

Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1300

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Proudly representing the transit workers of the MTA!



SB 786 - Transportation of Persons With Disabilities - Transportation Network Companies - Requirements

Favorable with Amendments
Senate Budget & Taxation Committee
February 25th, 2026

ATU Local 1300 represents over 3,000 transit workers at the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA). This includes bus operators, bus mechanics, rail operators, rail maintenance workers, and more. Our members keep Maryland moving every day.

We have concerns with any legislation that decreases requirements on Transportation Network Companies (TNCs). TNCs are explicitly designed from their initial business model to undercut public transportation by lowering the compensation of transit workers through exempting them from commonsense worker protections, like unemployment benefits, minimum wage requirements, and payroll taxes. After the TNCs sufficiently undermine the existing public transit services, the TNCs dramatically increase their costs or request subsidies from the very same entities they tried to put out of business. This isn't speculation, this is the very process that has worked out in public view since Uber, Lyft, and rideshare companies began.

It is already unfortunate that MTA contracts with any TNCs. Public transit work, including vital paratransit services and flexible demand services, should be done in-house by workers employed by a public transit agency. This legislation seems to repeat the same process initiated over a decade ago, where TNCs carved themselves out of existing regulations in favor of them largely self regulating their own industry by operating as "platforms" for independent contractors. But this ignores the fact that any claims that operators on these platforms cannot set their own prices, only accept or deny work offered to them algorithmically designed to suppress their compensation.

While we oppose all use of TNCs, including those with more modern and public transit friendly images like Via, we are amenable to amendments that may limit the applicability of this bill's exemption to just the MTA's Call A Ride service. We propose this amendment in order to protect the work that our sister local, ATU 1764, has done to organize MTA's contracted paratransit workers. Their testimony should include proposed amendments to this bill, but we have attached them below for your reference.

Appendix: Amendment to SB 786

New text in bold. Removed text is struck through.

24 (II) THE REQUIREMENTS OF PARAGRAPHS (2) AND (3) OF THIS
25 SUBSECTION DO NOT APPLY TO A TRANSPORTATION NETWORK COMPANY UNDER
26 CONTRACT WITH THE ADMINISTRATION THAT FACILITATES THE PROVISION OF
27 TRANSIT SERVICES TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES THROUGH TRANSPORTATION
28 NETWORK OPERATORS **AS PART OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S CALL-A-RIDE
SERVICE.**

We are flexible on language so long as the amendment makes it clear that these statutory exemptions to the standard background check process only apply to Call A Ride services.