



Department of Civil Rights

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Dr. David Ward, Interim Chancellor
University of Wisconsin–Madison
161 Bascom Hall
500 Lincoln Dr.
Madison, WI 53706

SUBJECT: Decreased Disabled Parking Spaces on the University of WI–Madison Campus

Dear Dr. Ward:

On behalf of the citizens of the city of Madison with disabilities, we are writing to encourage the University to revisit its plans to reduce disabled accessible parking spaces within the limits of the campus. The Commission on People with Disabilities believes that, while this decision is 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, not only within the UW system, but educational systems across the country. Decreasing access to higher education furthers the education gap between people with disabilities and those without. Not only does it create disparities in education, but it promotes segregation and impedes efforts by those with disabilities to lead active social lives like their peers.

The University of Wisconsin–Madison is more than just an academic institution but a source of pride for this city and a resource to all its residents. This issue affects more than just students as proven by 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 Capital Times an article 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 a 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 also 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.

Sincerely,

Randy G. Black, Chair

cc: Mayor Soglin
Astra Miriaku Iheukumere, Mayor’s Office
UW–Liaison Committee
Vince Sweeney, Vice Chancellor for University Relations
Casey Neuman, Associate Director, UW Transportation Services