

Transportation Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: HB-5237 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT IMPLEMENTING RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE DEPARTMENT OF

Title: MOTOR VEHICLES.

Vote Date: 3/16/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/2/2026

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Transportation Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill includes DMV suggested provisions that are small, mainly technical changes that will help to streamline DMV administrative operations. This bill will also establish a requirement for the Governor to declare the second Monday in July as Accessible Parking Awareness Day to both educate the public and promote the importance of accessible parking, as well as its responsible use.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Antonio Guerrero, Commissioner of Department of Motor Vehicles

This bill includes limited, technical provisions recommended by the DMV to improve efficiency and support consumer protection and public safety. Sections 1–5 tighten existing law to prevent improper disclosure of vessel records while preserving the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection’s (DEEP) ability to trace vessel ownership and allowing verified owners to obtain the last registered owner’s contact information, while adding protections for customer data. Sections 6–8 clarify that the Motor Vehicles Commissioner is responsible for conducting national background checks when administering DMV business licenses. Section 9 requires a national safety check for duplicate title applications to reduce fraud and verify documents without affecting processing time. Section 10 adopts a recommendation to promote annual accessible parking awareness to encourage proper use and enforcement.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Alexandria Bode, Executive Director, Peace Love ACCESSibility (PLA)

As someone who uses a wheelchair and has often been unable to re-enter my van because someone parked in the access area to the parking space, establishing an annual Accessible Parking Awareness Day would: Elevate public understanding, encourage responsible use, support ongoing law enforcement education efforts and reinforce collaboration between state agencies and local communities. It creates a focal point for conversation, training, and outreach. This is a simple step, but it sends a powerful message that Connecticut values access, dignity, and inclusion.

Sam Bode, Paraprofessional, North Branford Schools

Sam Bode, a paraprofessional at North Branford High School, shares his personal experience living with Friedreich's Ataxia, a rare progressive illness he and his sister both have. Because of his condition, he relies on accessible parking in everyday life. When these spaces are misused—such as when people park in access aisles or use illegal placards—it can leave him unable to exit his vehicle or access buildings and services. For Sam, accessible parking is not a convenience but a necessary gateway to daily activities, from medical appointments to social outings. He strongly supports creating an Accessible Parking Awareness Day to educate the public, reduce misuse, and help people with disabilities feel recognized, respected, and included in their communities.

Kenneth Cain, Deputy Police Chief, Clinton Police Dept.

In Clinton, we partnered with the nonprofit Peace, Love & ACCESSibility to promote education over immediate fines by placing Accessible Parking Courtesy Notices on vehicles violating rules such as using expired placards or blocking ramp access areas. The notices explain proper use and include a QR code linking to educational resources. Combined with social media outreach, the initiative encourages community understanding and inclusion.

State Representative Vincent Candelora, 86th District

A recent incident involving Alex Bode, Executive Director of Peace Love & ACCESSibility, highlights the challenges people with disabilities face when accessible parking access aisles are blocked. On multiple occasions, someone parked in the striped access area next to her van, preventing her from deploying her ramp and entering her vehicle. For many individuals with disabilities, this type of barrier is a frequent obstacle to everyday activities. Advocates note that most violations occur not out of malice but because drivers do not understand the purpose of access aisles.

Julie DeGennaro

Ms. DeGennaro has worked with young adults for over 30 years and believes many people initially do not understand the importance of accessible parking spaces or access aisles. However, when the issue is explained—particularly how the lack or misuse of these spaces makes it difficult for individuals with mobility challenges to access public places—young people often gain a better understanding and change their behavior. She supports creating an Accessible Parking Awareness Day, arguing it would help educate the public across Connecticut, increase respect for accessibility rules, and improve decision-making about using designated parking spaces.

Maria DeSarbo, President, Carbonella & DeSarbo

Societal awareness of accessibility is indicative of an evolved and thoughtful community. A society that understands and respects the needs of its most vulnerable members demonstrates maturity, empathy, and shared responsibility. We should strive not merely to coexist, but to

actively take care of one another. Ensuring that accessible parking is respected is a simple but powerful reflection of that principle.

Laura Francis, Board member, Peace, Love and ACCESSability

Ms. Francis expresses strong support for Section 10 of Bill 5237 establishing an Accessible Parking Awareness Day. Drawing on a personal experience as a Girl Scout troop leader, they describe how using wheelchairs to understand mobility challenges was eye-opening for both youth and adults. The testimony stresses that accessibility is a bipartisan issue affecting anyone at any time and that education—beyond law enforcement—is essential to reducing misuse of accessible parking. Establishing an awareness day and particularly engaging school children to begin raising awareness, would highlight the issue statewide and help build a more inclusive Connecticut while encouraging younger generations to advocate for accessibility.

Jacey Jones, 2nd year Physician's Assistant and Personal Care Assistant

Ms. Jones, a second-year Physician Assistant student and Personal Care Assistant, supports HB 5237 establishing Accessible Parking Awareness Day. She explains that accessible parking permits are not a convenience but a necessity that allow people with disabilities to safely access their communities. Through her work as a caregiver, she has personally witnessed the problems caused when accessible spaces or access aisles are misused, including situations where a wheelchair ramp could not be safely deployed. As a future healthcare provider responsible for approving placards, she emphasizes the importance of public education about proper qualifications and use of accessible parking. An awareness day would help reduce misuse, protect access for those who truly need it, and promote dignity and inclusion for people with disabilities.

Ron Onofrio, Chairman, Peace, Love, & Accessibility

Establishing an annual Accessible Parking Awareness Day would elevate public understanding, encourage responsible use, support ongoing law enforcement education efforts and reinforce collaboration between state agencies and local communities.

24 members of the public

Wrote to support specifically Section 10 of HB 5237 proclaiming an Accessible Parking Awareness Day.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Dr. Linda Dalessio

Although many items in this bill make sense, the two that I am in opposition to are disclosure of vehicle records to labor organizations and surveys, marketing or solicitations companies.

1 Member of the public

Wrote in opposition to the bill.

Reported by: Cindy Panioto

Date: 3/23/26