



NEWS RELEASE

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Disability Access Laws Must Be Enforced on Buses

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Transportation unions applaud House passage of legislation that makes clear to the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) that it must require bus companies to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Today, the House of Representatives passed HR 3985, a bill that instructs the DOT's Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) to require compliance with ADA regulations when granting and renewing operating authority to intercity bus companies.

"Transportation Labor is surprised that it takes an act of Congress to force this Administration to enforce well-established laws designed to protect people with disabilities," said Edward Wytkind, President of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO. "Today's vote is an important step in the right direction toward ensuring access to all people."

Transportation unions have long argued that passengers with disabilities are at risk when bus companies refuse to honor their obligations under the ADA.

"Companies that don't abide by these laws shouldn't be allowed to operate on our highways," Wytkind said. "And passengers shouldn't be put in a position where they unwittingly use the services of bus companies that ignore the rights of passengers with disabilities."

FMCSA has repeatedly indicated its unwillingness to consider ADA compliance in its licensing decisions – despite a U.S. Court of Appeals decision requiring it to do so. Low-fare bus companies referred to as "curbside" buses are a rapidly expanding sector of the industry. Because they pick up and drop off passengers from downtown curbsides – and not from a centralized bus terminal – they are more elusive to inspect and remain virtually unregulated.

"Curbside bus companies offer cheap fares, but their business models are predicated on evading compliance with disability and other important laws," Wytkind said. "Laws exist for a reason, and they must be enforced. We thank Committee Chairman Jim Oberstar and Subcommittee Chairman Peter DeFazio for their leadership on this issue, and look forward to the Senate acting on this as well."

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The Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO, represents 32 member unions in the aviation, rail, transit, trucking, highway, longshore, maritime and related industries. For more information, visit www.ttd.org.

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