

Written Comments for Pennsylvania House Consumer Affairs Committee Hearing 6/5/2015 HB 1065

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I am writing this Committee to urge them to pass a bill that will allow myself and fellow Pennsylvanians to continue operating as TNC drivers for Uber so that our right to earn money with our own cars is protected in both Philadelphia and throughout Pennsylvania. I drive as an UberX driver in Philadelphia and the surrounding suburbs and having different rules for just the city of Philadelphia will impinge on my and others ability to earn income. In current economic times, it is crucial to have such an income opportunity with ridesharing that aids individuals and their families which also benefits the Commonwealth by having more hard working tax paying citizens.

I have partnered with Uber for 9 months now to earn income that is essential to the livelihood of my family. With 3 children in college this past year, this income was crucial to help pay for the high education costs existing today. I have lived and worked in Pennsylvania all my life after attending Penn State and have always been involved as an owner in small entrepreneurial businesses. The Uber business model allows me to continue as an independent small businessman to make money with my own vehicle with a schedule that is conducive to my family. As a senior, I believe I have faced age discrimination in trying to return to the general workplace so the Uber platform has been a real tangible benefit in providing consistent income.

Since starting driving for UberX in August 2014, I have given over 3800 safe rides and received a lot of good feedback from my riders. Consumers have raved about the excellent ridesharing experience and commented about its cashless convenience, quick arrival, safety, economical cost and gone as far as to comment that it is a "lifesaver". There are countless times where I have served customers who otherwise could not get rides in more remote areas, who needed rides from emergency rooms, and needed to get home from bars to prevent drunk driving. Many customers without cars have used the service for shopping and to get to and from work. Parents trust the service to have their children transported from school and activities. Riders are extremely pleased to have the ridesharing alternative where they are treated like a person, client, customer. Riders have shared many stories of uncomfortable rides with other older transportation alternatives where they have been treated like cattle or a commodity. Just ask any college student how they have been taken advantage of with extra mileage routes taken in unclean, smelly vehicles that are driven at unsafe speeds then falsely told the credit card machine is broken with cash payment demanded and meter running while stopping at an ATM.

In conclusion, I want to reinforce how the ridesharing alternative provides not only individual income for drivers which benefits the Commonwealth as well but also serves the public well with a cheaper, better, faster, safer system that helps with the environment by keeping less cars on the road. The future of the State will be well served with legislation that continues to allow such things to happen and move the ridesharing alternative forward. America has always been a cradle for innovation and progress be it the car replacing the horse drawn carriage or the calculator replacing the slide rule to name just a very few. Our laws should allow a platform for such new ideas to flourish.