



Statement of the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 689 SB 747– Transportation Network Companies - Deactivation of Operators - Policy and Appeal Procedure March 5th, 2025

TO: The Honorable Pamela Beidle and Members of the Senate Finance Committee
FROM: Matthew Girardi, Political & Communications Director, ATU Local 689

ATU Local 689 supports SB 747 and urges the Senate Finance Committee to issue a favorable report. This bill is a necessary and fair measure for rideshare drivers 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. Indeed, when transit workers themselves began organizing, we were not given the same rights they 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. Sadly, we see this happening with TNCs now, with rideshare drivers being deactivated. This must stop.

Today across the state of Maryland, rideshare drivers are in a precarious situation. While many effectively drive and work for Uber and Lyft, existing labor law does not protect them in the same way it does every other worker. Instead, riders are subject to being "fired by the app" without notice, reason, or recourse.

To start, the Union notes that deactivation has severe consequences for drivers. Instead of being a "side-hustle", many deactivated drivers are instead heavily reliant on Uber and Lyft as their primary sources of income according to a recent survey by Asian Americans Advancing Justice and Rideshare Drivers United. To list a few of the major points of the report:

- Of surveyed drivers who were deactivated, they averaged working 44.5 hours per week for Uber and 37.7 hours per week for Lyft.
- 18% of drivers lost their car as a result of loss of income from deactivation
- 12% of drivers lost their homes as a result of loss of income from deactivation
- 28% of drivers had difficulty paying for healthcare as a result of loss of income from deactivation
- 24% of drivers had difficulty paying for their children's needs including childcare and education as a result of loss of income from deactivation.

Additionally, the Union notes that Uber and Lyft deactivation is far too common. Moreover, this has severe consequences and impacts Black, brown, and AAPI drivers disproportionately. From that same report, we saw:

- Altogether, 66% of surveyed drivers reported deactivation at some point either from Uber or Lyft.
- Over 69% of drivers of color experienced some form of deactivation, compared to 57% of white drivers.

- 45% of drivers believe they were deactivated directly as a result of some form of discrimination.
- 30% of drivers who were deactivated were not given any explanation for why they were locked out of the app.
- 40% of deactivated Uber drivers and 16% of deactivated Lyft drivers reported they were not provided enough information by the company on how to appeal their deactivation.
- Only 10% of drivers from each company were able to successfully appeal and reverse their deactivations.

SB 747 would simply require that there is a fair, clearly outlined, and accountable process for deactivation. Much like any other workplace where “just cause” is required to fire an employee, there should be clear standards around who gets to drive for rideshare companies and when. Deactivation being driven by ratings which, in turn, have been influenced by riders who do not like a driver for being part of an otherwise protected class, like their national origin, skin color, race, gender, sexual orientation, or age is fundamentally unfair and discriminatory. We need to have fair and standardized deactivation procedures. That is exactly what SB 747 does.

The Union thanks Senator Kramer for introducing this worthy measure and urges the committee to issue a favorable report.