

Good morning Chairman Louser and members of the Industry Business and Labor Committee.

I'm Don Larson and I am here today representing Uber Technologies in North Dakota. Today I'm here in support of House Bill 1381 which seeks to clarify when a transportation network company driver is an independent contractor.

I want to thank Representative Ostile for his attention and support of this important issue. I also want to recognize all of the cosponsors of this bill.

To start with a little context - many of you know Uber as a rideshare platform that connects riders with drivers. This service has become popular across North Dakota around the world. The platform helps riders get where they need to go quickly, easily, and safely, while at the same time provides flexible earning opportunities for drivers.

Uber isn't the only company working in this space. You may have used Lyft for rides or Door Dash or Instacart to get groceries or takeout from a local restaurant.

These services are convenient and popular options that allow restaurants and grocery stores to expand their access to consumers. It gives additional flexible job opportunities to couriers. And it makes it easy for people to access food when they may not be able to otherwise.

With that in mind, this bill is simply seeking to clarify that couriers and drivers who work on these platforms are independent contractors. This classification is important for a number of reasons.

First - it ensures that couriers maintain flexibility. In survey after survey, the top reason that people work with Uber is flexibility. The business model is set up so couriers can set their own schedules. They can open the app when they leave their 9-5 job and they can even drive with multiple platforms.

Second - it protects the modern business model and provides certainty for companies to continue offering these services in the state.

While we are not facing an immediate threat here in North Dakota, there are challenges happening right now in other states, and there's a lack of clarity at the federal level. A little work and attention now could prevent major challenges and disruptions in the future for North Dakotans looking to earn money and get around town safely.

This bill means: more options for consumers, more certainty for businesses, and more flexibility for drivers to set their own schedules and truly be independent.

Thank you for your consideration. I urge you to support House Bill 1381.

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