

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Signs Legislation Strengthening NJ TRANSIT's Access Link Paratransit Services

08/12/2020

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy today signed legislation (S362 and A2456) to further strengthen NJ TRANSIT's paratransit services for individuals with disabilities.

"We know that Access Link serves as a critical transportation resource for New Jerseyans with disabilities, who deserve reliable, efficient transit services," **said Governor Murphy**. "These improvements will further strengthen our public transportation network to ensure New Jersey's Access Link riders have a more equitable experience."

S362 would require NJ TRANSIT's Access Link services to operate during state of emergency if it is determined it can be done safely.

A2456 would require a person eligible for Access Link service to be issued an ID card for reduced fares at the same time that NJ TRANSIT determines Access Link service eligibility. Currently, customers who have been certified as needing to use Access Link paratransit service must apply separately if they want to use regular NJ TRANSIT services at the discounted rate for those with disabilities. Under the bill, if an individual is determined to be eligible for Access Link prior to the effective date, they would be issued an ID card within 60 days after the bill's effective date or immediately upon the eligible person's request.

Primary Sponsors of S362 include Senator Joe Cryan, and Assemblymembers Roy Freiman, Carol Murphy, and Christopher Tully.

"People with disabilities rely on Access Link for their basic transportation needs," **said Senator Joe Cryan**. "During emergencies, their reliance on this service is even more important. Access Link has proven to be a real success in serving a vital service for those who need it most. It will now be maintained in emergency conditions so those with disabilities are not left to fend for themselves."

In a joint statement, Assemblymembers Freiman, Murphy, and Tully said:

"Many rely on Access Link to be able to travel to work, day programs and to medical appointments or the hospital – even under a state of emergency. With this new law, all riders will be able to access transit services during a state of emergency, including those with disabilities."

Primary Sponsors of A2456 include Assemblymembers Daniel Benson, Carol Murphy, Valerie Vainieri Huttle, and Senator Nicholas Scutari.

In a joint statement, Assemblymembers Benson, Murphy, and Vainieri Huttle said:

Access Link serves our most vulnerable, including seniors and people with disabilities who would otherwise have difficulty using public transportation. Access Link riders usually are also eligible for NJ TRANSIT's reduced fare program and may not realize it. There's currently no coordination between these two programs, so riders often miss out. By linking the programs together so that recipients receive their ID card when they enroll in Access Link, we can ensure more people will take advantage of this important program."

"Many individuals who utilize Access Link's services are living on fixed incomes," **said Senator Nicholas Scutari**. "This piece of legislation allows riders to travel on bus and rail at a greatly discounted rate, greatly benefitting riders with disabilities who rely on public transportation as their main source of mobility."

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