

October 20, 2025

To whom it may concern:

My name is Cindy Steinberg and I am the Director of Policy and Advocacy at the U.S. Pain Foundation and Chair of the Policy Council of the Massachusetts Pain Initiative. I serve on a number of state-based and national pain-related oversight committees, task forces and commissions. I am also the founder and leader of the Arlington, MA Chapter of the U.S. Pain Foundation. Our group has been meeting continuously year-round for 25 years. We have members who attend our support group from all over the greater metro area and state.

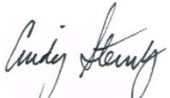
I have recently been alerted to the adverse impacts of the Newton's overnight on-street parking ban on some individuals with chronic pain and disability.

As someone with chronic pain who has been leading meetings for those with chronic pain for more than two decades, I can both personally and professionally attest that taking public transit is not always (or even usually) a practical option for many of us. For some, it may not even be feasible at all. Those who live with moderate to severe chronic pain on a daily basis tend to experience serious limitations to their mobility. Even something as simple as walking a few blocks can be excruciating, so unless a public transit stop is located right outside their doorway and is taking them directly to their intended destination, they may not be able to access it. Even for those located on direct public transit routes, taking crowded buses and trains where seats may not be available and that can take much longer than a car trip, can seriously exacerbate pain and use up what little energy the person has to function that day or week. Most of our members cannot ride bicycles, so that is also not an option for many with severe chronic pain.

For those of us with chronic pain, cars can enable us to function in ways that many take for granted-allowing us to attend social events (and leave suddenly if needed), run errands, or even make it possible for those of us who are still employed to continue working. Without access to cars, many of us would lead more socially isolated and disenfranchised lives than we already do due to our condition. As such, I believe Newton should allow an exemption program to the overnight parking ban for those experiencing medical hardship. However, at this point in time, it seems that the only way for residents with disabilities to get any sort of immediate relief from the Overnight Parking Ban is to vote for its Repeal, given that the Newton City Council has not created such an exemption program.

In taking this step forward, Newton will be advancing its own goals of being an inclusive municipality that values compassion. It will be sending a clear message that it welcomes residents who have chronic pain and disability and does not wish to set up barriers for them to live in Newton. I thank you for consideration.

Sincerely,



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