

# WRITTEN TESTIMONY – HB480

Mitchell Yangson Testimony:

Good afternoon Mister Chair and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

My name is Mitchell Yangson and I am the director of the ACE Collaborative and the DMV Drivers Alliance,

We are an organization that has engaged with over 2,000 drivers in the DMV region. We have also provided assistance to over 200 drivers in reactivating their accounts.

Uber and Lyft's current driver deactivation method puts drivers and customers in an unsafe environment. The main reason that a driver can be deactivated or fired by the app is based on customer hearsay, (false reports) and nothing more. It does not matter if a driver has a 4.8 or a perfect 5-star rating. It does not matter how many years the driver has been driving on the app.

Drivers can be deactivated on just 1 unsubstantiated accusation by the customer. For example, a customer can simply claim that a driver was driving under the influence, or the driver assaulted them without verifiable evidence. The customer does not need to submit a police report or provide supporting video or audio recordings for their accusation. There is really no due process or just cause for drivers.

This current method actually lends itself to drivers being unsafe and prone to abuse from passengers. Secondly, because drivers know how easy it is for any customer to deactivate them and their lack of options in challenging these unfair deactivations, it creates an environment where a driver is reluctant to inform passengers of basic traffic safety laws. Drivers can be reluctant to inform a passenger to put on their seatbelts, or refuse to give a ride to a bunch of drunk customers because the driver does not have enough seatbelts available, we have drivers telling us that they are afraid to refuse rides from parents who did not bring a car seat for their baby.

It has gotten so bad, that there are even Facebook posts that tell people how they can get a free ride from an uber driver by making false claims or statements.

Uber and Lyft even an acknowledge in their correspondence with drivers that there are customers that do game the system

These are the reasons why HB0480 should be reported favorably by thos committee. By giving drivers more options or ways to challenge these unfair deactivations and by providing some regulation on this deactivation process, drivers will be more comfortable in informing passengers of basic traffic safety laws because they know that they have more options in challenging unfair deactivations.

If you really want to increase both the safety and well-being of Maryland workers and Maryland customers who use apps like Uber and Lyft, I urge to report favorably on HB0480