



SENT VIA EMAIL

June 27, 2019

The Honorable Benjamin Cardin
United States Senate
509 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chris Smith
United States House of Representatives
2373 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Cardin and Representative Smith:

Members of the National Federation of the Blind appreciate your efforts to improve the safety of transportation network companies (TNC) through the introduction of Sami's Law (S. 1871/H.R. 3262). However, we are compelled to bring to your attention the adverse repercussions the blind and other passengers will experience as a result of the requirement to scan a QR code before a ride begins.

The National Federation of the Blind is the oldest and largest organization of blind people in the United States. Many of our members independently use a TNC almost every day as a quick and convenient transportation option. While the scanning of a QR code may seem virtually effortless, we are concerned that it may be difficult for a blind person to locate and scan a code that is not tactilely accessible. Blind people currently use QR codes on a variety of products and devices, but scanning a code that is not tactilely accessible because it is on the opposite side of a featureless pane of glass in the back window of a car may prove difficult, especially while standing on the side of a busy city street or sidewalk.

While not specific to blind people, there are two additional areas that might be of general concern. First, most transportation network companies currently allow passengers to order rides via a landline without the use of a smart phone. This means that passengers without smart phones will also not be able to scan the QR code, and therefore be unable to commence a ride. A mandatory QR code would eliminate the option of using a TNC for any passengers who do not possess a smart phone. Second, passengers sometimes order vehicles for friends and relatives utilizing their own TNC account. This means that the smart phone needed to verify the QR code would not be with the passenger getting into the vehicle. While including an opt-out could address these two concerns, it would not provide the additional security the law is intended to create.

We applaud your efforts to make transportation network companies safer for both passengers and drivers. However, we urge you to consider better and more inclusive ways to accomplish this goal.

Sincerely,

Mark Riccobono, President
National Federation of the Blind