



## **Surface Transportation and Amtrak Reauthorization Priorities**

The National Disability Rights Network (NDRN) is the membership organization for the nationwide network of Protection and Advocacy (P&A) agencies. Congressionally created and mandated to provide legally based advocacy services for all people with disabilities, under all state and federal laws. The P&A Network is the largest provider of advocacy services for people with disabilities.

Transportation systems are too often unavailable, inaccessible or provide unequal services to people with disabilities. NDRN and the P&A Network work to monitor accessibility in a variety of transportation settings, and help enforce federal and state laws relating to accessibility to make sure transportation systems are improved and maintained so people with disabilities can live and work in the community. As an organization and network, we have a vested interest in ensuring surface transportation and Amtrak reauthorizations include the provisions outlined below to ensure accessibility to all.

### **Surface Transportation Priorities**

Accessible transportation is necessary in order for people with disabilities to be part of their communities. Unfortunately, significant barriers to accessible, equitable, and reliable transportation persist. NDRN recommends the following surface transportation proposals and priorities for the next reauthorization.

#### **Assess and increase the availability of fully-accessible, integrated transit and on-demand mobility services.**

- Require data collection and reports on public-private partnerships (Uber, Lyft, taxis, etc.) including impacts on mobility for people with disabilities.
- Assess and support best practices for quality paratransit, including one-stop service pilots where appropriate as outlined in legislation such as the [Disability Access to Transportation Act \(H.R. 6248\)](#).
- Establish connectivity and equity data collection and performance measures.
- Identify the availability of affordable, accessible transportation systems to within ¼ mile of accessible housing. Identify transit and paratransit gaps in service.

**Assess and address continued discrimination in transit and on-demand mobility services through public-private partnerships and public accommodation.**

- Improve the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Office of Civil Rights complaint reporting process, including adding phone and online reporting, and require regular reports on type and number of complaints received and their disposition.

**Ensure access to fully-accessible Autonomous Vehicles (AVs) and AV mobility services.**

- Require full accessibility for all types of common and public use AVs.
- Define a process to engage with manufacturers, legal and insurance industry representatives, disability groups, the U.S. Department of Labor, and U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT). Existing rules, including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), should be recognized as requiring accessible AVs, including the development of any additional needed standards by the U.S. Access Board and regulations by the U.S. Department of Justice.
- An AV Accessibility Advisory Committee should be established and include individuals with disabilities, representatives of national organizations representing individuals with disabilities, people who are elderly, and representatives of standard-setting organizations.
- Require that, as a matter of civil rights, all new technology incorporates the needs of people with disabilities at the earliest possible point. Many new technologies are inaccessible to people with vision, hearing, and/or other disabilities because accessibility was not considered during research and development.
- Require that people with disabilities are part of the design and testing of new technologies in order to ensure the accessibility and usability of the technology.
- Funding for the research or development of AV technology should require all resulting products be fully accessible for people with disabilities. All technology products should be required to comply with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.
- Increase funding to USDOT's Accessible Transportation Technologies Research Initiative program, the Intelligent Transportation Systems' Joint Program Office, and the FTA to promote research and development of accessible AV technology.

- Increase funding for the FTA to ensure its technical assistance and training are available to promote the availability and accessibility of AV transportation options for older adults, people with disabilities, and caregivers.
- Increase funding for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to ensure robust standards and testing are developed for the safety of passengers and pedestrians with disabilities, including wheelchair users.
- Increase funding for the U.S. Access Board to ensure robust standards for AVs are developed for the safety and accessibility of passengers with disabilities and pedestrians.
- Fund research into how AVs could affect transportation and land-use patterns, congestion, pollution, road safety and public transit, members of low-income, indigenous, and disability communities, and communities of color.

**Fund P&A agencies to monitor and provide technical assistance** to all stakeholders in order to achieve full accessibility in surface transportation.

**Require and enforce minimum standards for pedestrian facilities** based on the proposed Access Board 2011 Public Rights of Way Guidelines.

**Assess and fund accessible infrastructure** such as sidewalks, audible pedestrian signals, crosswalks, bus stops and on-demand pick-up/drop-off zones.

**Fund and support the use of 49 U.S.C. Section 5310 funds**, including non-traditional uses that exceed the ADA such as voucher programs, infrastructure improvement, and mobility management.

**Fund and support the use of 5311 Formula Area for Rural Areas funds** for late-night, weekend and off-peak hour services, pedestrian access improvement, mobility management, and Job Access and Reverse Commute activities.

**Fund and support provisions of technical assistance** for transit agencies and public entities to support ADA and Title VI compliance for existing and new services.

### **Amtrak Priorities**

People with disabilities who travel on Amtrak have faced numerous barriers to using Amtrak. Some have faced inaccessible trains, others have been unable to purchase tickets to their destinations because the platforms and stations were inaccessible, and some have had to disembark at a station that was not their ultimate destination just so they could get off the train or out of the station. People with disabilities have also been forced to suffer embarrassment, discomfort, and other indignities due to a lack of accessible bathrooms and other facilities and services. Many of these deficiencies were

highlighted in NDRN's report "[All Aboard \(Except People with Disabilities\)](#)". In order to address these issues, NDRN recommends the following proposals and priorities for Amtrak as part of a surface transportation reauthorization.

**Utilize Congressional funding authority to enforce accessibility requirements for Amtrak including, but not limited to, prioritizing the replacement of single-level Amtrak cars with passenger cars that provide truly accessible restrooms and fully accessible text announcements.**

**Require level boarding at all Amtrak stations in order to increase accessibility for all people to Amtrak trains.**

**Fund P&A agencies to monitor and provide technical assistance to all stakeholders in order to achieve full accessibility at all Amtrak stations.**

**Direct the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) to produce a report that examines the failure of Amtrak to meet accessibility requirements at its stations, in its trains, and throughout its provision of services and recommend corrective action. GAO, as part of this report, should specify penalties for failure to complete the corrective action recommended.**

**Include the Ending Passenger Rail Forced Arbitration Act ([S.3400/H.R.6101](#)) as part of a surface transportation reauthorization bill.**