



## Legislation Text

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Int. No. 779

By Council Members Rodriguez, Cabrera, Chin, Cohen, Constantinides, Cornegy, Crowley, Cumbo, Deutsch, Dromm, Espinal, Eugene, Greenfield, Johnson, King, Koo, Levin, Maisel, Reynoso, Richards, Rose, Vacca, Vallone, Van Bramer, Williams, Barron, Gentile, Miller, Palma, Rosenthal, Kallos, Koslowitz, Treyger and Ulrich

A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to providing certain parking privileges for press vehicles.

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Legislative findings and intent. The Council finds that since the time of John Peter Zenger the freedom of the press and the ability of the press to gather the news are recognized as indispensable components of good government, and that news coverage is of vital importance to the citizens of the City of New York. In 1950, the Bureau of Motor Vehicles in the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance recognized the importance of automobiles to news gathering by creating a series of license plates bearing the letters NYP to represent the New York Press corps. The New York State Legislature ratified this action by amending the Vehicle and Traffic Law in Section 404 to provide for the issuance of special license plates to “accredited representatives of the press.” These license plates continue to be issued by the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles and require proof of press accreditation.

During the same time period, the City through the predecessor agency of the Department of Transportation also recognized the necessity of motor vehicles for the press by establishing a limited number of special parking spaces reserved for the press, commonly called “NYP zones”, throughout the city. With the understanding that news often happened in areas where there were no reserved parking spaces and where parking was otherwise prohibited, the Police Department issued special placards last known as Press Vehicle Identification Cards which permitted the press to park when covering the news in locations where parking would otherwise be prohibited. A variety of parking, driving and enforcement privileges came into being both formally and informally. These Press Vehicle Cards existed for approximately fifty years but since 2009, the

New York City Police Department has not reissued them. The Department of Transportation has failed to address both the inadequacy of NYP zones and the problems accruing to Press Vehicles when these spaces are used by city-owned, commercial, diplomatic, and other vehicles. The imposition of parking and driving restrictions on the press has severely impeded its ability to cover the news especially during emergency situations. The Council finds that given the need to use motor vehicles in the gathering of the news, this legislation is intended to restore the ability of these members of the press to use their vehicles for news-gathering purposes.

§2. Subchapter 2 of chapter one of title 19 of the administrative code of the city of New York is amended by adding a new section 19-162.3 to read as follows:

§19-162.3. Permissible parking for vehicles operated by members of the press. a. For purposes of this section, “press vehicle” shall mean: (1) a motor vehicle registered pursuant to the vehicle and traffic law and which contains a license plate issued by the department of motor vehicles or successor agency indicating such registration has been provided to a member of the press; or (2) a vehicle registered by the New Jersey motor vehicle commission or successor agency or the Connecticut department of motor vehicles or successor agency in a series reserved for members of the press working in the state of New York.

b. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a press vehicle may park where parking or standing is otherwise prohibited except where standing or stopping is prohibited to all motor vehicles, and any such press vehicle shall not be required to use an authorized payment method for a metered parking space or to comply with signage indicating the time limit for such metered parking, provided that at the time of such parking the operator or an occupant of such vehicle immediately preceding the parking of such vehicle is actually engaged in the covering of a news event or matter of public concern.

c. Where the department of any other city agency has granted by sign any privilege of parking or driving to “vehicles with NYP license plates”, such privilege shall be extended solely to press vehicles and on-duty emergency vehicles.

§3. This local law shall take effect immediately.

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