



Group Launches Push to Stop Parking Violators

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By Gilbert Baez

(06/22/07 -- FAYETTEVILLE) (WTVD) -- There's a grassroots movement in Fayetteville to stop people without disabilities from parking in spots designated for those who need them.

The group wants business to upgrade disability parking signs and police to hand out more ticket to violators.

Kelly Narowski is paralyzed from the chest down. She wants to do a little shopping, but she's got a big problem. "I'm not able to get out of the car because the truck is parked next to the wheelchair accessible parking," Kelly explained to Eyewitness News reporter Gilbert Baez.

The truck belongs to Wade Hardin Plumbing, an employee is doing work inside a nearby building. "Is that your truck?" Gilbert asked. "You're parked in a handicap spot."

It's a battle people with disabilities fight everyday. Gilbert asked the driver, "Were you not aware of it?" The driver replied, "Yes. I wasn't aware of it." "OK... well that woman beside you in a wheelchair can't get out," Gilbert told the driver.

Kelly was paralyzed in a car accident eight years ago. She and others with disabilities aren't looking for pity. They want accessibility, and for others to respect parking spots designated for people with disabilities.

"It's not for people that just want to run in a store for five-minutes," Kelly said. "It's not that want to use their Grandmother who has a disability tag because it happens to be in the car. It is harder to live with a mobility impairment."

Kelly is a member of the Fayetteville-Cumberland Advisory Council of People with Disabilities. The group wants business owners to upgrade disability parking signs. The maximum fine for a violation is now \$250 - not \$100.

The group is also looking for more enforcement of the law. "It's common courtesy and I'm surprised how many people park in the accessible parking that don't have the blue... the disabled placards."

Kelly and her group are pushing to have a day when city leaders and business owners spend the day in wheelchairs, with crutches or canes so they can get a better understanding of the challenges people with disabilities face everyday.

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