

Autonomous Vehicle Accessibility Act

People with disabilities often face unique challenges accessing existing modes of transportation and infrastructure. Autonomous Vehicles (AVs) hold tremendous potential to address unmet mobility needs for Americans. This is particularly true for people with disabilities, where AVs will provide new mobility options and independence. However, AVs don't fit neatly into the traditional legal constructs of the driver and passenger and require communities to start thinking about infrastructure differently. The **Autonomous Vehicle Accessibility Act** will help people with disabilities to better access the mobility and independence benefits of ride-hail AVs.

The AV Accessibility Act is supported by the National Federation of the Blind, the Blinded Veterans Association, and Waymo.

Bill Description

The Autonomous Vehicles Accessibility Act will help ensure that Americans with disabilities have access to AV ride-hail vehicles by:

- Prohibiting states from issuing motor vehicle operator's license in a manner that prevents a qualified individual with an ADA disability from riding as a passenger in an ADS-equipped vehicle operating in fully autonomous mode (SAE Level 4 or Level 5) vehicle; and
- Requiring the Secretary of Transportation, in collaboration with the National Academies of Science, to conduct an accessible infrastructure study to determine the best practices for public transportation infrastructure to be modified to improve the ability of Americans with disabilities to find, access, and use ride-hail autonomous vehicles, including during pickup and drop off.

Additional Background

SAE International establishes [internationally-accepted standards](#) for automated driving systems (ADS). ADS-equipped vehicles fall into SAE level 4 and level 5. Numerous companies have deployed AVs as ride-hail ADS-equipped vehicles.

According to the [Pew Research Center](#), there are 42.5 million Americans living with disabilities, which constitutes approximately 13% of the U.S. population. The purpose of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is "to provide a clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities." ([42 U.S. Code § 12101\(b\)\(1\)](#)). In order to accomplish the purpose of the ADA, enacting the AV Accessibility Act is necessary to provide certainty to Americans with disabilities that they can ride in ride-hail ADS-equipped vehicles with confidence.