



Live the life you want.

From: Ronza Othman, President
National Federation of the Blind of Maryland
15 Charles Plaza, #3002
Baltimore, MD 21201 president@nfbmd.org

To: Senate Committee on Finance

The members of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland urge the Senate finance Committee to give a favorable report with amendment to SB0786. This bill exempts transportation network companies under contract with the Maryland Transit Administration that facilitate transit service to persons with disabilities through transportation network operators from certain requirements relating to a criminal history records check and a required course for employees.

The bill as written is problematic to the extent that it exempts transportation network companies contracting with the MTA to require their operators to undergo training related to the proper treatment of people with disabilities. Unfortunately, transportation network companies have a poor record of respecting the rights of passengers with disabilities, particularly those who use guide dogs or other service animals. While the MTA may make every effort to explicitly require compliance with nondiscrimination laws in its contracts with transportation network companies, and while these companies often have policies against discrimination themselves, it is all too clear that many operators are not aware of their nondiscrimination obligations. We therefore believe that the bill should explicitly require that operators for transportation network companies that contract to provide service to people with disabilities undergo training about their obligations not to discriminate against passengers with disabilities, particularly those who use service animals.

For these reasons, we ask for a favorable report conditional on the above amendment on SB0786. For questions, please contact me at President@nfbmd.org or at 443-426-4110.