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## **State of Michigan approves update to parking signs for people with disabilities**

**LANSING**—Governor Gretchen Whitmer signed into law House Bills 4075 and 4076, sponsored by State Rep. Beau LaFave. The new laws update signs used to designate parking spaces for people with disabilities. Specifically, Public Acts 182 and 183 of 2022 will establish a design that better represents those who use wheelchairs or need mobility assistance, as well as remove the word “handicapped” from the sign.

Disability Network/Michigan (DN/M), an organization whose members advocate for independent living for people with disabilities, has worked for several years to address the current design, adopted in 1969.

The new design better represents independence by depicting a more active person in a wheelchair. In addition, removing the word “handicapped” and using “reserved” limits the perpetuation of antiquated and offensive language used when referring to people with disabilities. “We are pleased the Legislature and the Governor agreed that it was time for an update,” said Alex Gossage, Vice-Chair of Disability Network/Michigan Board of Directors and Executive Director of Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living.

Businesses are not required to replace their signs immediately. Instead, businesses must use the updated signs when they are placing new or replacing current signs. Therefore, there are no new or additional costs to Michigan’s businesses.

The Governor’s signature comes one day before the 32nd anniversary of the signing of the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in everyday activities.

“We appreciate the work everyone put into these bills,” Gossage said. “As we’ve demonstrated, advocating for people with disabilities did not end when the ADA was signed into law. We will continue to share our message that our communities thrive when we all are included and represented accurately.”

DN/M represents the collective voice of Michigan's 15 Centers for Independent Living (CILs). Its focus is on leadership development, relationship building, effective communication and mobilizing around issues that will have the greatest impact on delivering high-quality independent living services to people with disabilities.

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