# **RESOLUTION 2023-04**

# **Regarding the Need for Urgent Action to Prevent Ongoing Discrimination Against the Blind by Transportation Network Companies**

WHEREAS, the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado is the oldest and largest organization of people who are blind or have low vision in the state; and

WHEREAS, access to transportation means access to employment, education, family, religious worship, medical care, and civic life; and

WHEREAS, for more than a decade, Transportation Network Companies (also known as rideshare providers) such as Uber and Lyft have changed the transportation landscape for millions of Colorado residents; and

WHEREAS, Transportation Network Companies have become an indispensable option in the Colorado transit system, especially as public transit options have failed to fully rebound since the COVID pandemic; and

WHEREAS, the Regional Transportation District (RTD), to name one entity, has contracted with Uber and Lyft to provide on-demand, accessible, low-cost paratransit services for eligible individuals with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Uber and Lyft profit greatly from these contracts as well as from blind and other disabled riders who have need of their rideshare services; and

WHEREAS, far too often, blind riders with service animals are denied transportation when drivers find out that they will be transporting a passenger with a service animal; and

WHEREAS, these service denials are discriminatory and create unwarranted obstacles to the ability of the blind to live the lives they want on terms of equality with their peers who can see; and

WHEREAS, we who are blind, despite our best efforts, are finding denial of transportation services by transportation network companies to be increasing significantly in frequency--to the extent that some guide dog handlers are being forced to consider seriously abandoning the use of guide dogs as a primary and equalizing travel tool; and

WHEREAS, what should be a great equalizer for people with disabilities has become a source of great anxiety and a transportation obstacle for service animal users; and

WHEREAS, for many years, the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado has worked diligently with community partners to end the horrendous practice of discrimination by Transportation Network Company drivers; and

WHEREAS, although there seems to be some progress on the national level through increased dialog with Uber, constant denials of service continue to blight the everyday lives of riders with service animals, creating unwarranted barriers to jobs, education, and community life; and

WHEREAS, attempts by the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado to engage in productive dialog with the Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies have met with little response, making the need for higher-level intervention abundantly clear: Now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado in convention assembled this 29th day of October, 2023, in the City of Lone Tree, Colorado, that this organization call upon Governor Polis, the Colorado General Assembly, the Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies, and all state and local government subdivisions to work with the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado and the Colorado Association of Guide Dog Users to take immediate steps to eliminate the frequent, flagrant, and unwarranted denial of transportation by Transportation Network Companies against rideshare passengers with service animals; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this organization call upon Transportation Network Company contract drivers and their representatives to partner with the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado to ensure that this type of transportation discrimination will not happen in the future.

Resolution unanimously adopted.