



Statement of the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 689

HB 1030– Transportation Network Companies - Deactivation of Operators - Policy and Appeal
Procedure
March 11th, 2025

TO: The Honorable C.T. Wilson and Members of the Economic Matters Committee
FROM: Matthew Girardi, Political & Communications Director, ATU Local 689

ATU Local 689 supports HB 861 and urges the Economic Matters committee to issue a favorable report. This bill is a necessary and fair measure for rideshare drivers and riders in the state of Maryland.

At Local 689, we represent over 15,000 transit workers and retirees throughout the Washington DC Metro Area performing many skilled transportation crafts for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), MetroAccess, DASH, and MTA Commuter Bus among others. Our union helped turn low-wage, exploitative transit jobs into transit careers. We became an engine for the middle-class of this region.

Throughout the Union's history, we have had to fight tooth and nail to get fairness for our members. Be it a living wage, a secure retirement system, quality health insurance, or stable hours, Local 689 has been on the front lines of the fights to bring a decent quality of life to blue-collar workers throughout the transportation and transit industry. Indeed, when transit workers themselves began organizing, we were not given the same rights we have today. Transit workers were often intentionally isolated and not allowed to talk with each other. There wasn't transparency in pay. Firings were at will and hiring was discriminatory. There wasn't even a minimum wage. We sadly see these practices echoed in the ways that rideshare is being allowed to operate currently.

Today, across the state of Maryland, rideshare is a prevalent part of our transportation networks. However, unlike single personal use vehicles, rail, bus, or traditional for-hire vehicles, we do not have good public and comprehensive data showing who drives for companies like Uber and Lyft, how they are compensated, or how much they drive. Additionally, riders and drivers, unlike other consumers and workers, do not have access to identical itemized receipts. HB 861 would help this immensely in a number of ways.

To start, the Union notes Uber and Lyft drivers under current setups have great difficulty understanding how much they are making. A recent survey from the Kalmanowitz Initiative of Georgetown University shows this clearly:

- Of surveyed drivers, 100% experienced difficulties with, or barriers to, calculating their actual compensation.
- While 83% of drivers knew what percentage of their fares Uber took, 38% did not know how Uber determined the amount drivers took home on a single fare, whether they were required to buy commercial insurance, or how tax filing worked at the end of the year.

Uber, Lyft, and all rideshare companies have the ability to give these itemized and accessible receipts to both drivers and passengers. However, as of now, many drivers are forced to see only estimates of their pay behind a separate portal not within the apps. There is no reason why this should be the case. HB 861 would solve this problem by requiring an accessible, itemized, and identical receipt available both to drivers and riders.

Additionally, there is a common misperception that rideshare drivers are using this as a “side-hustle”, but private research shows this is often not the case. According to a recent study from gridwise, a service that helps rideshare drivers track their earnings, Uber drivers are working on average 56 hours a week, and Lyft drivers on average 44 hours per week. This makes the importance of transparency and fairness for drivers that much greater. These are not individuals looking to supplement their incomes; for many, this work is their livelihood. HB 861 would help us finally help fix the misperceptions around rideshare drivers by requiring that we have publicly available data showing how many drivers are active, what kind of wages they are making, and how many hours they are driving.

Finally, the Union notes that Maryland should not be behind the ball in what other states are doing. Already, for instance, Virginia has passed a bill in bipartisan manner both in the 2024 and 2025 sessions to do this. That bill specifically requires a transportation network company (TNC) to:

- (i) issue an annual report to the Department of Motor Vehicles containing the aggregate data regarding the average fare collected from passengers, the total time driven by TNC partners while transporting a passenger, and the total amount earned by TNC partners in connection with prearranged rides and
- (ii) disclose to TNC partners details about the deactivation process and provide a weekly summary that includes the total fare collected from passengers, the total amount earned, and the percentage earned by such TNC partner that week.

Maryland should follow and adopt these critical fairness and transparency measures to help ensure that rideshare drivers are treated with the dignity and respect they have earned. The Union thanks Delegate Stewart for introducing this worthy measure and urges the committee to issue a favorable report.