



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

Kennedy, Jacobs, Peoples-Stokes & Kearns Partner with Mayor Brown to Announce First of Four Statewide Public Forums on Bringing Ridesharing to Upstate New York

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY January 27, 2017

| ISSUE: RIDESHARING, UPSTATE



**DO YOU WANT RIDESHARING  
IN UPSTATE NEW YORK?**

**WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

*As Legislators Consider Ridesharing in Both Bill Form and Budget, Kennedy to Launch Statewide Public Forums to Allow Upstate New Yorkers to Make Their Voices Heard*

*Buffalo Public Forum on Feb. 11 at Albright Knox Art Gallery Auditorium Will Kick Off Tour Across NY; Forums in Rochester, Syracuse & Albany to Follow*

BUFFALO, NY – Senators Tim Kennedy (D-Buffalo) and Chris Jacobs joined Assemblymembers Crystal Peoples-Stokes and Michael Kearns, and Mayor Byron Brown Friday to announce the first of a series of public forums on ridesharing and efforts to legalize it in upstate New York. The kickoff forum will be held Saturday, February 11th from 10 a.m. – noon at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery Auditorium, and will be the first of four public forums Kennedy will be holding across upstate New York. Similar forums will later be held in Rochester, Syracuse and Albany, in partnership with Rochester Mayor Lovely Warren, Syracuse-based Senator David Valesky, and Albany-based Senator Neil Breslin.

The announcement of the public forums comes as legislators continue to hear overwhelmingly from constituents, local businesses and municipalities about the need to bring ridesharing upstate. Currently, ridesharing companies such as Uber and Lyft are able to operate in New York City due to an agreement with the city's Taxi and Limousine Commission, allowing them to operate as for-hire cars similar to other livery vehicles. As a result, Kennedy has invited all 65 downstate Assemblymembers to attend one of the four statewide press conferences, so that they can hear directly from upstate New Yorkers what is needed and wanted: fairness to access that is already delivered in their respective districts.

“Thirty-six states have already passed legislation allowing ridesharing platforms, and New York still is not one of them. Bringing ridesharing to upstate isn't just a matter of equal access and opportunity; at its core it boils down to fairness,” said **Senator Tim Kennedy**. “The fact that you can request an Uber in a matter of seconds in New York City, but come up empty handed in Buffalo or any other upstate city is appalling, and only further underscores the upstate and downstate divide. Ridesharing not only creates jobs and stimulates local economies, it saves lives, and the fact that it is not at the fingertips of every New Yorker is simply unacceptable. I encourage all upstate New Yorkers to come out to these public hearings and make your voices heard, so that we can take your words to Albany and prove

you deserve and demand better.”

"Buffalo is earning a national and international reputation as a modern and thriving community, yet we are the largest city in the nation that does not have ridesharing. It is embarrassing and unacceptable," said **Senator Chris Jacobs**. "I have personally attended a number of rallies where Western New Yorkers have come out to voice their support for ridesharing. I encourage them to attend this public forum and have their voices heard once again. I have co-sponsored legislation in the Senate and Governor Cuomo has come out in favor of ridesharing in all of New York state. We need the public's help now, more than ever, to keep the momentum going and make ridesharing in Western New York a reality."

“Expanding transportation options in Buffalo and upstate is critical to growing economic development and tourism,” said **Assemblymember Crystal Peoples-Stokes**. “Buffalo is one of the largest cities in the nation without Uber and Lyft. Our collective regions support ridesharing and this series of forums will build on the momentum over the last year. I look forward to the input from community and business stakeholders throughout upstate. I thank my colleagues in government on making this collaborative effort a reality.”

**Assemblymember Mickey Kearns**, “Ridesharing is an expected service and it’s time we bring it to the rest of New York. I am encouraged that ridesharing has been included in the budget, and by the weekly meetings we in the Assembly have had to finalize details on ridesharing in Upstate New York. I am proud to co-host this event, and as we move closer to bringing ridesharing to WNY I feel it is important to hear from the public on this issue.”

“Ridesharing is a source of employment, another transportation option and is being seen more as a must-have amenity in every city in America. Much like the expectation of WiFi being available for hotel guests, visitors of the City of Buffalo and other Upstate cities want ridesharing to be available to them,” said **Mayor Byron W. Brown**. “Buffalo and WNY have

seen a tremendous revival. Every day, we are looking for ways to create new jobs and attract young professionals and families to our city and state. Ridesharing is beneficial for both of those goals."A list of public forum dates, times and locations can be found below:

**Buffalo Public Forum on Ridesharing**

*Hosted by: Senators Kennedy and Jacobs, Assemblymembers Peoples-Stokes and Kearns*

Saturday, February 11<sup>th</sup>

10 a.m.- noon

Albright-Knox Art Gallery Auditorium

1285 Elmwood Avenue, Buffalo

**Rochester Public Forum on Ridesharing**

*Hosted by: Senator Kennedy and Mayor Lovely Warren*

Wednesday, February 15<sup>th</sup>

5:30-7:30 p.m.

Rochester City Council Chambers

30 Church St., Rochester

**Syracuse Public Forum on Ridesharing**

*Hosted by: Senator Kennedy and Senator Valesky*

Wednesday, March 8<sup>th</sup>

5:30-7:30 p.m.

Syracuse City Council Chambers

**Albany Public Forum on Ridesharing**

*Hosted by: Senator Kennedy and Senator Breslin*

Wednesday, March 15<sup>th</sup>

5:30-7:30 p.m.

Albany County Office Building, Cahill Room

112 State Street, Albany