removable windshield placard to use a parking space reserved for persons with disabilities.
(HB646 HD1)



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

919 Ala Moana Boulevard, Room 101 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96814
Ph. (808) 586-8121 • Fax (808) 586-8129

March 20, 2017

TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON TRANSPORTATION AND ENERGY, AND HUMAN SERVICES

House Bill 646, HD1 – Relating to Parking for Disabled Persons

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) opposes House Bill 646, HD1 – which would expand the eligibility to obtain a parking placard to persons who are blind or visually impaired. The purpose of this bill is to allow individuals who are blind or visually impaired to apply for and obtain a removable windshield placard to use parking spaces reserved for persons with disabilities.

Congress enacted Public Law 100-641 with the intent to provide the opportunity to park in reserved spaces for persons with disabilities who are limited in their physical mobility or limited in their ability to walk a long distance. When the Federal Highway Administration and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration issued implementing regulations, they specifically excluded blindness as a qualifying condition. They relied on the National Federation of the Blind's Resolution 85-22, which states that "blindness, in and of itself, is not a mobility impairment and that the problems blind people face with respect to mobility cannot be remedied by making a handicapped parking space available to them."

Reserved parking spaces are necessary to ensure access for those with a mobility disability to places where the public is invited. Reserved parking spaces have two important features, (1) they are located on the shortest route to an accessible facility entrance, and (2) they have an adjacent access aisle. Access aisles, whether 5 or 8 feet wide, provide additional area for permittees with mobility aids, such as walkers, crutches, wheelchairs, motorized scooters to fully open a car door or deploy a side-mounted lift. If reserved spaces are not available, disabled persons who need one or both features will be denied access to a facility. By contrast, people who are blind or visually impaired can use any parking space.

Currently in the State of Hawaii, there are over 108,000 disabled parking permits in use. Per the 2015 American Communities Survey, 21,952 Hawaii residents have a vision impairment. Passage of this bill will significantly increase the number of permits in use and thereby severely limit the availability of reserved parking spaces for people who need to park closer to an accessible facility entrance, the use of an access aisle, or both. In addition this bill would require an appropriation of approximately \$264,000 to cover the cost of issuing the additional placards, assuming that all the individuals come forth to ask for a placard.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment.

Respectfully submitted,

BARBARA FISCHLOWITZ-LEONG
Chairperson
Legislative Committee

FRANCINE WAI
Executive Director

Date: March 17, 2017

From: Christopher Akamine Blind Vendor

Committee on Transportation and energy
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair

Date: Monday, March 20, 2017

1:15p

Conference Room 225

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

Dear Committee Chair Morikawa and Members,

My name is Christopher Akamine and I am a blind vendor in the Liliuokalani Building. I am in favor of this bill.

Date: March 17, 2017

From: Roberta K. AuYoung Legally Blind Resident and Program Director of Guide Dogs of Hawaii

Committee on Transportation and energy
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair

Date: Monday, March 20, 2017

1:15p

Conference Room 225

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

I support HB646 to allow the Blind to obtain parking placard due to safety reasons. I work with blind seniors and I have heard some of their concerns about safety when their personal drivers have to park far from the entrance to a store or hospital. Many of them have been left alone by the entrance of the establishment and accosted by individuals who mean to harm and steal from them. I am legally blind and safety is a big issue for myself so I can identify with my clients fears of being left vulnerable as their drive parks or retrieves the car.

As a legally blind individual and cane user for the past 28 years, I was struck by an electric car in a parking lot at Wal-mart Keeaumoku, last November. Electric cars are silent and therefore are hazardous to the Blind. So through my own experience I can testify that this Bill HB 646 is necessary for the safety of all Blind people in Hawaii regardless of the mobility skills they possess. So please vote yes to this amendment of this bill.

Respectfully,
Roberta K. AuYoung

Date: March 17, 2017

From: Tammy Chow Blind Resident

Committee on Human Services
Senator Josh Green, Chair
Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair

Date: Monday, March 20, 2017

1:15p

Conference Room 225

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

I Tammy Chow support HB 646 because I am legally blind an over age 60. I have personal driver who drives me to the doctors, stores, and to meetings. Sometimes we have to park very far away and I get confussed of where we parked and my friend has to leave me standing alone while he looks for the car. A few times when he left me alone, someone tride to steal my purse and some people try to beg me for money. I don't feel safe. But if I can get a handicap placard I would not have to worry about my safety. Please pass this bill.

Date: March 17, 2017

From: Sharon Ige Blind Resident

Committee on Transportation and Energy
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair

Date: Monday, March 20, 2017

1:15p

Conference Room 225

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

I am in support of Bill 646 because of the following reasons:

It has come to my awareness that it would be much easier for the driver of the blind. Depending on the blind person's mobility, the driver does not have to guide the blind person after parking a far distance. If they can park in the handicapped stalls, it would be a shorter distance of assistance, if needed. Also, the handicapped stall is a safe place to drop off and wait.

Most importantly, blind people are not safe in a parking lot. For those who get out of a car and walk independently, it can be a risky experience. I recently have heard of more incidents of the blind getting hit by drivers who did not see them. Because of our inability to "see" them, we do not get out of the way either. The loud noises of cars, people and other goings on prevent us from fully getting a grip on the situation. We have enough problems trying to read traffic on the roadways. But now have to navigate a crowded parking lot with drivers who are speeding or not paying attention. Not to mention that we cannot hear the new hybrid cars even if there is not unusually loud noise around.

It has been said that blind people should not have a placard because they do not drive but many current placard holders do not drive either. Placards should be given to those who need them.

Although I have not felt passionate about this bill in the past, it is evident to me that it has become a safety issue.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,
Sharon Ige

Date: March 17, 2017

From: Jim Kennedy

Committee on Transportation and energy
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair

Date: Monday, March 20, 2017

1:15p

Conference Room 225

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

"Aloha, I am writing as the husband of a wonderful, self-confident lady who has been legally blind since 1978 and totally blind since 2000. I bring a perspective from two points of view: that of a caring husband and that as an observer.

"My wife is fiercely independent! I am proud of her. For years she was a cane user, and since 2000 she has been partnered with two incredibly smart and trustworthy guide dogs. She asks for no sympathies. Given an obstacle, she tries her best to figure out ways to address them. This almost always works. However, as admirable as this attitude and confidence is, it is in my opinion not able to ameliorate the problems with all the distractions that we are faced with by today's drivers. I think most reasonable people will have to agree that things have changed exponentially in just the past few years: electric cars you cannot hear, and smart phones causing s=distractions, being among the greatest concerns.

"Obviously, because I care, we walk together as we traverse parking lots. I cannot tell you how many times I have had to bang my fist HARD on the trunks of cars backing out of spaces as we walk carefully behind them, to get them to realize they have to stop fast. Most of these drivers seem to be not paying much attention. Also, too many today seem to be TOO distracted talking on cell phones, texting or checking emails, especially as they start to pull away from parking spots ... carrying on the communications without fully being aware of what is going on right around them. People who are legally blind are purely at the mercy of these drivers and those who are accompanying them. They should not be, in my honest opinion. Being able to park in a handicapped spot near the curb would eliminate these concerns!

"It seems to me, in a very real way, the blind may unwittingly be being discriminated against. I say this because while in every legal sense they are disabled, for some reason are not afforded the same kind of protective allowances provided those with other kinds of disabilities. Why do so many segments of the disabled get accommodation, and not the blind?

"It seems to me that it should be axiomatic that accommodations by the issuance of parking placards are aimed to protect the disabled. Why, then, are the blind so "blindly" discarded in this care and concern, when their safety should be of equal concern?

"I am sorry I cannot make the hearing this Friday, but do thank you for your consideration, and would welcome the opportunity to talk any time you would like about these very critical safety matters.

"Mahalo for your considerations."

Jim Kennedy
91-1012 Kaipalaoa Street #5506
Ewa Beach, HI 96706

tel. cell 224-7639

e-mail: jimkennedy513@gmail.com

Date: March 17, 2017

From: Richard Koja Blind Resident

Committee on Transportation and Energy
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair

Date: Monday, March 20, 2017

1:15p

Conference Room 225

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

My name is Richard Koja and I support this bill because in my experience I've been accosted in by homeless people while I waited for a my driver to get the car. It would be safe for me if I had a handicap placard so when I have someone who can take me where I need to go, we will be able to park closer to the entrance of the store. Also trying to navigate parking lots that are riddled with tire stoppers and speed bumps become a very dangerous obstacle for me. I am completely blind and I try my best to pay attention and sometimes I have to wonder who is really blind, especially when cars back out of their stalls without warning. Please give deep consideration to this bill to not only allow the blind to obtain the placard but think of the fatalities you'll help to prevent. Thank you very much.

Date: March 17, 2017

From: Joy Nakata-Muranaka Blind Resident & Guide Dog Handler

Committee on Transportation and Energy
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair

Date: Monday, March 20, 2017

1:15p

Conference Room 225

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

I am Joy Nakata-Muranaka and I support HB 646.

I am totally blind. Safety is an important issue. Some individuals have other issues such as hearing/equilibrium/balance; some are unsteady on their feet and get disorientated easily. In the life of a visually impaired person, he/she deals with orientation issues daily. With the use of a parking placard, the shorter distance required to walk and the less turning to move around the stall/lane/cars the better sense of balance, orientation and safety a blind individual can maintain. The blind has many challenges each day of life.

There have been many occurrences where when walking through a parking lot, other drivers are not watching and the person assisting me suddenly stops or if I am walking with my guide dog, needs to say stop or grabs my arm.

The parking placard will permit less complication when being driven anywhere and not have to deal with walking so far, having to cross lanes and watching for inattentive drivers, keeping our orientation, and more safety will be achieved.

Date: March 17, 2017

From: Tehani Tau Case Management Specialist Guide Dogs of Hawaii

Committee on Transportation and Energy
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair

Date: Monday, March 20, 2017

1:15p

Conference Room 225

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

My name is Tehani Tau and I am in total support of HB 646. Although I am not blind, I support HB 646 because I have been involved with the blind community from a young age. More recently I have gotten completely involved, working with both youth and seniors who are blind and visually impaired. In my experience there are many safety issues that people who are sighted don't realize the blind and visually impaired are forced to face every day.

Individuals who are blind are limited to what they can perceive in their surroundings. Due to their lack of sight, they rely on their hearing, sense of smell, and other people to navigate when traveling. These methods are not fool proof and are not always reliable. Allowing someone with a visual impairment to have a handicap placard would reduce many of the safety hazards that they face when having to go out. Some may question why a person who is blind and not able to drive would need a handicap placard, but like many other people with disabilities they often have a friend or family member take them around to run errands.

Due to the fact they are not allocated handicap placards the blind individual will often be dropped off in the front of their destination unattended while waiting, or forced to travel long distances in busy parking lots. These may not be recognized as obvious safety hazards, but indeed they are within the blind community. When you are left alone in an unfamiliar environment that you cannot see, you are subject to being taken advantage of. Homeless people will ask for money in hopes of them accidentally giving a bigger bill than intended, or even go as far as to try and rob the blind individual because they are alone. When walking through busy parking lots visually impaired people rely solely on the people around them to be attentive when driving. Unfortunately with the increasing amount of distracted drivers on the road this is extremely dangerous. For children whom are blind who are only beginning to learn how to use a cane for travel the dangers are even greater. The kids are still learning the skills they need to use their other sense to be aware of their surroundings. Parents of blind students who may also have young children with them would make what should be a simple task like going to a store less worrisome because traveling across a long parking lot is no longer an issue.

All in all, I am in support of HB 646 because I strongly feel that we should offer support to the disabled in any way that we can. This directly benefits the portion of the disabled community that has been left out for far too long. Mahalo for your consideration on HB 646.

Date: March 17, 2017

From: Aza Torres Case Management Specialist for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Guide Dogs of Hawaii

Committee on Transportation and energy
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair

Date: Monday, March 20, 2017

1:15p

Conference Room 225

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

As an active advocate for the Blind and Visually Impaired, I am fully in favor of HB 646.

Although I am sighted, my mother has been legally blind since my birth. I have been her primary sighted guide since I was able to effectively distinguish hazards that she could not, and I am also a Case Manager for blind and visually impaired individuals of all ages. I hope to shed light on the mobility limitations that create obstacles that are frightening and potentially harmful for the blind community.

Safety is the key reason behind my support for this bill. Sight is arguably the most important sense for safety and self-preservation. The lack of vision takes away one's ability to properly assess their surroundings, therefore limiting the awareness of immediate dangers and affecting their mobility.

One might debate that other senses will compensate for vision loss. Although many members of the blind community exercise their listening skills, this is not always a reliable method of assessing the immediate environment. Many threats are inaudible, including quiet vehicles that are driving or reversing from stalls, bicyclists zipping around and of course everyone's favorite – speed bumps.

Providing the appropriate accommodations by allowing access to parking for disabled persons will minimize the very many dangers present to the blind community, so I fully support HB 646.

Date: March 17, 2017

From: Laura Tanigawa

Committee on Transportation and Energy
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair

Date: Monday, March 20, 2017

1:15p

Conference Room 225

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

I feel that parking passes should be available to all handicapped/disabled people but for today. I am going to explain why a VIP (visually impaired person) or a blind person should be allowed to have one.

When I walk to and from places, I am totally focused and concentrating to make sure I don't trip, fall or walk into things that by the time I get home I am more mentally exhausted from focusing all day than physically exhausted. Even when I have a sighted guide to help me, it will be a friend or family member helping and they are not experts so I still have to focus and concentrate to make sure we don't have an accident. I can feel my guide's tension focus when they are guiding me and I noticed that when we finally get to our location, they relax and so do I and can finally have some fun and enjoy ourselves. When we get to our location, the ground is usually flat and even so we can relax. Because I don't or not allowed to have a parking pass and had to park some distance away, I have been guided into fenders of cars, walked into side mirrors of cars, tripped and fallen. I feel the above situation can be avoided if I a blind person was allowed to have a parking pass. The parking pass will help me and my guide to relax and it will help and make it easier for my helper. Just as a person in a wheelchair, having a parking pass helps their helper more than the person in the wheelchair. But it does also help the person in the wheelchair because it avoids the bumps, holes and uneven ground so that they are not jostled around in their chair which can be painful.

Finally, we the VIP and blind people should be allowed to have the parking pass so that we and our helpers may receive the help and benefits the pass will provide us.

Laura Tanigawa

Date: March 17, 2017

From: Jeanne Torres, Executive Director, Guide Dogs of Hawaii

Committee on Transportation and energy
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair

Date: Monday, March 20, 2017

1:15p

Conference Room 225

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

Dear Committee Chair Lorraine R. Inouye,

I acknowledge that the current law entitles individuals with mobility difficulties to have access to a parking stall immediately outside of any place of business that serves the general public. Although Blind and Visually Impaired individuals do not have physical difficulties in mobility, these individuals do have serious mobility limitations may walk into harm's way if appropriate accommodations are not in place.

90% of what we do and learn every day requires our sight. This includes walking. As parents, we always protect our young saying "Pay attention, when you are walking", "watch where you are going", or "look where you are going". This is not possible for the blind for obvious reasons. Here are a number of reasons why the blind and visually impaired residents may potentially benefit from the use of parking placards:

1. Blind and visually impaired people must be purposefully and systematically taught to navigate from one point to the next. Some might suggest that if the blind can get from the bus stop to the business door, they can get from the private vehicle to the door. It is important to remember that the bus stop and the entrance door are permanent landmarks. They don't move. The blind and visually impaired person is taught to navigate from the bus stop to the entrance door. Travelling by vehicle, on the other hand, is different. The vehicle is not parked in any exact stall. As such each experience is unfamiliar to the blind and visually impaired.
2. By having parked in a designated stall close to the entrance door, the blind and visually impaired will be able to independently and safely access the vehicle.
3. Blind and visually impaired persons rely on their sense of hearing and smell to compensate for their vision loss. We have older blind and visually impaired who must cope with loss of hearing as well. The loss of two senses is frustrating which often leads to stress and fear when trying to navigate in a noisy environment.
4. There is the matter of silent vehicles that the sighted person can see but not hear. Consider a blind person navigating through a parking lot, only to come upon a silent car.
5. Blind and visually impaired persons experience extreme hardship coping with the different sounds and movement around them as they navigate. Allowing the blind and visually impaired to obtain parking placards will promote safe travelling.

By passing Bill HB646, you will be lifting away one of many challenges that the blind and visually impaired person must cope with on a daily basis.

I am in full support of HB646 and request that the committee offer the blind community the opportunity to travel safely and confidently by passing this very practical and sensible measure.

Date: March 17, 2017

From: Ernie Udo Guide Dog Handler

Committee on Transportation and Energy
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair

Date: Monday, March 20, 2017

1:15p

Conference Room 225

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

I am Ernie Udo and am in favor of HB646.

Safety is involved with walking when you are a visually impaired individual. After parking, the distance to walk to our destination is far, it adds to the challenge of safety. Visually impaired individuals who are walking and using a mobility aid plus carrying any items and walking a distance to their car only adds to the challenge of traversing around and through obstacles. For an aid to a visually impaired individual to quickly assist the individual out of the way when necessary is not a simple matter.

The placard will allow for less stress and much more safety.

Date: March 17, 2017

From: Victoria Kennedy Blind Resident & Guide Dog Angela

Committee on Transportation and energy
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair

Date: Monday, March 20, 2017

1:15p

Conference Room 225

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share with you, my thoughts about HB646 – Placard for the visually impaired and for the blind.

I was diagnosed legally blind with Reinitis Pigmentosa in 1978, and became totally blind in 2000. I was a cane user for 12 years, and since 2000, I have been a guide dog handler.

Over the years, with the advent of technology, especially with the smart phones, and now, with the popularity of the electric cars (which are good for the environment but horrible to us, the blind, who cannot also hear them approach), I find myself being afraid to walk in large parking lots with my guide dog.

As I walk in large parking lots with my husband or friends who drive me to the various stores, my guide will alert me if a car is backing up. Unfortunately, all too often cars back up without even looking to see if people are walking behind them. More and more drivers are not paying attention as they are talking on the cell phones, texting, or emailing others. Increasingly, my husband who is sighted, has had to hit the trunk of cars which are suddenly backing up, and the drivers are usually startled to find him and others behind the car.

If we could be allowed to have a placard, it would not only be a safety factor for us, we can always find our way back to our car when we are done with our shopping, tired of walking, or my guide dog is hot and is in need of water. Though blind, I will be able to find our car as we will be sure to know what store we parked in front of, and with applications on our I-phones, we can mark where the car is parked, and will be able to find it without very little problems.

When I lived in California, I was issued a placard due to my blindness, and was stunned that the state of Hawaii wouldn't issue a placard for the blind.

Being able to have our car in a handicapped parking space would certainly instill a very real level of safety for me, and I will be able to walk to the stores with confidence, knowing that I wouldn't have to dodge cars, listen for cars backing up, and having the fear of being hit and hurt badly or worse.

There was one other experience I had that frightened me so, that could be prevented if we could park at the curb in a handicapped spot. When using my cane and walking across a parking lot, I once had a car pull up slowly beside me and a passenger grabbed my purse from my shoulder and the car took off. I was so very fortunate not to fall under the rear tires.

I ask that you please consider the safety issues of allowing those of us who are blind to be allowed to have a placard to be able to have our spouse/friend park in a handicap parking space.

Mahalo and thank you for your consideration.

Aloha,

Vickie and "Angela" Kennedy

Date: March 17, 2017

From: Norman Ota (Blind Vendor)

Committee on Transportation and Energy
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair

Date: Monday, March 20, 2017

1:15p

Conference Room 225

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

My name is Norman Ota and I support this bill!

Date: March 17, 2017

From: Gail Sakamoto (Blind Vendor)

Committee on Transportation and Energy
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair

Date: Monday, March 20, 2017

1:15p

Conference Room 225

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

My name is Gail Sakamoto and I am a blind vendor at the Dept. of Health. I support house bill 646 that allows the blind to obtain handicap placard. Sometimes I have a hard time navigating through very dark parking lots. I have tripped over tire stoppers, speed bump and root that protrude from under the asphalt of some parking lots. It's not safe for us who are visually impaired and it's worse for my friends who are blind. Please consider passing this bill.

Thank you,
Gail Sakamoto

Date: March 17, 2017

From: Fay Solomon A Blind Senior Resident of Hawaii

Committee on Transportation and Energy
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair

Date: Monday, March 20, 2017

1:15p

Conference Room 225

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

I support this bill to allow the Blind to obtain parking placard. I am elderly and often have people drive me to doctor appointments. Walking is not my problem. I am slower now but I cannot see or hear too good. I am always scared to walk in parking lots where drivers don't look where they are going or drive too fast. This placard will allow my driver to park close to the building and I would feel safe when I am going in and out of the building. Please pass this bill to help keep the Blind safe.

Respectfully,
Fay Solomon (Blind)

Date: March 17, 2017

From: Nora Ota-Burrows Blind Individual

Committee on Transportation and Energy
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair

Date: Monday, March 20, 2017

1:15p

Conference Room 225

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

My name is Nora Ota Burrows and I am in support of HB646.

Capt. T. J. Davies, Jr. (Ret.)
909 Kapiolani Blvd # 601
Honolulu, HI 96814-2132
tjdavies@juno.com
808-593-1026

16 March 2017

To: Committee on Transportation And Energy, Senator Inouye, Chair, Senator Dela Cruz, Vice Chair
Committee on Human Services, Senator Josh Green, Chair, Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair

Date: Monday, March 20, 2017, 1:15 p.m., Room 225

Re: HB 646 HD1, Relating to Parking for Disabled Persons. Windshield Placard for Persons with Disabilities.

Chair s (Inouye & Green, Vice Chairs Dela Cruz & Chang and members of the committees:

I am writing in STRONG SUPPORT of HB 646 HD1, Relating to Parking for Disabled Persons, Windshield Placard for Persons with Disabilities.

My name is T. J. Davies Jr. I am 82 years old, retired, handicapped and live in Kakaako. I have been diagnosed with Polyneuropathy, Degenerative Spinal Stenosis and Biclonal Gammopathy. These conditions are lifelong and permanent. I walk with a cane and rely on the kindness of others for transportation. My Handicapped placard greatly facilitates my drivers providing transportation for the necessities of daily healthy living, i.e., frequent medical appointments, groceries, participation in volunteer non-government organization meetings and social activities.

Your favorable consideration of HB 646 HD1, Relating to Parking for Disabled Persons. Windshield Placard for Persons with Disabilities is requested. Mahalo & Aloha

T. J. Davies Jr., Volunteer
Treasurer, AARP Chapter 60 Honolulu
Treasurer, Kokua Council for Senior Citizens of Hawaii Education Fund
Director, Hawaii Alliance for Retired Americans
Kakaako (District 26 / Senate District 12)

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Friday, March 17, 2017 7:30 AM
To: TRE Testimony
Cc: mkhan@hawaiiantel.net
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB646 on Mar 20, 2017 13:15PM

HB646

Submitted on: 3/17/2017

Testimony for TRE/HMS on Mar 20, 2017 13:15PM in Conference Room 225

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Leimomi Khan	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Aloha, I continue to support this bill. There is so much abuse of the use of handicapped parking by people who are not even close to being as physically challenged as the blind. Allowing individuals who are blind to apply for a windshield placard to use a parking space reserved for persons with disabilities is the right thing to do. It will make them less vulnerable to accidents and people who may take advantage of them. Please pass HB646 HD1.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

44-148 Hako Street
Kaneohe, HI 96744

Thursday, March 09, 2017

Senate Committee on Human Services
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

To the Senate Committee On Human Services:

I am a blind person and an active member of the organized blind movement here in Hawaii, and I write to oppose House Bill 646, House Draft 1, which would make blind people eligible for handicapped parking passes. I know first-hand that blind people can learn how to walk with a cane, know where they are, and find their way. If a blind person is unable to walk independently due to a lack of training, the handicapped parking pass will have no effect because they will still need someone else's help. In addition to the fact that it is unnecessary, this bill will reduce the expectations of blind people, which are already low enough as it is. When blind people, especially newly blind adults or blind youths who are coming of age, are offered a handicapped parking pass, we are being told to think of ourselves as more disabled than we actually are. The National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii, the oldest organization of blind people in Hawaii, is working to raise the expectations of blind people because low expectations are what create obstacles between blind people and our dreams. Blindness itself is not what holds us back. We want equal rights, so we must be willing to bear equal responsibility.

There is absolutely no reason, and every well-adjusted blind person knows it, that a blind person should ever require a handicapped parking pass on account of blindness. Blindness means that our sense of eyesight does not work, but it means nothing about our legs. If a blind person has an additional disability and requires the handicapped parking pass for that other disability, blindness is not a factor. If someone is just blind, then what that person needs is blindness training, which our state provides to them free of charge. Once blind people have had good training to become an independent traveler, there will be no difference in that person's traveling ability versus what it would be if that person were sighted. If a blind person lacks the proper training for independent travel, then that person must continue using the same helping mechanisms which got them to the location in the first place to finish the journey. For any situation imaginable, there is a better solution. If any blind people want this handicapped parking pass out of laziness, I will be the first to remind them that we cannot have our cake and eat it, too; if we want equal rights, we must bear equal responsibility.

When blind people, especially newly blind adults or blind youths who are coming of age, are offered a handicapped parking pass, we are being told to think of ourselves as more disabled than we actually are. We are being told that we should not be expected to walk from a car to a building and back if that car is parked in a normal parking space. This is a small and simple message, but it is a part of a societal message that blind people are less capable than our sighted counterparts. When blind people are held to normal expectations, that empowers us toward doing normal things, getting normal jobs, paying normal taxes, and being normal members of society.

House Bill 646, House Draft 1, is not only unnecessary; it codifies a system of oppression of blind people. I am urging you to please join me in opposing this bill. If you would like to meet with me, as well as many of my friends and colleagues in the National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii, I am eager to do so. If you want to learn more about the capacity of blind people, you might also consider visiting the office of Ho'opono Services for the Blind, the state agency

providing rehabilitation services to blind people in Hawaii, where you can learn about the type of rehabilitation training available to blind people in our state.

Much mahalo for your consideration!

Aloha,

Ms. Kyle Laconsay

Affiliate Treasurer

National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii

hearkylaugh@gmail.com

(808)457-7757

4444 Rice St.; Lihue. Hi. 96766

Thursday, March 09, 2017

Senate Committee on Human Services
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

To the Senate Committee On Human Services:

I am a blind person and an active member of the organized blind movement here in Hawaii, and I write to **oppose House Bill 646, House Draft 1**, which would make blind people eligible for handicapped parking passes. I know first-hand that blind people can learn how to walk with a cane, know where they are, and find their way. If a blind person is unable to walk independently due to a lack of training, the handicapped parking pass will have no effect because they will still need someone else's help. In addition to the fact that it is unnecessary, this bill will reduce the expectations of blind people, which are already low enough as it is. When blind people, especially newly blind adults or blind youths who are coming of age, are offered a handicapped parking pass, we are being told to think of ourselves as more disabled than we actually are. The National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii, the oldest organization of blind people in Hawaii, is working to raise the expectations of blind people because low expectations are what create obstacles between blind people and our dreams. Blindness itself is not what holds us back. We want equal rights, so we must be willing to bear equal responsibility.

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House Bill 646, House Draft 1, is not only unnecessary; it codifies a system of oppression of blind people. I am urging you to please join me in opposing this bill. If you would like to meet with me, as well as many of my friends and colleagues in the National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii, I am eager to do so. If you want to learn more about the capacity of blind people, you might also consider visiting the office of Ho`opono Services for the Blind, the state agency providing rehabilitation services to blind people in Hawaii, where you can learn about the type of rehabilitation training available to blind people in our state.

Much mahalo for your consideration!

Aloha, Douglas Moises

Kauai Chapter President

National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii

moifeva@aol.com

(808)482-1115

Katie Keim 2943 Kalakaua Ave. #304, Honolulu, Hawaii, 96815
808-722-4242 808keim@gmail.com

Friday, March 10, 2017

Senate Committee on Human Services
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

To the Senate Chair and Committee On Human Services:

I am a blind person and an active member of the organized blind movement here in Hawaii, and I write to **oppose House Bill 646, House Draft 1**, which would make blind people eligible for handicapped parking passes.

Being an individual who became blind as an adult in the midst of my career; I know quite intimately and first-hand that blind people can learn how to walk with a cane, know where they are, and find their way.

If a blind person is unable to walk independently due to a lack of training, the handicapped parking pass will have no effect because they first off do not drive and then secondly will still need someone else's help. In addition to the fact that it is unnecessary, this bill will reduce the expectations of blind people, which are already low enough as it is. When blind people, especially newly blind adults or blind youths who are coming of age, are offered a handicapped parking pass, we are being told to think of ourselves as more disabled than we actually are.

The National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii, the oldest organization of blind people in Hawaii and across our nation, is working to raise the expectations of blind people because low expectations are what create obstacles between blind people and our dreams. Blindness itself is not what holds us back. We want equal rights, so we must be willing to bear equal responsibility.

There is absolutely no reason, and every well-adjusted blind person knows it, that a blind person should ever require a handicapped parking pass on account of blindness. Blindness means that our sense of eyesight does not work, but it means nothing about our legs. If a blind person has an additional disability and requires the handicapped parking pass for that other disability, blindness is not a factor. If someone is just blind, then what that person needs is blindness training, which our state provides to them free of charge.

Once blind people have had good training to become an independent traveler, there will be no difference in that person's traveling ability versus what it would be if that person were sighted. If a blind person lacks the proper training for independent travel, then that person must continue using the same helping mechanisms which got them to the location in the first place to finish the journey.

For any situation imaginable, there is a better solution. If any blind people want this handicapped parking pass out of laziness, I will be the first to remind them that we cannot have our cake and eat it, too; if we want equal rights, we must bear equal responsibility.

When blind people, especially newly blind adults or blind youths who are coming of age, are offered a handicapped parking pass, we are being told to think of ourselves as more disabled than we actually are. We are being told that we should not be expected to walk from a car to a building and back if that car is parked in a normal parking space. This is a small and simple message, but it is a part of a societal message that blind people are less capable than our sighted counterparts. **When blind people are held to normal expectations, that empowers us toward doing normal things, getting normal jobs, paying normal taxes, and being normal members of society.**

House Bill 646, House Draft 1, is not only unnecessary; it codifies a system of oppression of blind people. I am urging you to please join me in opposing this bill. If you would like to meet with me, as well as many of my friends and colleagues in the National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii, I am eager to do so.

If you want to learn more about the capacity of blind people, you might also consider visiting the office of Ho`opono Services for the Blind, the state agency providing rehabilitation services to blind people in Hawaii, where you can learn about the type of rehabilitation training available to blind people in our state.

Much Mahalo for your consideration!

Aloha, Katie Keim, Secretary National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii

808keim@gmail.com 808-722-4242

45-410 Kamehameha Hwy.
Kaneohe, HI 96744

Thursday, March 09, 2017

Senate Committee on Human Services
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

To the Senate Committee On Human Services:

I am a blind person and an active member of the organized blind movement here in Hawaii, and I write to **oppose House Bill 646, House Draft 1**, which would make blind people eligible for handicapped parking passes. I know first-hand that blind people can learn how to walk with a cane, know where they are, and find their way. If a blind person is unable to walk independently due to a lack of training, the handicapped parking pass will have no effect because they will still need someone else's help. In addition to the fact that it is unnecessary, this bill will reduce the expectations of blind people, which are already low enough as it is. When blind people, especially newly blind adults or blind youths who are coming of age, are offered a handicapped parking pass, we are being told to think of ourselves as more disabled than we actually are. The National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii, the oldest organization of blind people in Hawaii, is working to raise the expectations of blind people because low expectations are what create obstacles between blind people and our dreams. Blindness itself is not what holds us back. We want equal rights, so we must be willing to bear equal responsibility.

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Much mahalo for your consideration!

Aloha,

Scott-Michael Tokunaga
Vice President of Student Division of Hawaii
Honolulu Chapter and Anuenue Chapter
National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii
skippy@hawaii.rr.com
808 391-4959

Casandra Certeza
1250 Richard Ln. Apt. 203
Honolulu, HI 96819

Thursday, March 09, 2017

Senate Committee on Human Services
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

To the Senate Committee On Human Services:

I am a blind person and an active member of the organized blind movement here in Hawaii, and I write to **oppose House Bill 646, House Draft 1**, which would make blind people eligible for handicapped parking passes. I know first-hand that blind people can learn how to walk with a cane, know where they are, and find their way. If a blind person is unable to walk independently due to a lack of training, the handicapped parking pass will have no effect because they will still need someone else's help. In addition to the fact that it is unnecessary, this bill will reduce the expectations of blind people, which are already low enough as it is. When blind people, especially newly blind adults or blind youths who are coming of age, are offered a handicapped parking pass, we are being told to think of ourselves as more disabled than we actually are. The National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii, the oldest organization of blind people in Hawaii, is working to raise the expectations of blind people because low expectations are what create obstacles between blind people and our dreams. Blindness itself is not what holds us back. We want equal rights, so we must be willing to bear equal responsibility.

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societal message that blind people are less capable than our sighted counterparts. **When blind people are held to normal expectations, that empowers us toward doing normal things, getting normal jobs, paying normal taxes, and being normal members of society.**

House Bill 646, House Draft 1, is not only unnecessary; it codifies a system of oppression of blind people. I am urging you to please join me in opposing this bill. If you would like to meet with me, as well as many of my friends and colleagues in the National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii, I am eager to do so. If you want to learn more about the capacity of blind people, you might also consider visiting the office of Ho`opono Services for the Blind, the state agency providing rehabilitation services to blind people in Hawaii, where you can learn about the type of rehabilitation training available to blind people in our state.

Much mahalo for your consideration!

Aloha,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Casandra Certeza". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Casandra Certeza
Community Employment Services Specialist
Honolulu Chapter
National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii
casandra.certeza@honolulu.gov
(808) 797-7495

1617 Kapiolani Boulevard
Apartment 1402
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814

Wednesday, March 08, 2017

Senate Committee on Human Services
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

To the Senate Committee On Human Services:

I am a blind person and a teacher of the blind here in Hawaii, and I write to **oppose House Bill 646, House Draft 1**, which would make blind people eligible for handicapped parking passes. For my career, I teach blind adults, all day every day, how to walk with a cane, know where they are, and find their way. If a blind person is unable to walk independently due to a lack of training, the handicapped parking pass will have no effect because they will still need someone else's help. In addition to the fact that it is unnecessary, this bill will reduce the expectations of blind people, which are already low enough as it is. When blind people, especially newly blind adults or blind youths who are coming of age, are offered a handicapped parking pass, we are being told to think of ourselves as more disabled than we actually are. The National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii, the oldest organization of blind people in Hawaii, is working to raise the expectations of blind people because low expectations are what create obstacles between blind people and our dreams. Blindness itself is not what holds us back. We want equal rights, so we must be willing to bear equal responsibility.

There is absolutely no reason, and every well-adjusted blind person knows it, that a blind person should ever require a handicapped parking pass on account of blindness. Blindness means that our sense of eyesight does not work, but it means nothing about our legs. If a blind person has an additional disability and requires the handicapped parking pass for that other disability, blindness is not a factor. If someone is just blind, then what that person needs is blindness training, which I will eagerly provide to them. Once blind people have had good training to become an independent traveler, there will be no difference in that person's traveling ability versus what it would be if that person were sighted. If a blind person lacks the proper training for independent travel, then that person must continue using the same helping mechanisms which got them to the location in the first place to finish the journey. For any situation imaginable, there is a better solution. If any blind people want this handicapped parking pass out of laziness, I will be the first to remind them that we cannot have our cake and eat it, too; if we want equal rights, we must bear equal responsibility.

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House Bill 646, House Draft 1, is not only unnecessary; it codifies a system of oppression of blind people. I am urging you to please join me in opposing this bill. If you would like to meet with me, as well as many of my friends and colleagues in the National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii, I am eager to do so. If you want to learn more about the capacity of blind people, you might also consider visiting the office of Ho`opono Services for the Blind, the state agency providing rehabilitation services to blind people in Hawaii, where you can learn about the type of rehabilitation training available to blind people in our state.

Much mahalo for your consideration!

Aloha,

Justin M. Salisbury, MA, NOMC, NCRTB, NCUEB
Legislative Committee Chair
Honolulu Chapter
National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii
Justin.Salisbury@earthlink.net

Virgil Stinnett 2943 Kalakaua Ave. #304, Honolulu, Hawaii, 96815
808-722-4243 808virgil@gmail.com

Friday, March 10, 2017

Senate Committee on Human Services
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

To the Senate Committee On Human Services:

I am a blind person and an active member of the organized blind movement here in Hawaii, and I write to **oppose House Bill 646, House Draft 1**, which would make blind people eligible for handicapped parking passes.

I know first-hand that blind people can learn how to walk with a cane, know where they are, and find their way independently.

If a blind person is unable to walk independently due to a lack of training, the handicapped parking pass will have no effect because they will still need someone else's help as the blind do not drive. In addition to the fact that it is unnecessary, this bill will reduce the expectations of blind people, which are already low enough as it is.

When blind people, especially newly blind adults or blind youths who are coming of age, are offered a handicapped parking pass, we are being told to think of ourselves as more disabled than we actually are.

The National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii, the oldest organization of blind people in Hawaii, is working to raise the expectations of blind people because low expectations are what create obstacles between blind people and our dreams. Blindness itself is not what holds us back. We want equal rights, so we must be willing to bear equal responsibility.

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House Bill 646, House Draft 1, is not only unnecessary; it codifies a system of oppression of blind people. I am urging you to please join me in opposing this bill. If you would like to meet with me, as well as many of my friends and colleagues in the National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii, I am eager to do so.

If you want to learn more about the capacity of blind people, you might also consider visiting the office of Ho`opono Services for the Blind, the state agency providing rehabilitation services to blind people in Hawaii, where you can learn about the type of rehabilitation training available to blind people in our state.

Much Mahalo for your consideration!

Aloha, Virgil Stinnett, Vice President National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii

808virgil@gmail.com 808-722-4243

Post Office Box 212, Pahala, Hawaii 96777

PUBLIC HEARING TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB 646, HD 1

Monday, March 20, 2017, 1:15 PM
Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 225
Senate Committee on Transportation and Energy
Senate Committee on Human Services

To the Senate Committee on Transportation and Energy and Senate Committee on Human Services:

I am a blind person and an active member of the organized blind movement here in Hawaii, and I write to **oppose House Bill 646, House Draft 1**, which would make blind people eligible for handicapped parking passes. I know first-hand that blind people can learn how to walk with a cane, know where they are, and find their way. If a blind person is unable to walk independently due to a lack of training, the handicapped parking pass will have no effect because they will still need someone else's help. In addition to the fact that it is unnecessary, this bill will reduce the expectations of blind people, which are already low enough as it is. When blind people, especially newly blind adults or blind youths who are coming of age, are offered a handicapped parking pass, we are being told to think of ourselves as more disabled than we actually are. The National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii, the oldest organization of blind people in Hawaii, is working to raise the expectations of blind people because low expectations are what create obstacles between blind people and our dreams. Blindness itself is not what holds us back. We want equal rights, so we must be willing to bear equal responsibility.

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House Bill 646, House Draft 1, is not only unnecessary; it codifies a system of oppression of blind people. I am urging you to please join me in opposing this bill. If you would like to meet with me, as well as many of my friends and colleagues in the National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii, I am eager to do so. If you want to learn more about the capacity of blind people, you might also consider visiting the office of Ho`opono Services for the Blind, the state agency providing rehabilitation services to blind people in Hawaii, where you can learn about the type of rehabilitation training available to blind people in our state.

Much mahalo for your consideration!

Aloha,

Shannon KS Cantan

Board Member

Hawaii Association of Blind Students and Recent Graduates, a division of
The National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii

Thursday, March 17, 2017

Senate Committee on Transportation and Energy
Senate committee on Human Services
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Committee Members:

Aloha,

My name is Dean Georgiev and I am blind. I am writing in opposition to this bill which would allow blind and visually impaired people to utilize disabled parking placards to access parking stalls for disabled people.

Blindness alone is not a condition that requires this preference. Blind people, without any other qualifying condition, are capable of walking, with or without assistance, from any parking stall to any building or facility they are visiting.

I am saddened that this measure is even being considered as it reinforces the view that blind people are limited and incapable of walking and finding their way around; that the inability to see means the inability to travel independently. This is not true. Blind people are capable of getting to and from anywhere in a parking lot safely and effectively. And for those who have doubt about their abilities as blind people, they can always be guided by the person with whom they shared a ride or they can get blindness or mobility training. The last time I checked, blindness alone does not affect someone's legs and ability to walk.

Granting a parking placard to blind individuals is not a matter of equal rights or equal access. It has nothing to do with independence or empowerment. It is not what blind people need. It simply makes things easier, comfortable and convenient. And it is opportunistic in that it allows blind people to take advantage of the public misperceptions that blind people are pitiful and in need of charity. We are not.

What's worse, if blind people were allowed to receive these placards, they would be taking away parking stalls which are already scarce, from those for whom access to these stalls are truly a matter of accessibility.

So, please join me in opposing this bill. You will also be supporting the correct and empowering perception about blind people; that we are competent, capable, responsible members of society who share the same hopes and dreams as you do. We have our needs, but the use of parking placards, and all that it symbolizes negatively, is not one of them.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dean M. Georgiev

PUBLIC HEARING TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB 646, HD 1

Monday, March 20, 2017, 1:15 PM

Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 225

Senate Committee on Transportation and Energy

Senate Committee on Human Services

To the Senate Committee on Transportation and Energy and Senate Committee on Human Services:

I am a blind person and an active member of the organized blind movement here in Hawaii, and I write to oppose House Bill 646, House Draft 1, which would make blind people eligible for handicapped parking passes. I know first-hand that blind people can learn how to walk with a cane, know where they are, and find their way. If a blind person is unable to walk independently due to a lack of training, the handicapped parking pass will have no effect because they will still need someone else's help. In addition to the fact that it is unnecessary, this bill will reduce the expectations of blind people, which are already low enough as it is. When blind people, especially newly blind adults or blind youths who are coming of age, are offered a handicapped parking pass, we are being told to think of ourselves as more disabled than we actually are. The National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii, the oldest organization of blind people in Hawaii, is working to raise the expectations of blind people because low expectations are what create obstacles between blind people and our dreams. Blindness itself is not what holds us back. We want equal rights, so we must be willing to bear equal responsibility. There is absolutely no reason, and every well-adjusted blind person knows it, that a blind person should ever require a handicapped parking pass on account of blindness. Blindness means that our sense of eyesight does not work, but it means nothing about our legs. If a blind person has an additional disability and requires the handicapped parking pass for that other disability, blindness is not a factor. If someone is just blind, then what that person needs is blindness training, which our state provides to them free of charge. Once blind people have had good training to become an independent traveler, there will be no difference in that person's traveling ability versus what it would be if that person were sighted. If a blind person lacks the proper training for independent travel, then that person must continue using the same helping mechanisms which got them to the location in the first place to finish the journey. For any situation imaginable, there is a better solution. If any blind people want this handicapped parking pass out of laziness, I will be the first to remind them that we cannot have our cake and eat it, too; if we want equal rights, we must bear equal responsibility. When blind people, especially newly blind adults or blind youths who are coming of age, are offered a handicapped parking pass, we are being told to think of ourselves as more disabled than we actually are. We are being told that we should not be expected to walk from a car to a building and back if that car is parked in a normal parking space. This is a small and simple message, but it is a part of a societal message that blind people are less capable than our sighted counterparts. When blind people are held to normal expectations, that empowers us toward doing normal things, getting normal jobs, paying normal taxes, and being normal members of society. House Bill 646, House Draft 1, is not only unnecessary; it codifies a system of oppression of blind people. I am urging you to please join me in opposing this bill. If you would like to meet with me, as well as many of my friends and colleagues in the National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii, I am eager to do so. If you want to learn more about the capacity of blind people, you might also consider visiting the office of Ho'opono Services for the

Blind, the state agency providing rehabilitation services to blind people in Hawaii, where you can learn about the type of rehabilitation training available to blind people in our state.

Much mahalo for your consideration!

Aloha,

Gloria Tuuao
President, Student Division
Hawaii Chapter
National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii

1140 Mokulua Dr.
Kailua, HI 96734

Saturday, March 19, 2017

Senate Committee on Transportation and Energy
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

To the Senate Committee on Transportation and Energy:

I am a blind person and an active member of the organized blind movement here in Hawaii, and I write to **oppose House Bill 646, House Draft 1**, which would make blind people eligible for handicapped parking passes. I know first-hand that blind people can learn how to walk with a cane, know where they are, and find their way. If a blind person is unable to walk independently due to a lack of training, the handicapped parking pass will have no effect because they will still need someone else's help. In addition to the fact that it is unnecessary, this bill will reduce the expectations of blind people, which are already low enough as it is. When blind people, especially newly blind adults or blind youths who are coming of age, are offered a handicapped parking pass, we are being told to think of ourselves as more disabled than we actually are. The National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii, the oldest organization of blind people in Hawaii, is working to raise the expectations of blind people because low expectations are what create obstacles between blind people and our dreams. Blindness itself is not what holds us back. We want equal rights, so we must be willing to bear equal responsibility.

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Much mahalo for your consideration!

Aloha,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jove L. Watson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Jove L. Watson

Chapter Name: student division

National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii

Email address: watson9@hawaii.edu

Phone Number: 503-708-8000