My name is Merlyn Wade.

I operate a licensed limousine carrier company providing service to residents of Washtenaw County, Lenawee, Livingston, and Wayne Counties. I am a member of the Great Lakes Limousine Association.

I am opposed to the recently introduced grouping of House bills that are intended to give special treatment to the ride networking companies, such as Uber and Lyft. That benefit to Uber and Lyft, will create chaos in the transportation industry, expose the general public to a safety risk and will NOT create meaningful employment positions. The drivers for ride networking companies in Michigan are NOT employees and are merely **independent contractors** who are NOT closely monitored by the national ride networking companies. These national ride networking companies are not based in Michigan. The groupings of bills that benefit the pockets of the national ride sharing companies will eliminate the Michigan Limousine Transportation Act. The Michigan Limousine Transportation Act is a safeguard that protects the general public, regulates the safety of limousine vehicles and requires a minimum level of insurance for limousines.

Just because smart phones are convenient tools to order service, DOES NOT mean that we should eliminate safety regulations in favor of technology. Eliminating licensing of the limousine industry by the State of Michigan because a person can order a limousine ride by a cell phone is comparable to saying that we should eliminate the licensing of pharmacies and pharmacists because we can order prescription drugs by cell phone.

The pending grouping of bills will expose the customers of these unlicensed drivers to (a) liability for workers compensation injuries suffered by drivers who get injured carrying heavy luggage or in traffic accidents, (b) potential crimes, (c) no reliable enforcement of vehicle standards, and (d) no reliability regarding insurance coverage in case of injury.

The people of Michigan look to their state government, specifically the Michigan Department of Transportation, to monitor the limousine operators by establishing licensing standards. The people also expect that licensed limousines are safe so that (a) their high school students will be able to enjoy the prom, (b) people getting married will have a safe and joyful wedding ceremony, (c) business people will have reliable transportation for important meetings and (d) people can ride without the fear that they may be sexually assaulted.

Our current limousine licensing system involves **local limousine carriers** who work with their insurance carriers to pick safe drivers and put safe equipment on the roadways.

The national ride sharing companies will fail in trying to convince Michigan citizens that they will closely monitor drivers and closely monitor the condition of the mechanical status for the limousine vehicles.

As you may be aware, limousine operators are licensed by the State of Michigan Department of Transportation and a limousine vehicle is authorized by the state to operate anywhere in the state. During a contracted ride, a vehicle could possibly go through 15 different jurisdictions going from place of origin to place of destination.

Limousines do not need local regulation by cities, townships and villages, the fact is that limousines travel through many local government units during a contracted ride. During 2011, SB 561 (which the limousine operators enthusiastically support) passed the Senate but did not get out of the Transportation Committee in the House. That bill would have stopped local units of government

from regulating and licensing limousine operators and/or limo drivers. The concept is as follows: We all have a state-wide driver license. Should each city government or local unit of government be able to force a driver to have an additional driver license for that local unit of government? The cities just want money and could care less about the destruction of jobs due to expensive regulation of business. The State of Michigan Department of Transportation has a limousine enforcement office that can easily work in conjunction with the Michigan State Police to enforce the Michigan Transportation Act.

Also, understand that cab companies are NOT licensed by the State of Michigan Department of Transportation and get all of their authority from the local unit of government where they operate. Cabs are local carriers within the city that authorizes the taxi cab operator. Limousines are intended to go for long rides, not just short inside-the-city cab rides. There are cab companies in certain cities that want to harm the limousines and eliminate competition by working with the cities to attempt to regulate limousines.

The pending grouping of bills to give special treatment to the ride networking companies are dangerous for the general public, while being great for profits that benefit out-of-state companies.

I ask that you oppose the bills that would eliminate the Michigan Limousine Transportation Act. I also ask you avoid giving special treatment for the ride networking companies. The groupings of ride share bills will create something comparable to the "Wild West." Ask your local police force commanders in your local House districts about the many problems that already exist with inadequate ride network drivers. We look to our government leaders, such as yourself, to prevent a "Wild West" situation.

THANK FOR LISTENING.