

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

An Act To Authorize Issuance of Permanent Disability Plates and Placards

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 29-A MRSA §521, sub-§3, ¶B, as amended by PL 1995, c. 645, Pt. A, §4, is further amended to read:

B. The placard must be blue with white print and contain the International Symbol of Access, at least 3 inches high, centered on the placard. The placard must contain the permit number, the expiration date and the seal of the Secretary of State, except that if an individual is determined to be permanently disabled under subsection 5, then the placard must indicate by sticker that the placard is permanent. In the case of an organization or agency, the placard must be green with white print and contain the same information, except that the name of the organization must appear along with the expiration date that must be determined by the Secretary of State. A placard issued to a person with a disability under this section expires in the applicant's month of birth in the 4th year following the date of issuance.

Sec. 2. 29-A MRSA §521, sub-§5, as amended by PL 2007, c. 703, §13, is further amended to read:

5. Application; issuance. An application for a disability plate or placard must be accompanied by the certificate of a physician, physician assistant, nurse practitioner or registered nurse attesting to that person's physical disability as defined in subsection 1. The Secretary of State shall issue to an eligible applicant disability plates and windshield placards upon request. Proof of a disability must be submitted every 4 years on a form prescribed by the Secretary of State, except, when the Secretary of State determines the disability to be permanent, the time may be extended upon a determination of permanent disability status by a qualified physician, the Secretary of State shall issue permanent plates or windshield placards. When the applicant's need for the disability placard terminates or the applicant dies, the plate or placard must be immediately returned to the Secretary of State.

Sec. 3. 29-A MRSA §521, sub-§11, as amended by PL 2001, c. 77, §1, is further amended to read:

11. Violation. A person other than a person with a disability or an organization transporting a person with a disability using a set of disability registration plates or a windshield placard commits a traffic infraction and is subject to a penalty of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500. The disability registration plates or removable windshield placard may be suspended for improper use. A 2nd or subsequent violation of this subsection is a Class E crime for which the fine under this subsection may be doubled.

SUMMARY

HP0655, LD 952, item 1, 124th Maine State Legislature
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This bill allows a permanently disabled person to submit proof of the permanent disability once instead of the current requirement of having to submit a new form every 4 years. It also makes a 2nd or subsequent violation of the law against misusing a disability plate or placard a Class E crime, with the potential for doubled fines.