

From: [Dana Nicholls](#)
To: [REDACTED] [delegations](#); mark.holland@parl.gc.ca; [William \(Bill\) Holmes](#)
Subject: Executive Meeting - Durham Transit Specialized Services
Date: March 6, 2023 7:56:08 PM

My name is Dana Nicholls and I am the mother of Amanda who is a 36 year old with cerebral palsy and is confined to her wheelchair. She has been using Specialized Services for the past 15 years to attend her day program at Tania's Place in Ajax. She has been on subscription for these years and although we have had blips along the way nothing compares to the nightmare that is going on now.

I cannot tell you how many times I have received calls either at 7:30 in the morning or late afternoon telling me that she cannot be accommodated and that I would have to make alternate arrangements for her. This involves me transporting her in her manual wheelchair as I cannot fit her power chair in my car. It also means that Amanda cannot be independent during the day as she is unable to maneuver her manual chair on her own and has to wait to be moved by staff. It also of course means that I am late for work.

For the past 6 months or so there have been rumours that Durham Transit will no longer be sending buses and that her rides would be by van as this part of the business had been given over to Voyago. Of course we have not even had the courtesy of an update from you and are only relying on comments from drivers and staff.

I will say the van drivers are very personable but obviously have had no training transporting clients in wheelchairs, to which they have admitted. Doesn't give a parent a very good feeling! I have had to assist numerous times to ensure that my daughter was transported safely.

I understand again through rumours that Specialized Services is being discontinued in favour of On Demand services. On numerous occasions able bodied people were being dropped off, one to the Pickering Casino, which meant that Amanda was late by an hour getting to her program which is only 10 minutes from home. This has been happening on a regular basis where people are being dropped off somewhere which results in Amanda being on the bus a lot longer than she should be.

When did Durham Transit wash their hands in providing safe and reliable transportation for the disabled? My daughter deserves the right to have this transportation available to her in order that she can continue to be an active member of our community. I pay my taxes like everyone else and the level of services has been declining for years.

I have spoken numerous times to staff at Durham Transit about the difficulties caused by these service issues but just keep getting told that their hands are tied and there is nothing they can do. I am respectfully asking that you take this situation to heart and put yourself in our shoes instead of just ignoring us in favour of business decisions.

Amanda is now 36 and instead of having her daily routine at a point where it is finally organized after 15 years, there is always something like this that comes along to throw a wrench in our planning and make our lives even more of a challenge.

I am 63 years old and am getting tired of having to stand up and fight yet again for the rights of our children. Having said that I will continue to be an advocate for my daughter who cannot speak for herself and urge you to consider the negative impact of making these changes to Specialized Services.

I sincerely hope this email is addressed at the upcoming meeting and as always a response would be appreciated. I can also be reached by phone at [REDACTED]

Thank you.

Dana Nicholls

Sent from my iPad