



August 30, 2018

The Honorable John Thune
United States Senator
511 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Gary Peters
United States Senator
724 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
United States Senator
260 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator
731 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roger Wicker
United States Senator
555 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Thune, Senator Peters, Senator Blunt, Senator Stabenow, and Senator Wicker:

On behalf of the American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR), I write to express our support for the AV START Act (S. 1885). ANCOR believes this legislation is significant because of the potential automated vehicles have to assist people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD) in living in the community with their families and peers. Thank you for your leadership in fostering innovation in this important new field of technology.

ANCOR is a national, nonprofit trade association representing more than 1,400 private community providers of services to people with disabilities. Combined, we support over one million individuals with disabilities, and work to shape policy, share solutions and strengthen the community. We have supported the AV START Act since 2016 because increased availability of automated vehicles can address the significant transportation challenges faced by the individuals our members support.

It is well-documented that transportation remains a major obstacle for people with disabilities, whether it be [public transportation](#), [paratransit](#) or [private transportation](#). This has been a long-standing challenge despite legislative advances such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As shared in a 2012 [joint report](#) by the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) and the Leadership Conference Education Fund: "Of the nearly 2 million people with disabilities who never leave their homes, 560,000 never leave home because of transportation difficulties." For individuals with I/DD, the obstacles extend beyond physical accessibility. As shared in a [2016 article](#) in the

Journal of Disability Policy Studies, “people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) often have trouble with many of the skills that navigating transportation requires.”

The widespread nature of transportation challenges have been corroborated by a [2017 article](#) in the Journal of Disability Policy Studies, surveying over 4,000 individuals with disabilities on public transportation. The authors found that: “Although the ADA paved the way for change in public transportation, it is evident that existing facilities and systems are still not meeting the needs of people with disabilities. Nearly half (47.9%) of the respondents reported the public transportation system was inadequate, meaning that it did not get them where they needed to go, when they needed to get there, and in a reasonable amount of time.”

Due to the limitations of our current transportation systems, ANCOR believes it is important for Congress to empower technological innovation in this field. Access to reliable, safe and customizable transportation, such as that offered by automated vehicles, could profoundly improve outcomes for individuals with I/DD by helping them live more independently. For example, increased mobility would mean greater access to work – a key issue for people with I/DD, as they are more likely to [live in poverty](#) than their peers without disabilities. Beyond encouraging innovation, the AV START Act has specific provisions addressing the needs of people with disabilities. Specifically, the AV START Act prevents licensing practices that would exclude persons with disabilities from being able to use an AV. The bill also creates a working group dedicated to accessibility for individuals with disabilities.

ANCOR is thankful for your consideration of the disability community in this legislation and once again states its support for the AV START Act. We recognize your concerted efforts to address issues raised by stakeholders and members of Congress and look forward to continuing to work with you on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Meek". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sarah Meek, MSW
Director of Legislative Affairs
American Network of Community Options & Resources

Cc: Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer