



The Arc Maryland
8601 Robert Fulton Drive, Suite 140
Columbia, MD 21046

**SB625: Transportation of Disabled Persons - Transportation Network Companies -
Employee Requirements
Finance Committee
March 9, 2022**

Position: Support

The Arc Maryland is the largest statewide advocacy organization dedicated to protecting and advancing the rights of people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (IDD) and furthering inclusion of people with IDD in all aspects of daily life.

We support SB625 because we see this as expanding needed transportation access for people with disabilities. By exempting certain employees of transportation network companies (that provide transit service to disabled persons under contract with the Maryland Transit Administration) from CJIS fingerprinting background requirements in lieu of completing another background check, we create a win-win where private transportation companies expand their customer base, and people with disabilities have increased access to the transportation they need.

Currently the Transportation Article says that taxi and paratransit drivers must be fingerprinted. Uber and Lyft drivers are not fingerprinted and therefore currently cannot contract with the Maryland Transit Administration. The Public Service Commission, which regulates taxis, has determined that Uber and Lyft's background checks are sufficient; currently these companies require an annual background screening on all transit operators to including the operator's adult history for certain convictions. We believe this is sufficient.

In October 2021, The Cross Disability Rights Coalition, made up of 40 organizations including The Arc Maryland, called on Governor Larry Hogan to create an emergency response plan for individuals with disabilities who were being stranded or put in harm's way by Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) services. MTA paratransit (MobilityLink) provides public transit for people who cannot, due to environmental barriers or their disabilities, use the fixed route bus service. Riders of paratransit rely on the service to go to health care appointments, jobs, school, day programs, church, shopping, and other community activities. The ongoing failures in transportation service have resulted in people being left on the street for hours, sometimes being told their scheduled ride will not come until 2:00 am or that no ride is available.

MTA has acknowledged it has not been able to provide reliable services and has attributed the issues to driver shortages. Clearly, we need to try something new to address this crisis and restore reliable and safe transportation services for people with disabilities.

For more information, please contact:

Mat Rice, Director of Public Policy

The Arc Maryland

mrice@thearcmd.org