

## **SB 625.pdf**

Uploaded by: Beth Wiseman

Position: FAV

## **TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF SENATE BILL 625**

### **Transportation of Persons With Disabilities – Transportation Network Companies – Employee Requirements**

As an advocate for seniors and persons with disabilities, and as one who takes MobilityLink assisted transportation, I was very pleased to see this Bill.

I always have to tell myself the driver is safe, but there are times I have wondered. I don't want to detail more.

Please help me feel safer by passing this Bill out of Committee.

Thank you.

Beth Wiseman

1216 Glenback Avenue

Pikesville, Maryland 21208

410-484-6866

# **SB625\_The Arc Maryland\_Support.pdf**Wednesday, March

Uploaded by: Mathew Rice

Position: FAV



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](mailto:mrice@thearcmd.org)

# **SB0625 - MTA - TNC Exemption - SUPP\_FINAL.pdf**

Uploaded by: Molly O'Hara

Position: FAV

March 9, 2022

The Honorable Dolores G. Kelley  
Chair, Senate Finance Committee  
3 East Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

***Re: Letter of Support – Senate Bill 625 – Transportation of Disabled Persons –  
Transportation Network Companies – Employee Requirements***

Dear Chair Kelley and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) supports Senate Bill 625 as it will allow the MDOT Maryland Transit Administration (MDOT MTA) to offer increased service for our mobility customers, via partnering with Transportation Network Companies (TNCs).

Senate Bill 625 would exempt TNC employees that provide transit service to disabled persons under contract with the MDOT MTA from the fingerprinting requirement within Transportation Article 7-102.1. In place of that, Senate Bill 625 requires that TNCs that provide these transit services run an annual background screening on all transit operators, including an operator's entire adult history. Senate Bill 625 requires that any background screening provider used by a TNC be audited and accredited by the Background Screening Credentialing Council of the Professional Background Screening Association. Senate Bill 625 also gives the MDOT MTA the ability to adopt more stringent regulations at its discretion.

The MDOT MTA has investigated several innovative ways to improve Mobility service and provide additional options for riders. One effective and immediate way to improve service is through contracts with TNCs for a service similar to the MDOT MTA's current Call-a-Ride program. Mobility riders will have the ability to opt into this supplemental service and their access to existing Mobility service will not change.

Many of the MDOT MTA's industry peers offer similar supplemental paratransit service using TNCs. Currently, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) offers supplemental premium TNC programs within Maryland.

In the MDOT MTA's initial discussions with major TNCs in the region, it was conveyed that the fingerprinting requirements of Section 7-102.1(e) of the Transportation Article would be a barrier to any contractual agreement with MDOT MTA. Enacting Senate Bill 625 would immediately remove this impasse and allow negotiations and program implementation to proceed. As an added layer of protection for our customers, Senate Bill 625 codifies Public Service Commission regulations on minimum standards for criminal history screenings and allows the MDOT MTA to adopt more stringent standards, if needed. Additionally, the MDOT MTA will accept and closely monitor complaints from our riders.

The Honorable Dolores G. Kelley  
Page Two

In closing, the operator shortage that currently exists has had a negative impact on the vital service that Mobility supplies to those in need. Senate Bill 625 will directly address this issue and allow the MDOT MTA to bring a new and innovative solution that will keep our customers safe and on the move.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee grant Senate Bill 625 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

Holly Arnold  
Administrator  
Maryland Transit Administration  
410-767-3943

Dave Myers  
Director of Governmental Affairs  
Maryland Transit Administration  
410-767-0820

## **SB 625 - Support - Transportation of Disabled Pers**

Uploaded by: Rachel London

Position: FAV





## Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

CREATING CHANGE • IMPROVING LIVES

Senate Finance Committee

**SB 625: Transportation of Disabled Persons – Transportation Network Companies – Employee Requirements**

**March 9, 2022**

**Position: Support**

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council) is an independent, public policy organization that creates change to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to live the lives they want with the support they need. The DD Council is led by people with developmental disabilities and their families. **From that perspective, the DD Council supports SB 625 as it provides flexibility to transportation network companies, which increases access to transportation services for people with disabilities.**

### **WHAT does this legislation do?**

- This bill requires that transportation network companies (ex. Uber, Lyft, Zipcar) that contract with the Maryland Transit Administration to serve people with disabilities to conduct an annual background screening of all drivers.
- It also exempts transportation network companies from doing a complete criminal history background check through the Criminal Justice Information System Central Repository of the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services.

### **WHY is this legislation important?**

- Accessible transportation options for people with disabilities remain one of the greatest barriers to participation in full community life.
- People with disabilities rely on various transportation options to access important resources, such as: urgent health services, food and other groceries, employment, and social and educational advancement opportunities.
- The flexibility of utilizing a transportation network company for travel can address crucial transportation service gaps for people with disabilities.

The DD Council supports SB 625 because it is a step towards increasing comprehensive and accessible transportation options for people with disabilities in Maryland.

Contact: Zach Hands, Communications and Legislative Liaison, [zhands.mddc@gmail.com](mailto:zhands.mddc@gmail.com)

# **SB0625-273025-01 (1).pdf**

Uploaded by: Shelly Hettleman

Position: FAV



**SB0625/273025/1**

AMENDMENTS  
PREPARED  
BY THE  
DEPT. OF LEGISLATIVE  
SERVICES

22 FEB 22  
14:30:59

BY: Senator Hettleman  
(To be offered in the Finance Committee)

AMENDMENT TO SENATE BILL 625  
(First Reading File Bill)

On page 3, strike beginning with “BE” in line 10 down through “ASSOCIATION” in line 11 and substitute “COMPLY WITH THE FEDERAL FAIR CREDIT REPORTING ACT AND TITLE 14, SUBTITLE 12 OF THE COMMERCIAL LAW ARTICLE”.

# **SB625\_Hettleman\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Shelly Hettleman

Position: FAV



*The Senate of Maryland*  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

TESTIMONY OF SENATOR SHELLY HETTMAN  
SB 625 – TRANSPORTATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES –  
TRANSPORTATION NETWORK COMPANIES – EMPLOYEE REQUIREMENTS

Mobility is a program in the Baltimore area that provides people with disabilities critical transportation services. Constituents who have disabilities are completely reliant on this service to meet their mobility needs for doctors' appointments, jobs, and everyday living. Our office has been contacted repeatedly over the years by these constituents, and those calls for help have been increasingly more frequent as they have experienced frustrating and sometimes dangerous, circumstances stemming from untimely and unreliable service.

One young man, who is blind, was left stranded on a college campus when his MTA Mobility ride never showed up. He had to navigate logistics and arrange for his own transportation, which finally came hours later. Another constituent reported being dropped by their in-home care provider due to lateness resulting from so many canceled scheduled appointments. Last week a constituent got very ill with a Multiple Sclerosis flare-up resulting from long exposure to the heat and stress of bouncing up and down on a MTA van. The ride should have been a 5-8 minute trip, but ended up taking over 110 minutes due to challenges with drivers, poor routing, and logistics planning. Along with being uncomfortable and sick from being overheated, the constituent was mortified because her bladder emptied during the unplanned, lengthy ride. These are just a few examples of the indignities, frustrations, and unacceptable treatment of our constituents. We must do better.

To their credit, the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) has been accessible and responsive to our constituents' complaints, holding a town hall and meeting with us and our colleagues many times over the years. This bill is an attempt to enable the MTA to respond to our constituents' very real transportation needs.

During COVID, MTA experienced a dramatic decrease in the number of Mobility drivers. With these recent operator shortages, SB 625 is a necessary step towards expanding comprehensive and accessible transportation options for people with disabilities in Maryland. As the Maryland Transit Caucus has made us aware, nearly one third of people with disabilities routinely face inadequate access to transportation.

Current law requires that MTA obtain fingerprints from their drivers for criminal background checks, a provision that Transportation Network Companies (TNC's),

companies like Uber and Lyft, will not do. This bill would modify the provision in law, consistent with what is required by the Public Service Commission, and enable a TNC to use a background screening tool to obtain a full adult criminal history check for convictions in Maryland and all jurisdictions in the United States.

Specifically, the bill will:

- Exempt transportation network companies from doing a complete criminal history background check through the Criminal Justice Information System Central Repository of the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services.
- Exempt transportation employees that provide transit service to disabled persons under contract with the MTA from the fingerprinting requirement within the governing Transportation Article.
- Require that transportation providers run an annual background screening on all transit operators, including an operator's entire adult history.
- As amended, require that any background screening provider be audited and accredited by companies covered under the Fair Credit Reporting Act.

SB 625 will expand access to transportation for people with disabilities, improving their ability to participate in communal activities and independently access resources such as groceries, employment, healthcare appointments. The bill provides an innovative and effective way to ensure that Marylanders with disabilities have access to reliable and safe transportation services.