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# Police Chiefs push for ridesharing services in upstate NY

## Police Chiefs Fight for Uber



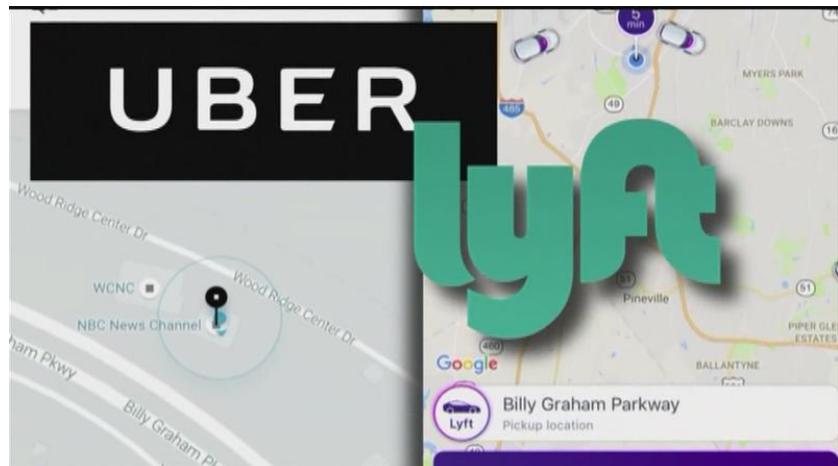
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Police chiefs across the state support bringing Uber and Lyft to upstate New York.

It is all about option and choice according to Greece Police Chief Pat Phalen. He's a Vice President for the New York State Association of Chiefs of Police. That group is now pushing hard to bring Uber and Lyft to upstate New York.

"People are going to drink," says Chief Phalen. "If you can offer them a way to get to where they want to go when they've been drinking and get home at a price that's reasonable, I think people will use it. That's going to make it safer."

Chief Phelan says his officers make about 250 DWI arrests each year in Rochester's biggest suburb. He'd like to see that number go down, and that's why he supports bringing Uber and Lyft to Rochester. Those ridesharing services are now available in New York City, but until the state legislature takes action, they will not be available upstate.



New York is just one of three states where ridesharing isn't fully legal. It's expected to be one of the hottest debates when lawmakers go back to Albany next month. The New York State Association of Chiefs of Police is now pushing to get it passed. Its president, Cheektowaga Police Chief David Zack, wrote to Governor Cuomo, saying ridesharing is more than just popular, it is an important tool to significantly improve public safety that upstate New York should have access to.

"We just like the idea of having options for people to rideshare or get a safe ride rather than drive a car when they've been drinking," says Chief Phalen.

Researchers at Temple University studied cities in California between 2009, when Uber was created, and 2014. According to their findings, if the lower costing service Uber X were to be implemented, 500 lives could be saved each year. Another study, coauthored by researchers from USC and the University of Oxford, has a differing view. CNN says the second study finds Uber had no impact on the number of drunk driving deaths, in part because people who are drunk make fewer rational decisions.

With chiefs of police across the state pushing to bring ridesharing services upstate, the Upstate Transportation Association, which lobbies for taxi drivers, released a statement saying: "We are surprised that the Association of Chiefs of Police signaled support for upstate ridesharing, while Uber refuses to fingerprint drivers outside New York City."

"It's a private business, and I'm sure they want to be successful, so part of their business model is to ride you with a safe driver," says Chief Phelan.

This is a debate that is going to play out over the next few months, possibly through June if there's no resolution right away when lawmakers go back to Albany next month. On Thursday, Brett Davidsen will be taking a closer look at Uber and Lyft and the fight against bringing them here.



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**Kathy A Richardson** · Fillmore Central High School

I'm a Rochesterian by birth but grew up in the southern tier and can tell you that the rural areas wouldn't benefit one way or the other from Uber or Lyft as there is a lack of employment in those areas and it wouldn't be worth anyone's time to be a driver down there.

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**Jeff JD** · Monroe Community College

That's not really a valid reason to keep them from upstate. If the business model doesn't work in certain areas then fine, it doesn't work. But don't limit the business because of that. Give them the opportunity to at least try.

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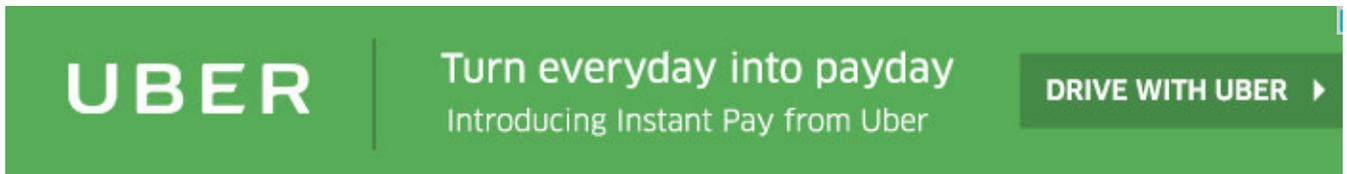
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