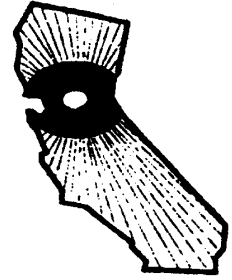


**CALIFORNIA COUNCIL  
OF THE BLIND**



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**CCB Paratransit Resolution calling For Equitable Paratransit Services**

WHEREAS, Prior to passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the availability and quality of paratransit service varied widely throughout California and the nation; and

Whereas, the ADA requires jurisdictions with fixed route service to establish complementary paratransit service; and

Whereas, at its core, the goal of ADA complementary paratransit service is to enable riders whose disabilities preclude them from using fixed route service to have a means of transport to and from places served by a jurisdiction's fixed route service; and

WHEREAS, paratransit service is necessary for many people with disabilities, including those who are blind or have low vision, to maximize their independence by having the necessary transportation options to allow them to participate in in all aspects of daily life, such as education, employment, leisure and accessing medical and social services; And

WHEREAS, as a result of the federal ADA regulations adopted pursuant to the limited core goal of ADA complementary Paratransit, these services are, more often than not, expensive, unreliable, and not intended to enable people with disabilities to get wherever they need to go when they need to get there; and

Whereas, because people with disabilities are both disproportionately low-income and in disadvantaged and underserved groups, the failure of ADA complementary paratransit to meet their needs creates significant inequities, based on the adverse impact on their ability to live independently; and

WHEREAS, in the past, CCB and other disability organizations have neither adequately addressed nor acted upon the serious inequities of paratransit service; and

WHEREAS, freedom of movement is a fundamental human right; and

WHEREAS paratransit riders often report feeling powerless and hopeless, because the minimum requirements governing paratransit service essentially deny them this fundamental right; and

Whereas, the specific inequities in paratransit service include, but are not limited to:

the high cost of fares, the inadequate ability to transfer between jurisdictions,  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile eligibility restriction, the lack of same day service, and recertification of riders with permanent disabilities; and

Whereas, the time required for reserving rides, the lack of same-day scheduling, the often outrageous time that paratransit riders must spend on a vehicle, missed appointments and other inequities would be considered unconscionable were these circumstances faced by the driving public; and

Whereas, some paratransit providers have undertaken innovative initiatives that show promise for the future; and

Whereas, nonetheless, it is abundantly clear that people with disabilities must begin to advocate for a paradigm shift in the basic purpose behind the provision of paratransit service, through short-term and long-term change at the local, state, and ultimately the national level, NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, IN VIRTUAL CONVENTION ASSEMBLED THIS SEVENTH DAY OF APRIL 2024, that this organization commit to advocate for both the short-term and long-term changes in paratransit so that riders can get where they need to go when they need to get there, and be it further.

Resolved, that CCB assemble a task force of active and knowledgeable paratransit riders, which may include the authors of this resolution, to develop a Paratransit Bill of Rights and White Paper, recommending next steps that this organization should take to further the goals of this resolution,

and BE IT

further RESOLVED, that this organization endeavor to disseminate the bill of rights and white paper developed pursuant to this resolution to California transit agencies, public transit and disability rights advocates, the media and the public, and BE IT FURTHER

FURTHER

RESOLVED, that the Publications Committee consider focusing an issue of The Blind Californian (BC) on Paratransit to increase awareness of its shortcomings, and encourage advocacy, and BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, that this organization encourage its members who have an appropriate understanding of paratransit requirements to join transit district or paratransit agency advisory boards, transit advocacy groups and other appropriate entities to help bring about the changes sought by this resolution and be it further.

RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the American Council of the Blind for action at its 2024 National Convention

Resolution 2024-14 Making ADA Paratransit More Equitable

Submitted by the California Council of the Blind and Others

Whereas, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires state and local governments which operate fixed-route public transit services (hereafter "transit agencies") to provide "complimentary paratransit" for individuals who are unable, because of a disability, to independently use fixed-route transit services; and,

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) requires that paratransit services meet specific minimum regulatory criteria (49 C.F.R. Part 37), including: service area, days and hours of service, reservations requirements, trip limits and priorities, and allowable fares; and,

WHEREAS, as a result of the federal ADA regulations adopted pursuant to the limited core goal of ADA Paratransit, these services are, more often than not, expensive, unreliable, and fail to enable people with disabilities to get where they need to go when they need to get there; and,

WHEREAS, the ADA also expressly permits transit agencies to provide additional services or a greater level of service than is required by the ADA's paratransit minimum mandate; and,

Whereas, many people with disabilities, including people who are blind or have low vision, depend on paratransit services for access to education, employment, healthcare, shopping, worship, visits with family and friends, and other activities; and,

Whereas, transit agencies unfortunately are currently permitted by regulations to require paratransit riders to book trips a day in advance, negotiate pick-up times by up to an hour before or after the time they need or wish to travel, wait for extended periods of time in order to receive trip confirmation, travel for extended periods of time (which can sometimes exceed several hours), and pay up to twice as much as the same trip would cost on the transit agency's fixed-route transit network; and,

WHEREAS, these unfortunate and unnecessary characteristics of paratransit often harm riders with disabilities by causing them to spend more time and money on transportation than other transit riders, arrive late to work and appointments, which has sometimes cost paratransit riders their jobs and/or access to healthcare appointments, educational and training opportunities, and otherwise seriously undermine the ADA's promise to "assure equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency...." for individuals with disabilities; and,

Whereas, when judged by today's standards, many of the policies set forth in current paratransit regulations are objectively unequal to the level of service that transit agencies provide for people without disabilities and are, therefore, inequitable; and,

WHEREAS, a growing number of transit agencies are taking steps to make their ADA paratransit services more equitable by aligning paratransit fares with fixed-route transit fares, by implementing same day paratransit for at least some trips, and by updating policies, practices, and service models based on the growing power of an array of transit-related technologies, including accessible mobile apps, real-time vehicle tracking, and rideshare services;

Now, THEREFORE, BE IT Resolved by the American Council of the blind, in convention assembled virtually, that:

This organization affirms its belief that the time has come to address the inequities that are imbedded within the current ADA regulations set forth in 49 CFR Part 37 and to begin the process of making a paradigm shift such that the purpose of paratransit service will be to allow persons with disabilities to get where they need to go when they need to get there; and,

Be it further resolved that:

This organization directs ACB's leadership to call upon and join with other organizations of and for people with disabilities to develop proposed national standards for paratransit service to provide for just,

equitable timely and efficient service for riders with disabilities and to collectively advocate for their adoption by the U.S. DOT; and,

be it further RESOLVED, that:

If the ACB Board of Directors concludes that circumstances justify ACB advocating primarily or solely on its own, the Board shall consider other advocacy options to carry out this resolution; And,

be it further resolved that:

The Executive Director and/or Board President shall provide a report at the next annual ACB Conference and Convention regarding progress on this resolution.