

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 1616
By: Harris
Intergovernmental Relations
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As Filed

DIGEST

Currently, there has been a rise in fraudulent usage of claims of handicapped parking at airports around the state. A change in Section 681.006, Transportation Code, exempted persons having a handicapped license plate or hanging tag from paying a parking fee at airports. There has been a significant increase in the number of fraudulent claims from 1996 to 1997. For example, at the Dallas Fort Worth airport, the number of persons claiming a handicapped parking exemption from paying a parking fee rose from an average of 600 per month just before the change in law to 18,750 per month in fiscal year 1996, after changing the law, and 21,300 thus far in fiscal year 1997.

The rising number of claims for a handicapped parking exemption results in the airport losing a significant amount of revenue, handicapped persons losing their preferred parking spaces, and the airport being unable to make improvements to parking and garage facilities, including improvements to access for handicapped persons. Because airports cannot easily monitor whether handicapped hanging tags are real or fraudulent, and because the color and format of the hanging tags does not change annually, it is difficult to prevent fraudulent usage under current law. S.B. 1616 would eliminate the "free parking" provision under Section 681.006, only for the category of municipal airports, to reduce the fraud that has occurred since 1995.

PURPOSE

As proposed, S.B. 1616 outlines provisions regarding parking fees imposed by a governmental authority.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 681.006(b), Transportation Code, to delete text providing that the owner of a vehicle is exempt from payment of a fee or penalty imposed by a governmental unit for parking at a meter or in a space with a limitation on the length of time for parking in certain instances.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 1997.

SECTION 3. Emergency clause.