



News From the NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

April 13, 2017

Contact: Molly Hirschbeck (Kennedy) 716-826-2683 (office) | 716-480-2517 (cell) | molly.hirschbeck@gmail.com
Paul Pfeiffer, (Jacobs) 716-854-8705 (office) | 716-913-6283 (cell) | pfeiffer@nysenate.gov

As Countdown to Ridesharing Begins, Senators Jacobs & Kennedy Outline Job Opportunities and User Expectations for Western New Yorkers

Buffalo Senators Join Brown and Community Leadership to Celebrate Big Accessibility and Safety Win and Highlight What's Next for Uber & Lyft Users

BUFFALO, NY – Senators Tim Kennedy (D-Buffalo) and Chris Jacobs (R-Buffalo) joined Mayor Byron Brown and dozens of elected and community leaders Thursday to celebrate the countdown to ridesharing in Western New York, and discuss job opportunities that residents may be able to take advantage of in the coming months. With the New York State legislature voting to legalize ridesharing in Upstate as part of the 2017-18 budget, the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles now has 30 days to craft regulations that will oversee the ridesharing industry. Services should be up and running in 90 days. While Western New Yorkers may have to wait until the summer to use services like Uber and Lyft, they do not have to wait to apply to become a driver.

"I am thrilled that Buffalo and Western New York, a 21st Century community on the rise, can now say it is a place with 21st Century business and recreational amenities like ridesharing," **said Senator Chris Jacobs**. "I co-sponsored ridesharing legislation in the Senate and strongly supported its expansion statewide not only because it provided a safe and affordable transportation alternative, but because it would provide additional opportunities for enterprising Western New Yorkers to take part in our economic recovery. I'm glad that opportunity now exists and I want to thank my fellow ridesharing advocates for their support in making ridesharing a reality."

"Day after day, I heard from constituents asking when Uber and Lyft would be coming to our city, and after fighting for years to bring ridesharing to Buffalo and Upstate New York, I'm proud to say we finally have the greenlight," **said Senator Tim Kennedy**. "While we wait for the DMV to craft service regulations, Western New Yorkers don't have to wait to take advantage of the potential that ridesharing will bring to our region. Job opportunities are already being created, and I strongly encourage those looking to become a driver to start exploring the application requirements now. Summer will be here before we know it, and with it we'll welcome a new level of safety and accessibility to the City of Good Neighbors."

Requirements for those interested in becoming drivers include:

Being at least 19-years-old, and having a valid license and insurance coverage.

- Own, lease or have otherwise authorization of a car
- Can't appear on the national sex-offender registry, or have committed certain crimes within the last seven years.

Additionally, ridesharing companies will be required to check the driving history of potential drivers before hiring, and will be required to have a zero-tolerance policy for drivers found to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs while on the job. It is important to note that ridesharing companies also have their own requirements that potential applicants must meet; for example, Uber and Lyft require that drivers be at least 21-years-old.

To sign up to become a driver, people can head to Lyft and Uber websites at:

www.lyft.com/drive-with-lyft

www.uber.com/drive

Both links will be posted on both Senators' websites and social media pages, as well as publicized at community events.

"The passing of ridesharing in the 2017-18 New York State budget will produce more progress for the City of Buffalo and its residents," said **Mayor Byron Brown**. "This is the countdown to investment, jobs and tourism for our City's economy. Our residents and visitors can now access services like Uber and Lyft, just in time for summer. This is a big win for our City."

"Ride sharing can bring another level of connectivity and community to Erie County and will not only help residents and visitors to explore our area more fully, it will provide an economic boost by presenting employment opportunities to individuals with free time and a car," said **Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz**. "This new way of getting around town will make travel easier and create new opportunities around Erie County."

"At long last, ride-sharing services will be allowed to operate in Buffalo and other upstate communities. Companies such as Uber and Lyft will create jobs, provide reliable transportation options for residents and visitors and help reduce the number of DWI's in our communities," said **Senator Patrick M. Gallivan (R,C,I - Elma)**.

"For too long, Upstate and Western New York were stuck at the curb while services like Uber and Lyft flourished in New York City," said **Senator Rob Ortt (R,C,I - North Tonawanda)**. "Through strong advocacy from citizens and bi-partisan cooperation among public officials, we were able to bring ride-sharing to Upstate and Western New York as part of this year's budget. We corrected a long-standing injustice and, more importantly, we will create jobs while offering safe, reliable transportation options to residents and visitors."

"I, along with my colleagues in the State Legislature, are thrilled ridesharing will finally be coming to Upstate New York," said **Assemblyman Robin Schimminger (D,C,I - Kenmore)**. This long-overdue development means Western New York will no longer be left behind. We will no longer be without the same array of transportation options downstate residents have long enjoyed. We are finally moving into the future. Ridesharing companies such as Uber and Lyft will inject the local economy with life by

encouraging tourism and creating jobs. Most importantly, by providing people with more ways, and safer alternatives, to get from one place to another, we are providing them with a better quality of life.”

“What an exciting day for Western New Yorkers, as we gather together to celebrate the inclusion of ride-sharing services, such as Uber and Lyft, in this year’s state budget,” said **Assemblyman Ray Walter (R,C,I - Amherst)**. “Besides providing our residents and visitors with a convenient new option for safe and affordable transportation, ride-sharing promises to serve as an economic engine, creating new jobs, and encouraging visitation of our area’s many recreational destinations. I look forward to continuing my work in support of the growth and success of this beneficial service.”

Assemblyman Sean Ryan said, “We have heard from our constituents over the past few years about the need to ensure our state laws are in tune with the changing technology and transportation needs of society. This year we were finally able to come to an agreement to expand ride-hailing across Upstate New York. This regulatory framework will help to make ride-hailing another component of the transportation options available across New York State.”

“I am proud that our recent efforts to make ridesharing a reality in Western New York were successful, while implementing important goals regarding passenger and driver safety, as well as and the positive economic impact this will have for local businesses,” said **Assemblymember Monica Wallace (D-Lancaster)**. I look forward to welcoming ridesharing services to Buffalo and Western New York this summer, and the convenience of having alternative reliable transportation in our region.”

“Since taking office I have been a strong advocate for bringing ride sharing services to Upstate New York. I am very pleased to be a part of a strong bipartisan effort of fellow Western New York Leaders to make this a reality for our region,” said **Assemblyman Michael J. Norris, (R,I- Lockport.)**

“I am thrilled our Legislature has finally moved past the political gridlock that exists in Albany and legalized ride-sharing for the rest of upstate New York,” said **Assemblyman Angelo Morinello (R,C,I,Ref-Niagara Falls)**. “Ride-sharing will create a safe and reliable service for the residents of our district, while also generating new jobs for individuals looking to make additional money in the form of a part-time job. There has been an overwhelming demand for this service and I am happy to have worked on behalf of my constituents to deliver a supply for this demand.”

“I’m thrilled that ride-sharing finally has a place in upstate New York. The passage of ride-sharing in the state budget will improve the economy, create jobs and provide people with easy and inexpensive new transportation options,” said **Assemblyman David DiPietro**. With these ride-sharing regulations, all state counties will have the power to utilize its benefits or prohibit the service if they choose to. Ride-sharing will provide easy and safe transportation, attracting tourism and prosperity statewide.”

“Exploring Buffalo’s rebirth – its redeveloped waterfront, restored architecture and vibrant neighborhoods - will be easier than ever before thanks to the addition of ridesharing,” **Visit Buffalo Niagara President and CEO Patrick Kaler** said. “We are thrilled that Buffalo will have this essential visitor amenity and are pleased to have helped mobilize local support for the service. We are also deeply appreciative of Governor Cuomo, Senators Kennedy and Jacobs and all our state officials who made ridesharing a priority in 2017.”

"As both a small business as well as a purveyor of craft beer in Western New York, Big Ditch Brewing Company believes a ridesharing program will help to grow both our business as well as other breweries in Buffalo's craft brewing community," said **Matt Kahn, President and co-founder of Big Ditch Brewing**

Company. “The program will make our city more accessible to tourists, which is a rapidly growing industry in Western New York, and will also keep our customers safe during the journey home. We firmly support the introduction of a rideshare program to our community.”

Kennedy, Jacobs, Brown, and Assembly members Peoples-Stokes and Kearns co-hosted a ridesharing forum at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in February, inviting the public to share their feelings on the issue. More than 200 people joined the conversation, and overwhelmingly expressed interest in having ridesharing in Buffalo in one form or another.

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