



Disability
Rights
Oregon

TO: House Committee on Transportation
FROM: Jake Cornett, Disability Rights Oregon
DATE: February 9, 2026
RE: Oppose HB 4085 (2026) – Support for independent mobility, only if accessibility is guaranteed

Chair McLain, Vice-Chair Boshart Davis, Vice-Chair Gamba, and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Jake Cornett, and I am the Executive Director at Disability Rights Oregon (DRO). Disability Rights Oregon supports policies that expand independent transportation options for Oregonians with disabilities. That is why we oppose HB 4085, unless amended. If designed and deployed inclusively, autonomous vehicles could increase independence for many people who cannot drive and reduce barriers to work, health care, and community participation. ***However, HB 4085 and the proposed amendments raise serious equity concerns for wheelchair users and others who need wheelchair-accessible vehicles.***

As we understand it, companies seeking to operate “on-demand autonomous vehicle networks” under this bill—including Waymo—have advocated for language that does not guarantee direct, equal service for wheelchair users. The -2 amendments require a network to “offer its services to persons with disabilities,” but then allow the network to provide only a referral to an alternative carrier when a person requires a “fixed-frame wheelchair” and the network does not have an available vehicle that can accommodate them.

Under [questioning](#) from U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) in the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee on [February 4, 2026](#), Waymo executives admitted that there is ***no fully autonomous Waymo service*** for wheelchair users and there is ***no timeline for beginning to provide such a service.***

A referral-only approach creates a two-tier transportation system: most riders receive direct service from the autonomous network, while wheelchair users are told to find transportation somewhere else. ***This does not expand options for wheelchair users—it maintains the existing shortage of accessible service.***

This inequity is compounded because HB 4085 would establish a uniform statewide framework and significantly limit local governments’ ability to regulate on-demand autonomous vehicle networks—including equal access to autonomous vehicles for wheelchair users. ***If the Legislature chooses to preempt local oversight, then the state must ensure accessibility is built into the statewide framework from day one.***

Wheelchair accessibility is not a “nice to have.” It is a civil right and a core component of full community participation. Whether a large autonomous vehicle company “can” serve wheelchair users is a business decision—and one entirely within that company’s control.

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Waymo's publicly available rider materials, for example, describe a wheelchair-accessible vehicle (WAV) option that is manually driven and intended for riders who cannot ride in Waymo's fully autonomous cars. ***Oregon should not codify a future where wheelchair users are permanently relegated to separate service models or referrals while everyone else benefits from autonomous mobility.***

DRO urges the Committee to move HB 4085 forward ***only with amendments*** that guarantee equal, direct service for wheelchair users, including people who use fixed-frame wheelchairs. At a minimum, we request amendments that:

1. Require every on-demand autonomous vehicle network authorized in Oregon to provide wheelchair-accessible service as part of its own operations—not merely referrals to someone else.
2. Ensure accessible trips are truly comparable to non-accessible trips in availability, response times, service area, hours of service, and pricing.
3. Direct the Oregon Department of Transportation to adopt enforceable accessibility rules and require meaningful reporting, compliance monitoring, and a clear complaint process.

With these changes, HB 4085 could expand independent transportation options for all Oregonians with disabilities—rather than only some.

Thank you for your time and consideration. **Unless amended to provide equal access for wheelchair users, we urge the legislature to oppose HB 4085.**

If you have any questions regarding DRO's position on this legislation, please call Hans Bernard or email him at hans@growthconsulting.net.

About Disability Rights Oregon

Since 1977 Disability Rights Oregon has been the State's Protection and Advocacy System.¹ We are authorized by Congress to protect, advocate, and enforce the rights of people with disabilities under the U.S. Constitution and Federal and State laws, investigate abuse and neglect of people with disabilities, and "pursue administrative, legal, and other appropriate remedies".² We are also mandated to "educate policymakers" on matters related to people with disabilities.³

¹ See ORS 192.517.

² See 42 U.S.C. § 15041 et seq; 42 U.S.C. § 10801 et seq.

³ See 42 U.S. Code § 15043(a)(2)(L).