

February 27, 2027

Good Afternoon,

I write to you about HB1242. I respectfully oppose HB 1242, which exempts services like Uber from fingerprinting and training requirements for transporting people with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities who rely on service animals or therapy dogs should feel secure, and their animals should feel safe as well.

First, eliminating fingerprint-based State and national criminal background checks for drivers serving riders with disabilities lowers safety standards for one of our most vulnerable populations. Fingerprint checks provide a far more reliable picture of an individual's criminal history than name-based database searches, and riders who rely on accessible transportation deserve the highest level of screening.

Second, this bill moves disability transportation to a TNC model at the same time the U.S. Department of Justice is suing Uber for systemic discrimination against riders with disabilities, including repeated denials of rides for individuals traveling with service dogs and wheelchairs. Weakening safety and training requirements now sends the wrong message and risks replicating the same discriminatory practices here in Maryland.

Finally, HB 1242 removes mandatory disability and service animal training that helps drivers understand their obligations under the ADA and the difference between service animals and therapy or emotional support animals. Without this training, riders who use service or therapy dogs are more likely to face confusion, refusals, and humiliation when trying to access essential transportation.

Again, I oppose HB1242.

Thank you,

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