

No on HB 4159

Members of the Oregon State House, I am writing to you on behalf of the Non-emergency medical transport industry. Although it's kind of a niche industry, and not well known, the medical transport industry is a very important one. Those who rely on medical transport would be denied medical care if not for our service. And yes, I drive for one such company.

There are a surprising number of people who rely on medical transport, on a regular basis. Many of those people are confined to wheelchairs. They are unable to transfer into a vehicle seat, and therefore require specially equipped vans to transport them safely to and from medical appointments. There are also some who require a stretcher for transport.

Medical transport companies operate on a very thin margin. The cost of the vans, including all the the special equipment, and annual inspections and certifications by 3rd party inspectors. The wheelchair lift alone is \$15,000. All vans are required to be equipped with a fire extinguisher, a decent first aid kit, a spill clean-up kit, and several other items required by ADA.

Insurance, Beyond simple vehicle insurance, to cover any possible incident involving the patient being transported. If a patient is injured either through driver error, or equipment failure, the transport company is responsible for all medical bills, and to repair or replace a damaged wheelchair.

Driver wages, special training and certifications for all employees. We are all required to be CPR and first aid certified. That means every 2 years, we must recertify, usually at company expense. There is also "P.A.S.S." (passenger assistance safety) which must be recertified every 3 years. We have to take the ADA approved defensive driving course every 3 years. All of these training sessions are done at company expense.

And of course the fuel needed to operate the vans. During the busiest time of the year, a van will average 120 miles per day. Assuming 10 gallons of fuel used in that time, that's \$2.64 in state gasoline tax. If HB 4159 passes, that cost will increase to \$8.64, about 4 times as much. The company I work for runs about 50 vans daily, so that means an extra \$45 per day, just in added fuel expense.

That expense is passed on to the customers, many of whom are on a fixed income, and already barely making ends meet. It will price some people right out of the market,

meaning they won't be able to afford to go to the doctor. Healthcare will become unaffordable.

Thank you for your attention.

Chris Propeck

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