

How S. 748 and H. 4768 Harm South Carolinians With Disabilities

Keep Accessible Parking for People with Disabilities

1. Nearly 300,000 South Carolinians already rely on accessible parking and there are not enough spaces now (Data provided from the SC DMV)

South Carolina currently has:

- 143,846 people with disabled parking license plates
- 105,732 people with permanent placards
- 22,433 disabled veterans with plates
- 24,275 people with temporary placards

Total: 296,286 South Carolinians depend on accessible parking every day. These individuals rely on these spaces to access jobs, medical care, grocery stores, childcare, community events, and daily life.



2. ADA parking is a civil right and not a convenience.

Accessible parking was created under the Americans with Disabilities Act to ensure people with mobility, respiratory, cardiac, neuromuscular, and other significant functional limitations can safely and equally access public spaces. Standards can be found at www.ADA.gov and <https://www.access-board.gov/ada/guides/chapter-5-parking/>. The ADA sets very specific design standards:

- Accessible spaces must have exact width requirements.
- Van-accessible spaces require even more space and height clearance.
- Access aisles must be unobstructed and on level ground.

These spaces are not “nice to have” but they are functional necessities for disabled people to get out of their vehicles safely.

3. The ADA limits how many accessible spaces must exist and the number is extremely low.

- The number of accessible spaces is based only on the size of the individual parking lot, not the number of people who need them.
- Small lots (common in SC) require only one to two accessible spaces – even if dozens of disabled residents visit that site daily.
- South Carolina already fails to meet real-world demand. Most people with disabilities regularly report that accessible parking is full, unavailable, or blocked.

4. SC does not enforce accessible parking well. Adding new placards without enforcement will worsen misuse.

SC already struggles with:

- Cars parking illegally in accessible spaces
- Access aisles being blocked
- Faded or noncompliant markings
- Lack of proper signage

Increasing the number of eligible people without increasing enforcement guarantees that disabled citizens will lose access they already struggle to maintain.

5. S. 748 dramatically increases demand with zero increase in supply.

- The bill would allow pregnant people in the 2nd/3rd trimester to receive accessible parking privileges.
- Pregnancy varies widely and many pregnant people do not have mobility impairments that meet ADA standards.
- This change could add tens of thousands of new placards into circulation, overwhelming parking that already cannot meet the needs of 296,286 disabled South Carolinians.

6. The unintended consequence: disabled South Carolinians get pushed out.

- People with permanent and severe disabilities, including wheelchair users, amputees, disabled veterans, cancer survivors, people with chronic pain, and people who require van lifts will be the first to lose access.
- When pregnant people who do *not* have mobility limitations use accessible parking, the result is fewer spaces available to people who cannot safely navigate a parking lot without it.

7. This bill weakens the civil-rights purpose of ADA parking.

- ADA parking exists to ensure equal access for people whose mobility is significantly impacted.
- Expanding eligibility based on a temporary condition without medical assessment of actual mobility impairment dilutes the very foundation of accessible parking laws.
- Disability rights groups statewide and nationally have already pushed back against similar proposals because they undermine disability access and create legal risk for states.

8. Better solutions exist that do not harm people with disabilities.

Instead of taking ADA parking away from disabled people, South Carolina could:

- Create designated “expectant parent” parking, separate from ADA parking.
- Improve enforcement of existing parking laws.
- Fund new spaces in high-traffic public facilities.
- Consult with disability-led organization, Able SC to develop equitable alternatives.

9. Pregnant people can get temporary disabled parking when pregnancy truly impacts mobility or health.

- Under the ADA framework and many states’ existing rules, any person (including a pregnant person) can qualify for a temporary disability placard if they have a condition that substantially limits walking or other major life activities, certified by a licensed medical provider.
- The New England ADA Center explicitly notes that pregnant people experiencing a temporary walking disability, as certified by their physician, already qualify for temporary parking placards under current law. [SCIBOSTON.ORG](https://www.sciboston.org)
- In other words:
- If a pregnancy complication does rise to the level of disability they can already get a temporary placard now, with a doctor’s note.



Key articles & resources opposing or questioning these bills (other states)

Major articles, lawsuits, and statements from around the country raising concerns about letting all pregnant people use disability parking:

- Able South Carolina. (2025, July 14). Statement: ADA parking and pregnancy accommodations. Able South Carolina.
 - Explains that pregnancy is not automatically a disability and that expanding ADA parking worsens existing access shortages for disabled South Carolinians.
- KFF Health News. (2025, November 18). Backlash grows over letting pregnant women use accessible parking spots. KFF Health News.
 - Documents growing disability-rights opposition, particularly in Florida, where accessible parking was already scarce.

Key articles & resources opposing or questioning these bills, continued

- MS NOW & United Spinal Association. (2025, December 8). Our take on expanding accessible parking for pregnant women. MS NOW.
 - Argues that allowing nondisabled pregnant people to use accessible parking undermines access in an already limited system.
- New England ADA Center. (2024, April). Pregnancy and temporary disability parking placards [Advocacy update]. SCI Boston.
 - Clarifies that pregnant people with temporary mobility impairments already qualify for temporary placards under existing law.
- The 19th News. (2025, December). Behind the fight over expanding disability parking placards for pregnancy. The 19th News.
 - Examines proposed laws in multiple states and highlights disability advocates' concerns about ongoing parking shortages.
- The Washington Post. (2025, November). Coverage of conservative push to let pregnant women use disability parking. The Washington Post.
 - Reports on multi-state legislative efforts and strong opposition from disability-rights advocates citing ADA access concerns.
- WUSF Public Media & CBS News Miami. (2025, November 5). Disability-rights advocates are challenging a new state law allowing pregnant women to use parking spaces reserved for people with disabilities. WUSF / CBS News Miami.
 - Covers a federal lawsuit arguing Florida's pregnancy parking permit violates the ADA by limiting access for disabled people.
- St. Johns Citizen. (2025, November 6). Battle of the bulge: Fight erupts over Florida's pregnant parking placards. St. Johns Citizen.
 - Summarizes the legal challenge and outlines claims that the law effectively excludes disabled drivers from accessible parking.

