



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

Kennedy & Rivera Join Disability Advocates to Celebrate Passage of Bill Amplifying Paratransit Voices as Legislation Moves to the Governor's Desk

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY July 27, 2022

| ISSUE: **PARATRANSIT, DISABILITY, TRANSPORTATION, MASS TRANSIT, TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITIES**



Bill Would Require the Appointment of a Transit-Dependent Representative to Upstate Transportation Authority Boards

Legislation Sponsored by Kennedy and Rivera Aims to Ensure the Voices of All Transit Users are Fairly Represented in Decision-Making Processes

BUFFALO, N.Y. – Senator Tim Kennedy (D-Buffalo) and Assemblymember Jon Rivera (D-Buffalo) joined disability community advocates Wednesday to celebrate the passage of [S3959B/A7822](#), a bill sponsored by the legislators that would give a greater voice to the disability community within upstate transportation authorities. The legislation, which passed both houses during the 2021-2022 legislative session, now awaits the Governor's signature. If signed into law, it would require the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority, Rochester-Genesee Regional Transportation Authority, Capital District Transportation Authority, and Central New York Regional Transportation Authority to have one of their voting members be an individual who relies on public transit as their main mode of transportation, due to a temporary or permanent disability. The voting member would be appointed by the Governor, at the recommendation of local and statewide transit advocacy organizations.

“How will a route cut affect a specific community? Is a rate hike going to eliminate access to service for certain individuals? What challenges currently exist within our transportation networks that still need to be addressed? When decisions are being made that directly impact people who rely on transit services statewide, those individuals deserve a seat at the table,” said **Senator Tim Kennedy, Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee**. “With this legislation, we’re establishing a more equal playing field by encouraging all perspectives to be considered in the decision-making process, and creating a new opportunity for transit-dependent riders to have their voices heard.”

“This legislation is indicative of what government should look like at its apex: fighting to protect and transform the lives of our community’s most vulnerable,” said **Assemblymember Jon D. Rivera**. “The ‘paratransit’ bill will give a voice to the disabled community by allowing them a direct say in all matters related to our region’s public transportation progress. In a city like Buffalo, in which transportation is mostly focused around personal car ownership, it is imperative that we craft long-term solutions for those who remain unable to drive. I want to thank Sen. Kennedy for his years of advocacy in pushing to get this bill to the table.”

"The Developmental Disabilities Alliance of WNY (DDAWNY), applauds Senator Kennedy and Assemblymember Rivera for once again, thinking of the disabilities community," said **Rhonda Frederick, President and CEO of People Inc and DDAWNY**.

Frederick added, "Thanks to Senator Kennedy and the advocacy of Stephanie Speaker, money was put in the budget to commission a Paratransit transportation study. It is critical that someone with a disability is at the table while that study is underway, concluded, and recommendations are put forward."

In April, Kennedy and NFTA Executive Director Kim Minkel joined Stephanie Speaker and Todd Vaarwerk, strong advocates within the disability community, to announce \$750,000 for a study that will examine the expansion of paratransit services in WNY. The study will gather financial data, as well as key

facts that will guide the NFTA on the best ways to provide the highest level of service for paratransit customers. Those details include identifying the number of those who qualify for paratransit services and their locations, examining door-to-door or curb-to-curb services, flexible pick-up/drop-off windows, short-notice services, peak-hour feeder services - all elements that impact overall service quality of paratransit service. The study will also look at best practice from agencies across the country.

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RELATED LEGISLATION

2021-S3959B

- Introduced

- - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate

- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate

- - Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate

- Delivered to Governor

- Signed By Governor

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Requires the appointment of a transit dependent and para-transit dependent representative on various transportation authorities

February 01, 2021

Passed Assembly

Sponsored by **Timothy M. Kennedy**

Do you support this bill?