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On behalf of the citizens of the city of Madison with disabilities, we write to encourage the University to revisit its plans to reduce and further displace accessible parking within the limits of the campus. It is the belief of the Commission on People with disabilities that while this decision may fall within the letter of the law, it is a disingenuous move that falls outside the spirit of the law by creating a less inviting campus.

This move lends itself to an ever increasing trend within the UW system and educational systems across the country. Decreasing access to higher education furthers the education gap between people with disabilities and those without disabilities. Not only does it create disparities in education, but it promotes segregation and impedes efforts by those with disabilities to lead socially normative lives like their peers.

The University of Wisconsin Madison tends to be more than just an academic institution but is a source of pride for this city and a resource to all residents. This issue affects more than just students. As proven by the testimony provided with this letter, your decision to reduce parking affects many members of the community, volunteers of the University, as well as Alumni and past staff.

In the Capitol Times article it states, "In addition, some of the lost spots were because UW-Madison added more extra-wide disabled parking spaces to accommodate those who drive vans with wheelchair lifts." Reasoning like this is part of the issues people with disabilities face on a daily basis. The spirit of the ADA was not intended to allow for a decrease in resources in order to provide accessibility. It was intended to create open inclusive places for people of all abilities. This decision clearly makes the University grounds a less inviting place for those with mobility impairments.

We hope the University recognizes the importance of maintaining free accessible parking around campus in order to encourage use of the campus by people of all abilities.