

OPINION

Suing for the right to ride: Federal lawsuit against the MTA's crummy Access-A-Ride for violating the Americans with Disabilities Act is well deserved

By Daily News Editorial Board
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We are surprised that it took this long for [someone to sue the MTA for its horrible Access-A-Ride](#), the paratransit service for people with disabilities. Its poor quality has long been documented and last fall the [Department of Justice found it](#) “has failed to provide paratransit services at a level of service comparable to the level of service provided to individuals who use the [regular subway and bus.]”

Before we get the complaining emails and phone calls from the transitrats, who will say Access-A-Ride has been getting better and the feds were looking at 2016 data, it's still not nearly good enough. They should try relying on Access-A-Ride for all their travel and see how great it is.

So good going to the three Access-A-Ride victims/customers and the New York Integrated Network for filing [their lawsuit in Manhattan Federal Court](#) on Wednesday. One compelling aspect of the case is that Access-A-Ride does offer an excellent service for a select group of 1,200 people who have been part of a small pilot program since 2017. The very fact that Access-A-Ride can deliver quality for a tiny subset damns them because they have failed to provide a similar experience for the vast majority of Access-A-Ride passengers.

On Monday of this week the MTA settled a state lawsuit by agreeing to [install elevators in 95% of the subway stations by 2055](#). That is taking far too long, but still it's in the right direction and it would have not have happened without the pressure of litigation. Still continuing is a companion federal case filed the same day, April 25, 2017, that the MTA fails to keep its existing elevators in good working order (and can't even accurately notify its passengers about what is broken or not.)

The Access-A-Ride case started two days ago. Will it also drag on for years, with the MTA using high-priced private lawyers to defend their denial of decent service to people with disabilities? Better to use that money to fix Access-A-Ride.