



NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

May 13, 2019

Representative Nancy Nathanson Chair
House Revenue Committee

Chair Jeff Barker and members of the Committee on Business and Labor, Speaker Kotek, and Majority Leader Williamson:

As elected officials entrusted to keep the peace and enforce the law, Sheriffs are directly accountable to their communities, which results in a distinctive relationship with the public. Countering the rise in traffic deaths and injuries, particularly reducing impaired driving, is of paramount importance to sheriffs and for all of law enforcement. Although there are many variables connected to the increase in traffic crashes, impaired driving, speeding, lack of occupant restraints, and inattention are predominant contributors.

Moreover, urban, rural, and unincorporated areas of our nation lack adequate infrastructure and resources to address transportation issues, including those facing victims of domestic violence and older adults. Human traffickers take advantage of our roadways to transport victims. The National Sheriffs' Association sees an opportunity to explore ridesharing options as a way to address these gaps and further increase safety across our communities.

This is why we have partnered with the ridesharing company, Lyft, and why we strongly believe that ridesharing companies should operate in communities across the country. Lyft is now connecting over 6 million riders per week in over 300 American cities, and is dedicated to making a positive impact on roadway safety and improving the quality of life in communities.

Ridesharing companies like Lyft are playing a critical role in the everyday lives by increasing access to safe, affordable, reliable access to transportation. Drivers undergo a rigorous and thorough background check and the on-demand apps have built in a number of additional enhanced safety features that provide further safety benefits for passengers and drivers.

Not only is ridesharing changing the way people are able to safely get around their community, these new forms of transportation are improving public safety. Studies have shown the availability of services like Lyft reduce alcohol-related driving arrests. A UC Davis Institute of

Transportation study documents substantial decreases in impaired driving in cities once rideshare is introduced - from 14% to 37% in cities studied

(<https://steps.ucdavis.edu/new-research-ride-hailing-impacts-travel-behavior/>). A Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania has similar findings of decreases up to almost 60% in impaired driving instances

(<https://www.pennmedicine.org/news/news-releases/2017/october/impacts-of-ride-hailing-on-crashes-differ-from-city-to-city>).


Other studies document a decrease in impaired drivers by up to 51% ([Dills & Mulholland](#)), reduction in assault and disorderly conduct arrests by up to 42% ([Dills & Mulholland](#)), and reduce DWI deaths by more than 10%. ([UT Austin](#)). Also, 88% of Lyft passengers already say they are less likely to drive drunk because of the availability of Lyft ([2019 Lyft Economic Impact Report](#)).

The National Sheriffs' Association and its committees understand that an effective community approach, to include alternatives to driving while impaired, maintaining safe speeds while on the roadways, eliminating distracted driving, providing equitable access to alternative modes of transportation for older adults, and curbing victimization, improves safety and improves the quality of life in our communities.

We encourage lawmakers and regulators to support comprehensive legislation and rules to promote ridesharing.

Thank you for helping to keep our nation's roadways safe and our communities a better place to live.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Whetsel". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Sheriff John Whetsel (Ret.)
Oklahoma County, OK
Chairman, NSA Traffic Safety Committee