

15 June 2018

To the distinguished members of the House,

Prior to Feb 2004, I was a 6'03" 245lb man, a veteran and a law enforcement officer and didn't look at accessibility issues the way I do now. That all changed when I became paralyzed from the chest down in February 2004. I realize that many of you, with no malicious intentions, do not readily see accessibility issues the same way I do now.

From personal experience, I can tell you that people with physical disabilities face hardships, which you will hopefully never experience. Despite these hardships, many of us continue to lead active and productive lives similar to the rest of you. We are parents, we are employees, and we are business owners. We are in almost every field you can imagine. Just like you, we have errands, appointment, and deadlines to meet; we have friends, families, and employers who rely on us.

Many of us who rely on assisted mobility devices like a wheelchair or a walker often have our lives completely disrupted by something as simple as the inability to park or re-enter our parked vehicles when we discover a blocked access aisle. A blocked access aisle stops us from events like job interviews, medical appointments, shopping for necessities and even socialization in the community.

For those who are unaware- Access Aisles were originally included in the Americans with Disabilities Act, which was signed by President George H Bush in July of 1990. An access aisle is a protected area next to or between accessible parking spaces. Access aisles must be 3, 5 or 8 feet wide depending on the scoping requirements. They are clearly marked with stripes or other markers indicating the space is not a parking area. The purpose of that protected area is to ensure a clear loading/ unloading area for people with mobility problems. The area allows room for someone who relies on items like a wheelchair or walker, or other mobility aid to safely enter and exit their vehicle. It also allows someone to fully open a car door so family members can assist a loved who needs help to enter or exit a vehicle. Unfortunately, drivers who either carelessly or intentionally park their vehicles inside the access aisle often block that "protected" space. Currently Pa Title 75, sec 3354 does not even mention the term "access aisles".

I feel we need to modernize the language in our current vehicle code to include these access aisles by definition. The current section is vague and open to interpretation. This vagueness often leads to a law enforcement officer's inability to protect the access aisles from violators. In my opinion, SB 888 contains concise definitions and makes the necessary changes.

I realize this issue may sound trivial to some of you, but I assure you that we need to modernize our current laws and educate the community to protect those who rely on the space offered in access aisles. The freedom they provide ensures us an independent lifestyle, which is one of the main objectives of the ADA.

I respectfully ask you consider voting yes for Senate Bill 888 when you have the opportunity.

Sincerely,

David L Weiser

47 year-old male

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