

## Safer Accessible Parking & More Economical Paratransit

### BACKGROUND

As wheelchair users, we face mounting roadblocks to our everyday travel. In large part, this is due to outdated federal standards that do not reflect the growth of our population nor advancements in technology. It does not matter whether we live in rural, suburban, or urban America - these roadblocks threaten our safety and cost our economy. We need solid data to help us make the case that these standards must be updated.

**Accessible parking:** For those of us who drive, finding an accessible parking space with an adjacent access aisle that we can use to exit and enter our vehicles is increasingly hard to find. This not only threatens our safety, but also our lives. In fact, [research](#) suggests that in vehicle-pedestrian crashes, wheelchair users are a third more likely to die than non-wheelchair users. United Spinal has compiled data on the number of accessible parking permit holders today from a multi-state [survey](#), showing just how outdated the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards are. On average, there are nearly 10 disabled placards and plates for every 100 registered vehicles, far exceeding the ADA minimum accessible parking space standards of 4% of a 100-space lot or 2% of a 500-space lot. We need more hard data to drive this safety crisis home to policymakers.

**Accessible paratransit:** For those of us who use paratransit, too often we are forced to spend hours simply to run an essential errand. Decades-old federal standards that allow lengthy pick-up, drop off and destination wait times devour a good part of our productivity on any given day. The American Public Transportation Association [reports](#) its members most cite paratransit ADA regulations as “needing an overhaul.” More paratransit services are employing dynamic scheduling, real-time tracking and on demand service. Even Federal Transit Administration [guidance](#) offers paratransit services grant opportunities using tech advancements to make a quick stop economical and productive. But we need a national pilot program to demonstrate the benefits of putting existing technologies to work to save time and money for paratransit riders, drivers, operators, and local governments big and small, urban and rural. Simply adding a brief stop along a scheduled paratransit trip would vastly improve our daily lives.

### REQUESTS FOR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

**Sponsored by Representatives Steve Cohen (D-TN-09) and Tim Burchett (R-TN-02)** - Please support legislative language the Representatives plan to introduce to produce data supporting updates to ADA accessible parking standards, including:

- **Government Accountability Office study** – examine parking facilities that have received federal funding.
- **Evaluate state and local innovative parking solutions** – and report on the economic impact in promoting full or equal access to parking. Must include rural, suburban & urban areas in its analysis.
- **Report to Congress** – determine the adequacy of related federal standards and provide recommendations for improving, expanding or updating those standards.

**Sponsored by Representative Dina Titus (D-NV-01)** - Please support legislative language Representative Titus plans to introduce that would provide key data to make paratransit more efficient & seamless, including the following:

- **One-stop paratransit pilot program** – allow a 15-minute stop, as part of a current paratransit trip to prevent long wait times between multiple trips that unduly limit an individual’s ability to complete essential tasks. It allows us to stop at a bank or pharmacy or drop our children off at daycare without needing to book separate trips that could take hours from our day. Supports employing real time technologies & a feasibility report to Congress.
- **Improve pedestrian access** – require the Department of Justice to issue proposed regulations to adopt enforceable standards for new construction or alterations to pedestrian facilities (sidewalks, crosswalks) in the public right-of-way using the Architectural and Transportation Barriers compliance (Access) Board’s guidelines.
- **Accessible complaint portals** – streamline the Federal Transit Administration’s filing & reporting processes.
- **Accessibility data pilot program** - improve data collection and identify gaps in multi modal transportation to aid planning, including connections between transit, rail, bicycling corridors and safe ADA-compliant sidewalks.