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Rep. Subeck: Recent sexual assault report prompts proposal to allow local licensing of transportation network company drivers

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Madison, Wisconsin – Today, Representative Lisa Subeck (D-Madison) introduced LRB-0964 which would allow municipalities to require Transportation Network Company (TNC) drivers be licensed locally. The legislation was prompted by a number of reports of criminal activity including robbery, battery, and sexual assault allegedly committed by TNC drivers since the 2015 implementation of a state law prohibiting local regulation of TNCs and their drivers by local units of government. The most recent allegation came last weekend when a driver for the TNC Uber was arrested after a 20 year old woman reported that after arriving outside her home, the driver battered and sexually assaulted her.
In some cases TNCs have refused to provide information about drivers accused of serious crimes against passengers or otherwise cooperate with law enforcement. In 2015, a TNC refused to provide even the identity of a driver to police investigating a reported sexual assault. The delay caused by the TNC's refusal to provide identifying information resulted in the perpetrator being able to flee the country before law enforcement was able to apprehend him.
Some Wisconsin incidents documented in local media reports include:
Woman sexually assaulted by an Uber driver, Madison, April 25, 2015
Uber driver sexually assaulted and attempted to further contact a passenger, Madison, April 26, 2015
Fake Uber driver reportedly targeting women, Milwaukee, May 28, 2016

Uber driver arrested for drug possession with passenger in the back seat, Racine, Sept. 9, 2016
Uber driver arrested after harassing women and running from police, Whitefish Bay, Oct. 9, 2016
Uber driver arrested for driving under the influence and drug possession, La Crosse, March 10, 2017
Passenger beat and robbed by Uber driver, Madison, Sept. 2, 2017
Passenger reported her Uber driver lifted up her skirt, La Crosse, Sept. 15, 2017
Uber driver sexually assaulted and battered woman passenger, Madison, November
Lyft driver shoots at passengers, Brookfield, Nov. 29, 2017
“We now have several disturbing examples of TNC drivers accused of sexual assault or other crimes against passengers and others while on the job. Even more disturbing is that TNCs have refused to cooperate with law enforcement, in one case allowing a perpetrator to flee the country,” said Rep. Subeck. “Removing the state prohibition to local licensing of TNC drivers enables local elected officials and law enforcement to determine what tools they need to keep their communities safe and respond to these serious crimes when they occur.”
Current law in Wisconsin prohibits cities, villages, and towns from licensing TNC drivers in the same way they license taxi drivers. Local licensure would allow local law enforcement to provide driver background checks, maintain updated records, and access driver information immediately when incidents occur.
“My proposed bill puts the power back into the hands of our city and town leaders and local law enforcement officials to ensure drivers for TNCs like Uber operate safely and are accountable to our local communities,” said Rep. Subeck. “Our cities, villages, and towns can already license taxi drivers, and it just makes good sense to apply the same public safety measures when it comes to TNC drivers.”