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# Discrimination Difficulties at Uber

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As discussed in previous blog posts, the North Carolina General Assembly passed legislation last year regulating ride-sharing services such as Uber and Lyft. Such legislation likely alleviates some of the concerns many Uber riders may have regarding safety, protection, and insurance while riding in an Uber vehicle. Still, as Uber and other ride-sharing services continue to expand their presence, the companies are faced with a number of other challenges typical of many private businesses.

Recently, Tiffany Joliff, a 29-year-old blind Virginia woman, filed suit against Uber claiming that on multiple occasions, Uber drivers refused to transport her due to the fact that she had a service dog. Joliff alleges that on one occasion, she was holding onto the door of the Uber vehicle when the driver pulled away after noticing her service dog. According to Joliff, she was dragged several feet and was treated at the hospital for her injuries.

Joliff claims that the drivers' actions in refusing Joliff service violate the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Virginians with Disabilities Act. According to the ADA, businesses that serve the public generally must allow service animals to accompany people with disabilities in all areas of the facility where the public is normally allowed to go.

In a statement response to Joliff's suit, Uber said "We expect our drivers to comply with our Code of Conduct that explicitly states service animals must be accommodated in compliance with accessibility laws." A copy of Uber's Code of Conduct can be found [here](#).

Joliff's suit comes on the heels of a class action settlement by Uber with the National Federation for the Blind wherein Uber agreed to take steps to ensure that its drivers were aware of their obligations to provide service to individuals traveling with service animals. Given Uber's business model, however, and lack of classroom or face to face orientation and training for its drivers, one wonders how effective an online Code of Conduct or email reminder of ADA compliance can be in communicating these important concepts. While business models continue to change and expand, it is important for business leaders to discuss ADA and other regulatory compliance on the front end in order to prevent potential abuse and discrimination.

**About the author:** David advises and represents clients in state and federal court in a number of areas including trucking and transportation, product liability, and business litigation. In addition, David advises healthcare providers concerning regulatory compliance matters and in claims of medical malpractice. For questions about this article, please contact David.

**Sources:**

Chicago Tribune  
ADA.gov

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