

TO: The Honorable Walter S. Felag, Jr., Chairman
Members of the Senate Committee on Special Legislation and Veterans Affairs
FROM: Kerri Cassino
DATE: March 30, 2026
RE: SUPPORT for S2178 – Relating to Motor and Other Vehicles – Registration of Vehicles

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of **S2178**, which would create a specialized "adaptive vehicle license plate" for Rhode Islanders with significant mobility impairments.

As a parent that has a child with autism and physical impairments, we use accessible parking spaces for my daughter's safety.

I also writing testimony for those that require -Adaptive vehicles— equipped with side-entry ramps, hydraulic lifts, or lowered floors—require significantly more space than a standard car to operate safely.

Currently, our state's general disability placards do not distinguish between a standard sedan and a heavily modified van. This lack of distinction often leads to challenges in parking environments where "van-accessible" spots are limited or occupied by vehicles that do not actually require the extra clearance for a ramp or lift.

S2178 addresses this by:

- **Improving Visibility:** Providing a clear, permanent identifier for vehicles that have undergone expensive and necessary structural modifications.
- **Enhancing Access:** Ensuring that infrastructure, like loading zones and wide-clearance spaces, is utilized by the vehicles that physically require them.
- **Streamlining Enforcement:** Helping law enforcement and parking officials easily identify vehicles that are legally permitted to occupy high-clearance accessible areas.

This legislation is a common-sense step toward making Rhode Island more inclusive. It recognizes the unique needs of our disability community and ensures that those who rely on specialized technology to move through the world can do so with dignity and ease.

I respectfully urge the **Committee to pass S2178**.

I would like include a statement that; The Rhode Island Statehouse is lacking in accessible parking spaces; with that said, more folks would have been able to come and testify.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Kerri Cassino – Mom Advocate
RAMP Board Member

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