

ATU Local 1764
President Raenelle Cole

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

Favorable with Amendment
Senate Finance Committee
February 25th, 2026

ATU Local 1764 represents thousands of transit workers that are employed by the privatized transit contractors that help serve this state. Most notably, our members work for Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) Mobility Link paratransit service contractors. For years, these workers have fought hard to drag these jobs out of being low wage, high turnover positions that were ignored and exploited. That fight is far from over but we have made substantial progress over the last few years to help bring these jobs closer to the middle class.

I am here today to oppose any bill that might make it easier for Transportation Network Companies to undermine paratransit careers in favor of a model where transit workers are mislabeled as independent contractors. By using TNCs the state is subsidizing misclassification, undermining the Unemployment Insurance system, cheating itself of payroll taxes, and more. The state should not be doing this, even if it may save money for the MTA.

The MTA and its contractors should always hold themselves accountable to the highest standards. That goes especially for transit workers assisting the elderly and those with disabilities. Exempting TNCs contracted by the MTA from the standard process of background checks and trainings makes no sense. We need stronger standards, especially when it comes to improving the quality of MTA Mobility Link services. Our goal at Local 1764, as always, is to turn paratransit work into a career path, not just a temporary job. Anything that lowers standards on TNCs undermines that mission. Paratransit riders deserve high quality, safe, and reliable transportation. TNCs cannot be allowed to self regulate their own standards and exempt themselves from the legal requirements put in place by statutes.

We have reason to believe that this bill might be targeted just at MTA's Call A Ride service. If that is the case, we believe that an amendment to the bill should be put forward to limit its scope just to contractors for Call A Ride. We believe that the amendment offered on page two would do just that.

We urge an unfavorable report for the bill as written, but if the bill's scope is limited to Call A Ride services we may be supportive.

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.