

Subject: Urgent Need for Support in Disability-Friendly Driver's Training and Transportation

Dear Montgomery County Council Members,

My name is Ludivine Kom Liapoe, and I am a resident of Montgomery County. I live in the Kingsview Ridge Neighborhood . I've lived here for about 9 years. I identify as a deaf, African-American, student. I am part of Everyday Canvassing. I am writing to bring attention to the challenges people with disabilities face when trying to obtain a driver's license. The current system is incredibly difficult to navigate, leaving many of us without reliable transportation options.

I have been trying to get my driver's license for over a year, beginning the process in March 2023. I successfully completed the in-class portion, but when it was time for the six-hour behind-the-wheel training, I was unable to continue due to my cerebral palsy. Instead, I was expected to practice with a parent or guardian. My family, however, was hesitant and ultimately said no. My uncle has offered to reinforce what I would learn in professional training, but I remain stuck because I have not been able to access the instruction I need.

Seeking an alternative path, I completed a driver's evaluation through Frederick Rehabilitation via DORS. However, I was told I could not move forward because I had not completed training with a parent or guardian. Now, I am trying to submit the necessary forms so Frederick Rehab can provide an instructor, but DORS may not fund it since they already covered my rehab evaluation two years ago.

This system is failing people with disabilities. I want to drive. I want to be independent. But at every step, I have been met with obstacles that make this process nearly impossible. I urge the Council to take action by:

- Expanding financial assistance for disability-friendly driver's training programs
- Creating alternative pathways for individuals who cannot rely on family for training
- Improving coordination between MVA, DORS, and rehabilitation services to remove unnecessary barriers

Reliable transportation is not just a convenience—it is a necessity for education, employment, and everyday life. Please take action to make sure that people with disabilities have a fair and accessible path to obtaining their licenses and achieving independence.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I hope to see real changes that make Montgomery County a more inclusive and a fair place for all.

Sincerely,
Ludivine Kom Liapoe