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QuickPoint! – Uber Translated: Better Service for the Underserved

By Lydia White

It's not news that free-market visionaries provide better service than their corrupt competitors, but big government advocates are reluctant to admit it, even when such enterprise benefits their causes.

Ride-hailing services like Uber and Lyft [provide cheaper, timelier](#), and higher quality rides. They [better serve those with lower incomes and disabilities](#). They [give Portland residents a local source of income](#). They also [better comply with city regulations](#).

Uber serves high- and low-income communities equally; taxis underserve poorer neighborhoods. Ride-hailing services connect the disabled with handicap-accessible cars; taxi companies force disabled users to wait and hope for one to eventually pass by.

The Portland City Auditor claims the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) isn't doing enough to "monitor the quality of service by ride-for-hire companies" and ensure riders from low-income communities or with disabilities are fairly served. Yet PBOT found that while Uber and Lyft provide a plethora of data (too much, in fact, for PBOT to analyze), [taxi companies fail to comply with the Bureau's requirements](#). Moreover, Uber's internal rating system provides its own system of accountability—including cleanliness and efficiency.

The free market is forging ahead with 21st-century technology. While cronyism befell taxi companies, Uber and Lyft created an innovative alternative.

Proponents of big government should embrace the free-market sharing economy, especially if they truly wish to help traditionally underserved minorities.

Lydia White is a Research Associate at Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon's free market public policy research organization.