

State signs off on Election Day free rides

By [Art Raymond@DNTechHive](mailto:Art.Raymond@DNTechHive)

Deseret News

Published: October 29, 2018

Link: <https://www.deseretnews.com/article/900039467/state-signs-off-on-election-day-free-rides.html>

SALT LAKE CITY — Utah appeared as a glaring exception in promotions underway for free and discounted rides for voters on Election Day from rideshare giants Uber and Lyft, listed as one of just two states and Puerto Rico in which the offers would not be available.

But just a week ahead of the general election, a legal review has deemed it acceptable for the gig economy transporters to play a part in encouraging voter participation.

The glitch, according to the state's election director, Justin Lee, was a piece of Utah code with the title, "Bribery in elections, paying for votes," that is aimed at prohibiting inducements or "valuable considerations" to encourage people to vote. Lee said an attorney from Uber had asked for a review of the code and on Monday, a state legal review determined that it did not or should not apply to what Lyft and Uber are offering.

"After an attorney representing Uber reached out to our office late last week, we had our attorney looking into this issue," Lee said in a statement. "After having done our due diligence, we don't see any reason that Uber or Lyft cannot offer this service."

The news was viewed as a very positive outcome by the American Civil Liberties Union of Utah. The group's legal director, John Mejia, told the Deseret News that the state's decision was especially appreciated at a time when the ACLU is involved with pushing back on voter suppression activities.

"It's heartening to see a reasonable interpretation of the law that encourages voting in an election season where so much of what the ACLU has had to deal with at the national level have been pretty clear attempts to suppress voting," Mejia said.

Details on Lyft's offers for discounted and free rides on Election Day can be found at <https://blog.lyft.com/posts/2018/8/22/get-out-the-vote>, and for Uber's offers, visit <https://www.uber.com/newsroom/update-uber-drives-vote/>.

