

Taxi _ Limousine Commission Board Meeting
April 6, 2017

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NEW YORK CITY
TAXI & LIMOUSINE COMMISSION
BOARD MEETING

April 6, 2017
10:30 a.m.
33 Beaver Street
New York, New York

B E F O R E:

MEERA JOSHI, Chair and Chief Executive Officer

CHRIS WILSON, General Counsel

Board of Commissioners:

BILL AGUADO
JACQUES JIHA
LAUVIENSKA POLANCO
NORA C. MARINO

Staff Members:

MIDORI VALDIVIA
RODNEY STILES
DAWN MILLER
RYAN WANTTAJA

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2 CHAIR JOSHI: Good morning, everyone.
3 The time now is 10:30 and we're going to
4 start today's hearing.

5 I'm going to do a brief Chair's
6 report because of the crowd today and get
7 started with the hearing right away.

8 So the only announcement I make in
9 the Chair's report is that a few weeks ago
10 Mayor de Blasio signed into law two
11 ordinances. One reduces the Medallion
12 sales transfer tax from 5 percent to
13 .5 percent, and the other got rid of the
14 distinction between an independent and
15 corporate Medallion, and there's now no
16 ownership restrictions on Medallions. One
17 owner can own as many as they want. And
18 because last year we repealed the owner
19 must drive rules, no owner is required to
20 personally drive their Medallion taxi.

21 These changes should make it easier
22 for people to enter the Medallion market
23 and for existing owners and buyers to
24 engage in transactions.

25 Today we're holding a hearing on taxi

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2 fares and Medallion and taxi vehicle
3 leasecaps. We're required to hold this
4 hearing every other year before the end of
5 April. The last one we had was in 2015.

6 Historically, we've focused on the
7 earnings of yellow taxi drivers, and we've
8 done this through regulation of the
9 fare -- of the fare that the passenger
10 pays, and setting a cap on the amount that
11 a driver can be charged for leasing a car
12 or Medallion, and through transparency
13 requirements, so a taxi driver can
14 determine whether or not they've been
15 overcharged.

16 Today, in line with the growth of the
17 for-hire industry, we are, for the first,
18 time expanding the scope of our hearing to
19 include testimony about the income and
20 expenses of drivers, vehicle owners and
21 operators in the for-hire sector. That's
22 livery cars, black cars and lux limos.

23 Why?

24 Today, there are more drivers. Today
25 we license over 150,000 drivers. That's

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the equivalent of licensing the entire population of the City of Syracuse. It's about 35,000 more drivers than we licensed in 2014. Over 90 percent of these drivers are immigrants, and driving may be one of the few opportunities they have to earn money.

There are also more vehicles. We have about 35,000 more licensed vehicles today than we had in 2014, bringing today's total to over 100,000 licensed vehicles. And the vast majority of these vehicles are brand new.

In 2015, 10,000 of the over 11,000 vehicles that we brought into service were model years 2015 or 2016. And in 2016, 10,000 of the 11,000-plus vehicles that we brought into service were model years 2016 or 2017.

At a very conservative purchase price of \$25,000 each, that amounts to a half a billion dollars that has been spent on new cars, and it raises questions for us about how the cost of all these new vehicles is

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2 being allocated.

3 It's also likely, though we don't
4 quantify it because we don't collect
5 passenger information, that there are
6 probably more passengers today than there
7 ever have been. New generations of
8 passengers rely solely on the ease of apps
9 to hire a car, and there are more service
10 options, especially outside of Manhattan,
11 than there were in the past.

12 And maybe, most significantly,
13 competition to lower fares resulting in,
14 at times, prices that are only slightly
15 above the cost of mass transit. That has
16 probably increased the number of people
17 who choose to ride in a for-hire car many
18 times instead of taking public
19 transportation.

20 So we anticipate that today's hearing
21 will focus on the individual effects in
22 terms of in connection and expenses of
23 these three trends.

24 There are some logistics because of
25 the number of people we have, and we would

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2 really like to hear from everyone who has
3 come to speak today.

4 And by the way, when we introduced
5 leasecaps in 1996, the hearing started at
6 10:00 a.m. and it ended at 5:23. So if
7 history is any indicator, it will be a
8 long day, and we would like to set a few
9 parameters. Hopefully this will allow
10 everybody to testify.

11 Everyone is limited to three minutes.
12 Please pay attention to our timekeeper and
13 respect your cutoff time when it's
14 announced.

15 We, the Commissioners, will not ask
16 any questions until each speaker has
17 finished their three minutes. And if you
18 need a translator, please let a staff
19 member in a blue TLC polo shirt know.

20 There are three rooms to watch the
21 hearing: this one, live, and two overflow
22 hearing rooms. The hearing is also
23 available on live stream, and you can get
24 the website from one of our staff members
25 in the back.

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2 A full transcript of the hearing will
3 appear on our website soon after today's
4 hearing is finished.

5 There are several people from the
6 same group here today. If you signed up
7 individually, please be appreciative of
8 your other people here that would also
9 like to testify, and come up as a group.

10 First of all, it gives us as a
11 Commission member -- as a Commission a
12 better visual of exactly how many people
13 feel a certain way on a certain subject if
14 you're all standing together. And that
15 won't be lost on us.

16 And it's not just effective; it's
17 efficient. Because that way it gives time
18 for other people to come and speak.

19 And since there are people that
20 aren't in the overflow rooms or up here
21 able to testify, if you've testified,
22 please make room for another person to
23 come in, because we really would like to
24 hear from everybody today.

25 For people that have written

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2 comments, you can hand them to any of the
3 staff members in the polo shirts. We'll
4 make sure that copies are made and that
5 all the Commissioners get a copy of every
6 piece of written comment that we get.

7 There are greeters that you've
8 probably encountered already. They're
9 taking names of people who want to
10 testify. So make sure you give them your
11 name if you would like to testify.

12 And for anyone who doesn't get to
13 testify today and hasn't brought written
14 comments today, please send your comments
15 to tlcrules@tlc.nyc.gov.

16 We anticipate taking a 45-minute
17 lunch break. And it will be executive
18 session for us, but lunch break for
19 others, at around 12:30.

20 So thank you everyone in advance for
21 your cooperation and understanding.

22 I want to especially thank my fellow
23 Commission members. Each is here today
24 because they want to be. They are not
25 paid to be here. It speaks volumes about

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2 their commitment to public service, so I
3 want to personally thank each and every
4 one of them in advance for taking the time
5 out of their busy lives to better
6 understand some of the issues that you
7 face every day.

8 And I want to thank each and every
9 driver who's taken the time out of their
10 workday to provide us with direct
11 feedback.

12 Please know that you can continue to
13 speak directly to us even after today.
14 You do not need to be represented by a
15 group or an organization. Just talk to
16 any one of the staff members -- they've
17 got blue polo shirts on -- and get contact
18 information to speak to us directly any
19 time after this hearing.

20 So with that, I am going to just do
21 one other piece of housekeeping, and
22 that's to adopt of minutes from the
23 February 2, 2017 Commission meeting.

24 All in favor of adopting the minutes?
25 (Unanimous vote.)

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2 CHAIR JOSHI: And with that, we'll
3 begin the hearing. Chris Wilson, our --
4 oh, and I will do base applications, too.

5 MS. MEOLA: Good morning,
6 Commissioners. My name is Angeliqe Meola
7 (phonetic), director of Bases and
8 Businesses.

9 Today we have 35 base applications
10 for your approval: 1 new application, 18
11 renewals and 12 various changes, and 4 for
12 denial.

13 CHAIR JOSHI: All in favor of
14 adopting the recommendation?

15 (Unanimous vote.)

16 CHAIR JOSHI: With that, it's
17 unanimously adopted.

18 Thank you very much.

19 And now we will move on to our public
20 hearing. Chris Wilson, our general
21 counsel, will read off the names and
22 organizations. If you are representing an
23 organization and we haven't said it,
24 please say it. And again, if everyone can
25 be respectful of the three-minute time

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2 limit, we'll all -- we'll get to hear from
3 everybody, which is our goal today.

4 MR. WILSON: When I read off the
5 names, I'm going to call first the next
6 speaker, but I'm also going to read off
7 the following two speakers, so that people
8 who are not in the room have time to get
9 in here.

10 The first speaker will be Gwendolyn
11 Fairley Smith from IDG. She will be
12 followed by Peter Mazer and Sarah
13 Leberstan.

14 MS. SMITH: Hi. My name is Gwendolyn
15 Fairley Smith. I am one of the IDG
16 Council members, and I'm also a TLC driver
17 since 2015.

18 I'm coming here today in regard to
19 some of the issues we're having as
20 drivers, especially in regard to our wages
21 and the amount that we earn as drivers.
22 We seem to be having an issue in regards
23 to the fares are being changed, and
24 without our knowledge. We don't have an
25 input in regards to the TLC's decisions on

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2 some of the licensing issues that we're
3 having.

4 We feel that maybe we should also
5 have a seat at the table when some of
6 these decisions are being made. And this
7 will also make us work together
8 cohesively, so that we can also make sure
9 that the drivers, the TLC and all of us
10 working together to have a better working
11 arrangement.

12 We also want to make sure that we
13 have insurance for our drivers. We don't
14 seem to have that with these changes. We
15 don't have coverages for our leasing fees
16 and the costs that we're imposed now. The
17 cost is becoming exuberant for us to be
18 able to afford our vehicles.

19 So the IDG has a number of items that
20 we would like to have addressed. Some of
21 our members will be speaking today and
22 counting on some of these points to be
23 mentioned and addressed by the TLC, as
24 well. But we do appreciate the chance to
25 speak here today and have our concerns

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2 flexibility in the leasing system. Thank
3 you.

4 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

5 The next speaker is Sarah Leberstan
6 from the Department of Consumer Affairs,
7 to be followed by Richard Thalor from the
8 Omni Payment Network, followed by Eugene
9 Jano.

10 MS. LEBERSTAN: Good morning,
11 Commissioners. Sarah Leberstan, labor
12 policy adviser at the Department of
13 Consumer Affairs, Office of Labor Policy
14 and Standards, or OLPS. On behalf of DCA
15 commissioner, Lorelei Salas, I thank you
16 for the opportunity to speak at today's
17 hearing.

18 Our longstanding work to assist
19 low-income New Yorkers puts us in direct
20 contact with workers who, like the drivers
21 we're talking about today, face immense
22 challenges in their struggle to make ends
23 meet and support their families.

24 Our testimony today is particularly
25 informed by the experiences of two of our

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2 divisions who have a special focus on
3 low-wage workers, OLPS, where I work, and
4 the Office of Financial Empowerment, or
5 OFE. OLPS is the dedicated voice of
6 workers in city government. We work to
7 educate workers, employers and the public
8 about the protections, conduct original
9 research and, of course, enforce the
10 City's key workplace laws.

11 OFE is the first local government
12 initiative in the country with the mission
13 to educate, empower and protect low-income
14 New Yorkers.

15 We talk with many workers who,
16 because they're employed in nontraditional
17 work structures, are at risk of being shut
18 out of those local labor standard laws we
19 enforce, as well as state and federal
20 protections. These nontraditional or
21 contingent workers include workers with
22 on-call or involuntary part-time
23 schedules, workers employed by
24 subcontractors working at the behest of
25 larger industry players, and free-lancers

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2 and workers outside independent
3 contractors, some working for
4 platform-based companies who are saddled
5 with employer side tax responsibilities
6 and business costs, and may be shut out of
7 other key employment protections and
8 benefits.

9 This last category, of course,
10 includes drivers in the taxi and for-hire
11 service industry. They suffer from low
12 and unpredictable income, rising
13 out-of-pocket costs, potential labor
14 standard violation, and a lack of
15 benefits.

16 The median salary for taxi and limo
17 drivers in the City is about \$31,000,
18 significantly lower than the City's median
19 salary of 48,000. And with average
20 workweeks over 50 hours, hourly pay is at
21 just about 11.50 an hour, which right now
22 is not much above the current minimum
23 wage. And this figure doesn't even factor
24 in overtime, which the workers would be
25 getting if they were classified as

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2 employees.

3 Low-income and income fluctuations
4 may be an especially acute problem among
5 for-hire drivers. Only 23 percent of Uber
6 drivers reported that they see working for
7 Uber as a stable source of income. And a
8 recent survey found that average hourly
9 pay before expenses was only about 15.50
10 for Uber drivers and 17.50 for Lyft
11 drivers.

12 But calculating expenses and net
13 income is an ongoing problem, and many
14 app-based drivers are reporting that
15 take-home pay falls far below living wage.

16 A main reason that income is so low
17 is because drivers are treated as
18 independent contractors, exempt from
19 workplace laws, including wage laws that
20 require employers to cover certain
21 business expenses of their employees.

22 Of course, drivers across the US are
23 challenging this practice --

24 (Timer sounding.)

25 MS. LEBERSTAN: -- alleging that by

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2 misclassifying the drivers as independent
3 contractors --

4 CHAIR JOSHI: We've got to cut
5 everybody off at three minutes.

6 MS. LEBERSTAN: May I make one last
7 point?

8 CHAIR JOSHI: No, because we have a
9 full agenda. Thank you.

10 MR. WILSON: And we do have your
11 written comments.

12 CHAIR JOSHI: We have your written
13 comments.

14 MS. LEBERSTAN: Thank you.

15 MR. WILSON: The next speaker is
16 Richard Thalor of Omni Payment Network.
17 He will be followed by Eugene Jano, and
18 followed by Lewis Gudmundsen.

19 MR. THALOR: Chair Joshi and
20 Commissioners, thank you for the
21 opportunity.

22 Some surprises today. The federal
23 judge dismissed the Melrose case last
24 week, but in dismissing the Melrose case
25 apparently she opened the door for

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2 CHAIR JOSHI: May I make one quick
3 announcement. My understanding is there
4 are some -- a number of people that are in
5 the lobby that would like to testify
6 today. So again, I urge you, if you've
7 testified, please make space for someone
8 else to come into this room and testify.
9 And if need be, we will have a second day
10 of hearings, because it's important that
11 the people that are outside this room also
12 get a chance to be heard.

13 MR. GUDMUNDSEN: My name is Lewis
14 Gudmundsen. Mr. Chris Wilson, good to
15 meet you and the other Commissioners
16 today, on behalf of all that are present.

17 I'm also here representing the IDG,
18 Independent Drivers Guild, and I would
19 request that my time be allotted to their
20 speaking as a group.

21 Thank you.

22 CHAIR JOSHI: Okay. Thank you. And
23 that can go for the rest of the IDG
24 members, at some point. They can come up
25 as a group rather than individually, so

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2 that other people can testify as well.

3 MR. GUDMUNDSEN: The only 15 words I
4 would say is that I was unaware of the
5 fact that the for-hire vehicle
6 applications, if turned off --

7 CHAIR JOSHI: If you gave your time
8 up, you gave your time up. Okay?

9 MR. GUDMUNDSEN: Okay. Just 15
10 words. Thank you.

11 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Do you mind if I
12 come up for a second?

13 CHAIR JOSHI: Are most of your
14 members here now?

15 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yeah. We have to
16 grab everyone, though.

17 CHAIR JOSHI: Okay. So take a few
18 minutes to do that, and we'll hear from
19 somebody else while that's happening.

20 MR. WILSON: So the next speaker is
21 James Parrott. He will be followed by
22 Carlos Isabel, and then we can take the
23 IDG group right after that.

24 MR. PARROTT: Good morning. James
25 Parrott is my name. I'm an economist. I

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2 have studied New York City economy for
3 over 25 years, working for the City of New
4 York, the State Comptroller's Office in
5 New York City, and for a long time the
6 Fiscal Policy Institute. I've done scores
7 of reports on wage and income trends for
8 New York City workers and dozens of sector
9 studies.

10 In trying to get a handle on taxi
11 drivers' earnings, I think the best
12 government public stated source is the
13 American Community Survey, published
14 annually by the Census Bureau. You can
15 look at occupational wages that way.

16 The State Labor Department publishes
17 a good data source on employees' wages,
18 but as you know, since many taxi drivers
19 are either self-employed or independent
20 contractors, their wages are not reflected
21 in the Labor Department data.

22 So what did the American Community
23 Survey data, the ACS data, show for 2015?

24 To get an idea of what the trend is,
25 I looked at comparisons to 2012. So over

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2 that period, 2012 to '15, the number of
3 for-hire vehicle licenses issues by the
4 TLC increased by 62 percent.

5 The ACS data show for the number of
6 people whose occupations are mainly taxi
7 drivers rose by 35 percent, from 48,000 in
8 2012 to almost 65,000 in 2015. The sharp
9 increase in the number of drivers appears
10 to be connected to a drop in the annual
11 hours worked, about 6.2 percent, and a
12 steep falloff in income.

13 Median annual earnings for taxi
14 drivers fell by 16 and a half percent over
15 this three-year period, when adjusted for
16 consumer price inflation. Annual earnings
17 appear to have fallen by a similar
18 magnitude across the board among taxi
19 drivers. Earnings fell by 14.6 percent at
20 the 25th percentile, and by 15.7 percent
21 at the 75th percentile.

22 Median annual taxi driver earnings
23 were \$25,232 in 2015, Down by almost
24 \$5,000 from 30,220 in 2012. Twenty-five
25 percent of full-time taxi drivers reported

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2 2015 earnings of less than \$16,000.

3 In my research, I found that wage --
4 that while wage gains for many New York
5 City workers --

6 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you so much.

7 MR. PARROTT: Can I have one more
8 minute?

9 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you so much.

10 MR. PARROTT: Okay.

11 CHAIR JOSHI: We have your written
12 comments, and they will be -- if you
13 haven't submitted them, you can submit
14 them and the Commissioners will each get a
15 copy.

16 Thank you very much for coming today.

17 MR. PARROTT: Okay. Thank you.

18 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

19 The next speaker is Carlos Isabel.
20 And the speakers after that will be the
21 IDG group and then Nicolae Hent.

22 Are you Carlos Isabel?

23 CHAIR JOSHI: We'll get you a Spanish
24 interpreter.

25 MR. ISABEL (through interpreter): He

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2 names. Thank you.

3 Then they will be followed by Nicolae
4 Hent and by -- pardon me if I butcher
5 this -- Namgyae Dorji.

6 AUDIENCE MEMBER: First of all, thank
7 you for listening to the for-hire vehicle
8 workers.

9 CHAIR JOSHI: So, it's great that you
10 all came up as a group, but it's good for
11 us as a Commission to know how many people
12 are behind the position. It's three
13 minutes, and in giving over your time as a
14 group for three minutes, you're helping
15 your fellow drivers also get an
16 opportunity to get up here and give us
17 three minutes of testimony. So I
18 appreciate your cooperation in this, and
19 look forward to hearing from you.

20 MR. PRICE: Maybe (inaudible) can
21 give you a number of how many showed.

22 FEMALE SPEAKER: Yes. Over 50 at
23 this point; some downstairs.

24 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you very much.

25 MR. PRICE: So since we only have

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2 three minutes or a little bit less time,
3 instead of going through our entire
4 written comment, which is about eight
5 pages, I'm just going to get to the
6 recommendations and make it quick and
7 easy. So here are five recommendations
8 for fair economics within the industry.

9 About 45 days ago we submitted a
10 petition to mandate the tipping option for
11 E-hail apps. That petition has been
12 supported by all kinds of elected
13 officials and organizations, including the
14 AFL/CIO of the State of New York, and the
15 New York City Central Labor Council. The
16 elected officials include Council Member
17 Ydanis Rodriguez, Council Member Karen
18 Koslowitz, Warrie Landsman (phonetic),
19 Mark Traiger (phonetic), Denise Miller,
20 Corrie Johnson and Debbie Rose, Darlene
21 Meely (phonetic), Rafael Espinol
22 (phonetic), Council Member Robert Cornegy,
23 Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz,
24 Junior; Comptroller Scott Stringer. And
25 verbally we have public advocate Latisha

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2 James, Council Member Julissa
3 Ferreras-Copeland, and Council Member Alan
4 Maisel.

5 The second recommendation is to
6 require a mandatory minute and mile pay
7 compared to a fare. Essentially, what we
8 imagine here is this pay that's regulated,
9 when it be touchable, the sales tax and
10 the Commission and the black car fund
11 wouldn't be allowed to be taken out of
12 this pay.

13 So it's something that we can rely on
14 every trip. We know if we go a certain
15 distance, if we have a long enough ride,
16 that we pay a certain amount.

17 The goal with that, what we've
18 discussed is that in an eight-hour day, we
19 should be able to make \$250. That's about
20 the goal that most people have. So if you
21 want people to not be on the road for
22 12 hours, that's the goal. That's what's
23 aimed for.

24 We also ask the TLC to limit the
25 number of licenses, driver licenses on the

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2 street. The entire goal, since it's all
3 one license now, that should -- could grow
4 with the number of trips as a whole, is
5 our thought.

6 We ask to regulate the luxury
7 vehicles as a separate class, and limit
8 the fleet size, because they have a huge
9 investment. They're investing 80- to
10 sometimes \$100,000 in a car.

11 (Timer sounding.)

12 AUDIENCE MEMBER: One last one?

13 CHAIR JOSHI: We do have your
14 comments. And before this Commission
15 meeting, the five points which were given
16 to us, we actually passed out to all of
17 the Commissioners. So we are aware of the
18 five points that you've raised, and
19 appreciate you appearing as a group. So
20 thank you very much.

21 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you.

22 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

23 The next speaker will be Nicolae
24 Hent. He will be followed by Namgyae
25 Dorji, and followed by Tahir Isamra

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2 CHAIR JOSHI: Do you need
3 interpreting services?

4 MR. FERNANDEZ: No, I don't.

5 CHAIR JOSHI: Okay.

6 MR. FERNANDEZ: Thank you.

7 Good morning. My name is Angel
8 Fernandez. Try to make it very brief.

9 I started -- I come from the banking
10 union industry, and I started as a yellow
11 taxi because I needed the flexibility,
12 basically -- and the money that, you know,
13 we're making as a yellow.

14 Uber came. I've been driving for
15 five years. Then Uber came. I didn't see
16 Uber as a competition, because basically
17 it was a door-to-door service, luxury
18 cars, you know, taxi. It's total
19 different industry.

20 Then Uber kept recruiting people.
21 What happens is that now they have to
22 lower their fare to compete with yellow
23 taxi.

24 I saw that my income was dropping
25 30 percent as a yellow taxi, so I became

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2 an Uber driver to meet -- to pay for my
3 bills basically.

4 So Uber kept recruiting and
5 recruiting. So what happens is that they
6 have to lower their fare.

7 Now, I wouldn't mind -- if I'm a
8 consumer, I wouldn't mind paying a little
9 extra to have the comfortability (sic) of
10 being picked up at my house, not go in the
11 rain, not go out in the snow, the cold,
12 the heat, you name it.

13 But they kept lowering the fare, and
14 now what happens is that we -- I see my
15 income dropping 30 percent again. So now
16 my income drops 60 percent in the last
17 five years.

18 This is the only industry that I see
19 that expenses go up, that inflation go up,
20 and our income goes down. This is the
21 only industry that I see that is, in the
22 future, I see the future in this industry,
23 that it is going to go bankrupt. There is
24 not going to be money to be made to even
25 pay our bills.

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2 Why? Because it's saturated. This
3 is the only industry that I see that, as
4 it was told before by one of our fellow
5 drivers, that it's going to be probably in
6 the future is going to be more drives than
7 consumers.

8 And what's going to happen? None of
9 us is going to be able to make money;
10 probably a little bit of money, not even
11 to pay our bills, not even to provide for
12 our family.

13 So my point is, we should control --
14 (Timer sounding.)

15 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you so much for
16 your testimony.

17 MR. FERNANDEZ: Thank you.

18 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

19 The next speaker is David Pollack, to
20 be followed by Lazkin Ibon, to be followed
21 by Ibraheem Ibraheem.

22 MR. POLLACK: Thank you.

23 Good morning, Chairwoman Joshi and
24 members of the New York City Taxi and
25 Limousine Commission. I'm David Pollack,

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2 MR. IBRAHEEM: Good morning. My name
3 is Ibraheem Ibraheem. I have been a
4 license for-hire vehicle driver for about
5 two and a half years.

6 The for-hire vehicle industry has
7 been a source of opportunity for many new
8 immigrants who call New York City home.
9 Over the past several years the for-hire
10 vehicle industry has seen an explosive
11 growth in the number of drivers with the
12 entry of the e-mail or app-based service
13 providers.

14 The promise of good pay and
15 flexibility has attracted many.
16 Unfortunately, the fierce competition for
17 market share between the app-based service
18 providers has turned into a rapid race to
19 the bottom.

20 The industry has quickly become
21 oversaturated. The steady decline of
22 fares year after year is putting many
23 families in serious economic jeopardy.

24 As I have detailed in the appendix,
25 my income, personally, per hour per mile

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2 and per year has declined by 11 percent,
3 10 percent and 8 percent respectively
4 between the years 2015 and 2016. And I am
5 the best-case scenario. I am a single
6 male and I own my own hybrid car.

7 As more miles are driven on my car, I
8 can only expect maintenance costs to
9 increase and adversely affecting my income
10 even more.

11 I am hear today to urge the Taxi and
12 Limousine Commission to take the brave
13 steps necessary to ensure that drivers and
14 their families are not at the mercy of
15 service providers who do not seem to have
16 a sense of morality in their pursuit of
17 market domination.

18 And the primary tool for these
19 service providers in maintaining or
20 growing their market share is the
21 reduction of fares.

22 Ensuring that drivers are fairly
23 compensated has several advantages. I
24 would like to mention just two, the most
25 important of which is the safety of New

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2 Yorkers. An underpaid driver is more
3 likely to be aggressive, is less likely to
4 yield to a crossing pedestrian, and is
5 less likely to drive cautiously in a
6 school zone.

7 It is now the time for the Taxi and
8 Limousine Commission to install the
9 necessary rules for regulating fares and
10 tips, market cap, base Commission,
11 including how that base Commission is
12 calculated.

13 Thank you very much.

14 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you.

15 And I do want to make a general
16 request. Anybody who has itemized driver
17 income statements, if you want to hand
18 them in to us or give them to us at a
19 later date, either anonymously or with
20 your name, it's extremely helpful for us
21 to see the exact numbers on how much
22 people are making and how much their
23 expenses are. So we appreciate it.

24 And, ironically, you mentioned
25 safety. The reason why the lease caps were

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2 put into place in 1996 actually was
3 because of the fear that underpaid drivers
4 were also unsafe drivers. So things come
5 full circle.

6 MR. WILSON: The next speaker is
7 Patrick Lorquet, to be followed by David
8 Beier, to be followed by Miah Golam, who I
9 believe needs an interpreter.

10 Mr. LORQUET: Good morning.

11 Good morning, Commissioner Joshi and
12 your staff. This is a followup after the
13 meeting we have with you on March 27th.
14 We bring a few points as far as the
15 union's standpoint. And I have a
16 statement here -- and then I have the
17 three minute from the other persons that
18 yield to us, and I'm going to try and make
19 it brief.

20 My name is --

21 CHAIR JOSHI: What group do you
22 represent?

23 MR. LORQUET: ATU.

24 CHAIR JOSHI: Okay.

25 MR. LORQUET: The local --

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2 (inaudible).

3 CHAIR JOSHI: Are there other members
4 of your group here? You can all stand
5 together. That way other people get a
6 chance to speak.

7 MR. LORQUET: We have a few, but we
8 didn't bring a whole army here.

9 CHAIR JOSHI: Okay. So I'm going to
10 take your testimony as a representative of
11 your group.

12 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you.

13 My name is Patrick Lorquet. I was
14 fortunate to be primary contact person for
15 ATU to meet firsthand with a group of
16 drivers who have concern about looking for
17 union support in New York City back in
18 2014.

19 I got in Transit Union Local 1181 --
20 has been involved in the last 14 months on
21 organizing drive to support the movement.
22 So far, more than 16,000 drivers have
23 signed up with the ATU local 1181, the
24 largest (inaudible) transportation union
25 in the US, representing also the MTA bus

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2 and Access-a-Ride in New York City.

3 From Albany to City Hall, the union
4 is informed and committed in the fight for
5 driver to bring justice and equality and a
6 fair system for all TLC drivers. So with
7 us, you are to join us in this effort.

8 In my humble opinion, this public
9 hearing held by the TLC as regulatory city
10 agency, this event should be a turning
11 point to act and make possible (inaudible)
12 to the driver dilemma, and New York City,
13 street hail (inaudible) for consideration
14 to follow.

15 Organized multiple hearing in the
16 five boroughs and the open forum
17 (inaudible) driver employer have to be
18 considered.

19 We have TLC New York City DOT
20 department, and New York and New Jersey
21 Port Authority, to work on a plan to
22 provide parking and bathrooms, and
23 designate relief area for drivers in the
24 City with a sense of urgency.

25 We are continuing to drop,

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2 effectively, drivers' earnings, and
3 drivers want a union.

4 I have here some exhibit based on a
5 survey. We went among the 16,000 drivers
6 that signed up with us, and I would like
7 to -- one of the question on the survey:
8 I would like to be called about a union
9 contract with Uber and other ride-share
10 companies, so I could earn more money and
11 be treated fairly.

12 And that, we got 82.19 percent
13 strongly agree with us. And I will show
14 you this exhibit.

15 There's an urgency and a need for
16 union representation in the system, based
17 on the survey that we sent to the drivers
18 that signed with us.

19 One of the other questions that:
20 Have you ever been paid less than what you
21 were entitled, by Uber or any other share
22 company?

23 Answer is, 77.62 percent say yes,
24 which is an exhibit.

25 (Timer sounding.)

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2 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you for your
3 testimony. We're also going to take
4 pictures of those exhibits for our
5 records.

6 MR. LORQUET: No problem.

7 CHAIR JOSHI: I would like to
8 reiterate, if you've spoken, please make
9 space for other people. We have 60 people
10 waiting to get in to testify today. So we
11 all have to give up a little time and
12 space in order for them to come in and
13 have their voices heard as well.

14 So thank you.

15 MR. LORQUET: You're welcome.

16 MR. WILSON: The next speaker is
17 David Beier, Committee for Taxi Safety, to
18 be followed by Miah Golam, followed by
19 Mohammed Zahrel Islam.

20 MR. BEIER: Good morning. My name is
21 David Beier and I'm president of the
22 Committee for Taxi Safety, which is
23 comprised of licensed lease agents.

24 CTS manages approximately 20 percent
25 of New York taxi Medallions, along with

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2 (Applause.)

3 MS. PROTZ: -- drivers to pick up
4 illegally, just so they can survive. And
5 you know it, you said yourself, it's too
6 lucrative to stop them.

7 This situation, unaddressed, will
8 only worsen. It's not an act of God.
9 It's not a hurricane. It's not an
10 earthquake. The problem was created
11 either by design or default by New York
12 City government, and the solution lies
13 with you.

14 (Applause.)

15 MS. PROTZ: Thank you.

16 MR. WILSON: The next speaker is
17 Mustafa Altan, to be followed by Mohamad
18 Tipu Sultan, to be followed by Aveshik
19 Chadromali (phonetic).

20 MR. ALTAN: Good morning,
21 Commissioner. My name is Mustafa Altan.
22 I am service-related disabled Vietnam
23 veteran. I am proud that I served my
24 country, in spite of serious medical
25 problems I suffered, and continue to

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2 suffer for 25 years.

3 I don't look for sympathy. I look
4 for justice. Yeah, I have to sell my
5 business --

6 (Applause.)

7 MR. ALTAN: -- due to my health issue
8 and purchase 1 million accessible taxi
9 Medallion 2004, from an auction for
10 \$535,000. I paid New York over half a
11 million dollars for my Medallions.

12 Since Uber, unrestricted growth in
13 New York City negatively affected taxi
14 Medallion owners' income. In May -- in
15 2014, my average monthly income from
16 rental of two taxi Medallions was \$5,616.
17 So far in 2017, it dropped to \$2,800.
18 This is over 50 percent drop, a little
19 over three years. This is not fair.

20 I am a New York State resident,
21 paying my taxes here. My broker/driver
22 are New York residents as well. All the
23 income we generate stays in New York and
24 we generate revenue for New York.

25 On the other hand, Uber is owned by

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2 billionaires from out of town. They are
3 collecting profits and take them out of
4 state.

5 Uber has --

6 (Applause.)

7 MR. ALTAN: Uber has false
8 advertised and ruined so many licenses
9 taxi drivers to drive Uber with false
10 promises.

11 I personally met and spoke with
12 several Uber drivers. They are not happy
13 with Uber's promises and constantly
14 changes fares --

15 (Applause.)

16 MR. ALTAN: Due to my medical
17 condition, I visit several doctors and
18 hospitals in New York City. I used to
19 take -- it used to take me hour, hour and
20 a half to get there. Now it takes me
21 about two and a half hours.

22 Manhattan traffic is unbearable. I
23 don't trust those reports saying
24 otherwise. Time after time I counted TLC
25 plates on for-hire vehicles, and I noticed

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2 that seven out of ten cars had TLC plates.
3 This does not include yellow Medallion
4 taxis.

5 Many times I came up with the same
6 results in Midtown Tunnel as well.
7 Manhattan's unbearable traffic is caused
8 by Uber's unlimited growth. This has to
9 be stopped and corrected immediately.

10 I made my investment in New York with
11 TLC --

12 (Timer sounding.)

13 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you so much for
14 your testimony.

15 MR. ALTAN: I have a piece of paper.

16 CHAIR JOSHI: If you have it in
17 writing, you can either hand it to us or
18 e-mail it to us. We can make copies, if
19 you would like to retain a copy as well.

20 MR. ALTAN: I would like to retain.

21 CHAIR JOSHI: Okay. So we will make
22 copies, and each commissioner will get a
23 copy.

24 MR. ALTAN: Thank you.

25 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you.

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2 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

3 The next speaker is Mohamad Tipu
4 Sultan, to be followed by Ashevik
5 Chadromali (phonetic), to be followed by
6 Muhammad Ijaz.

7 MR. SULTAN: Hi. Good afternoon. My
8 name is Mohamad Tipu Sultan, driving since
9 2004, after I quit college.

10 The reason I came to the taxi
11 industry I see the bright -- and living
12 with little, little -- under (inaudible) I
13 knew about the taxi industry, what it is.
14 But I still try to survive. That's why I
15 come to the taxi industry and try to
16 continue my education.

17 But then I have a family -- I
18 married. The plan changed, and I have
19 three children and my wife living in
20 Brooklyn, and currently still I'm driving
21 a taxi and participating two class in
22 Brooklyn College, American dream.

23 So American dream is education, is
24 almost fail. American dream with the
25 surviving with the minimum wage, is also

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2 fail. And the dream I see the TLC is also
3 fail.

4 The reason how I can say it --
5 (Applause.)

6 MR. SULTAN: -- there is 150,000 taxi
7 driver, they are driving yellow, green,
8 livery, Uber, Lyft, they're all drivers.
9 Currently, around 90,000 cab in the city,
10 yellow, green, Uber, Lyft. None of the
11 driver are living with the minimum wage
12 limit. And I believe that you -- are the
13 Commissioners, are the responsible for
14 this current situation.

15 (Applause.)

16 MR. SULTAN: Where is the Uber
17 closing all over the world? Business
18 policy closing. Business policy fail,
19 anti-labor, anti-minimum wage,
20 anti-people, anti-people rules and
21 regulations. Everywhere in the world
22 where Uber is crushing them because of
23 anti-labor, how come they are in New York
24 City, I have no idea.

25 (Applause.)

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2 MR. SULOTAN: Everywhere we see that
3 ad, app-based car ad, they say: You have
4 a TLC license, and come in there. When
5 the TLC license goes there and say what
6 they say with the minimum wage, not even
7 the minimum wage.

8 I'm driving Friday, Saturday night,
9 the best night, two-hour shift. Believe
10 me, if I can make hundred dollars for me,
11 thanks God.

12 And think about it. There are no
13 cash even. Goes to the seven days in the
14 hand of the garage. And last Saturday I
15 drive, everyone is double-shift, I drive.
16 I have \$100 only cash.

17 Your commissioner, that is also need
18 to be touched about the minimum wage. And
19 all over the minimum is going up, and TLC
20 should think about the improvement of the
21 taxi driver. I'm in labor Uber, Lyft, and
22 we do not want any special company, any
23 special organization, get the people to
24 use driver back.

25 (Timer sounding.)

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2 MR. SULTAN: Thank you.

3 CHAIR JOSHI: We have to give
4 everybody --

5 MR. SULTAN: I'm a taxi driver. I'm
6 a taxi driver.

7 CHAIR JOSHI: You're in contact with
8 us a lot, so please do so after the
9 hearing and we are happy to hear the rest
10 of your statement.

11 MR. SULTAN: Thank you all of you.
12 How the taxi driver --

13 (Simultaneous speaking.)

14 MR. WILSON: The next speaker --

15 MR. SULTAN: Thank you.

16 MR. WILSON: -- is Mr. -- is Mr.
17 Aveshik Chadromali (phonetic), to be
18 followed by Muhammad Ijaz, to be followed
19 by Suves Baiagi.

20 (No response.)

21 MR. WILSON: Okay. Muhammad Ijaz.

22 CHAIR JOSHI: And I am going to ask
23 again for people to rotate out of the
24 room. There are a lot of people that
25 would like an opportunity to speak. And

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2 everyone who has spoken and remains in the
3 room is taking that opportunity away from
4 another driver.

5 MR. WILSON: And Mr. Ijaz will be
6 followed by Suves Baiagi and Carlos
7 Adames.

8 MR. IJAZ. Hi Commissioners. My name
9 is Muhammad Ijaz. One of the reasons I
10 came here to testify, like, there is, like
11 TLC cops. This is one of my main concern,
12 like there isn't any standing or parking
13 area for livery guys or for taxis or
14 whatever, but they come over and treat you
15 or humiliate you, like they busted a
16 pretty big drug deal.

17 Like there was another person who is
18 not able to work because of that
19 humiliation. Like I forgot the name of
20 that person. He was testifying, like how
21 they treat them, and since that day he is
22 unable to work. And this is one of the
23 reason, like they give you no standing.
24 And wherever you go in Manhattan,
25 everywhere is no standing.

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2 And when you are issuing license
3 plates for TLC or whatever, you guys are
4 well aware how many plates are issued,
5 then you try to probably please keep in
6 mind, like these people, they need to go
7 to maybe restrooms or all those areas, and
8 they don't need a parking space.

9 And one of them, like wherever you
10 pick up, it's a no standing area, and you
11 sometimes are tolerated by parking
12 authority guys, they give you a chance.
13 But these TLC cops, they don't give you
14 any chance.

15 And a lot of the summons they
16 relate -- like if you come to -- they
17 offer you a settlement. If you come to
18 the TLC, it's going to be this much fine.
19 If you pay fine in the mail, it's going to
20 be this much fine.

21 And a lot of like drivers that don't
22 want to go to TLC and go through that
23 hassle, like parking your car, see a
24 judge, and wind up wasting like four hours
25 or whatnot. And they think, I'll just

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2 mail them \$100 or whatnot, which I think
3 is pretty unjustified.

4 And secondly, like a -- like a lot of
5 other drivers are, like their concern
6 is -- like I've been driving since 2009,
7 and like earning or whatever, it's going
8 down every single day.

9 And like there's another fellow who
10 mentioned like a lot of e-mails or
11 whatever, like offshore, they go offshore
12 or whatnot, they don't really know what's
13 going on in the city. And because of
14 those rating system or whatever, they can
15 terminate you any time without telling
16 you.

17 And when Uber launch here in the
18 city, what was the minimum wage or their
19 starting fare, and today it's a
20 significant difference.

21 And I'm definitely -- like a lot of
22 their ads are like gimmicks. It's just
23 like a beehive or something like that,
24 that tells you like you're going to make
25 this much money or whatnot, and then when

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2 you finally see -- like after when your
3 investment in your car and whatnot, and it
4 goes down. You don't make the same amount
5 of money --

6 (Applause.)

7 MR. IJAZ: (Inaudible) you were
8 making two weeks ago, and these are.

9 (Timer sounding.)

10 MR. IJAZ: Thank you.

11 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you for your
12 time.

13 We have members of our staff in the
14 back that I would like you to, if you have
15 a moment, speak with about your
16 experiences with our inspectors. Thank
17 you.

18 MR. WILSON: And the next speaker is
19 Sueves Baiagi, to be followed by Luiny
20 Tavares, to be follow by Christian
21 Libramonte.

22 MR. BAIAGI: Thank you for offering
23 me. My name is Sueves Baiagi.

24 I am driving a handicap taxi.

25 Actually, well, I -- before I drive from

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2 lease or make (inaudible). So at the time
3 when I go to the Omega to lease money
4 from -- Omega told me you can buy own
5 Medallion. So Omega, owner of Omega told
6 me you can fill out the form, at least
7 800, 800 to 900, you can get it.

8 So I was expecting below 700,000.
9 But they told me you can -- you cannot get
10 it.

11 But now business is so down, I cannot
12 ever -- I have no driver. I am a
13 (inaudible) three years driving. I am
14 killing myself. I cannot afford. My
15 family every day crying, before you drive
16 (inaudible). So now you drive every day.

17 I am proud of my family. My two
18 children going to the Stuyvesant High
19 School. My children (inaudible). Every
20 day I go to them, I tell them (inaudible)
21 every day I was playing with them.

22 So, and now, I request my Omega
23 brokers, I cannot drive any more. You can
24 take it.

25 So they told me: You are losing your

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2 home. I bought my house 2004. So I am
3 crying. My family crying. I cannot
4 ever -- so I am lucky. I came here. I
5 have great opportunity to come here.

6 So I want to give your Medallion, so
7 I can -- because I cannot afford. I have
8 no driver. Three years I am driving with
9 no driver. Every day I go to the -- I
10 request a driver. I drive both my car to
11 the the airport, no driver, no coming
12 anybody.

13 So I am very, very upset. My family
14 every day crying --

15 (Timer sounding.)

16 MR. BAIAGI: -- why are you driving?

17 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you so much for
18 your testimony. I would like you to talk
19 to somebody in the back who worked in the
20 accessible dispatch program --

21 MR. BAIAGI: Thank you. Thank you.
22 Thank you.

23 CHAIR JOSHI: -- and talk about some
24 of the incentives we can give for
25 accessible drivers.

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2 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

3 I've been asked to ask people who may
4 need Bengali translation assistance to
5 see someone in the back of the room.

6 And the next speaker is Luiny
7 Tavares, to be followed by Christian
8 Libramonte, to be followed by Doucouve
9 Mamadou.

10 MS. MARINO: I would like to say,
11 also, I know we have a lot to talk about,
12 but if we could all just show each speaker
13 the respect that we all want, and try to
14 not talk when people are speaking. It's
15 disruptive.

16 MR. WILSON: Mr. Tavares is not here.
17 The next speaker is Christian Libramonte.

18 MR. LIBRAMONTE: Hi everybody. My
19 name is Christian Libramonte. I'm here on
20 behalf of New Yorkers for Access, as well
21 as Gotham Government Relations.

22 Now today's hearing is about industry
23 economics. As noted by the TLC, the
24 for-hire industry has been expanding
25 exponentially in such a short time.

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2 Significantly, the Commission is
3 soliciting testimony about the effects of
4 this growth in the industry.

5 The growth of the for-hire industry
6 has had a horrific impact on the
7 Medallions. One of the biggest effects of
8 this growth is the illegal actions taken
9 by black car drivers.

10 I have footage on this computer of
11 mine, on video, of illegal actions taken
12 by black car drivers, and I will show this
13 to you really quickly.

14 CHAIR JOSHI: We can also take a copy
15 of that. Feel free to e-mail it to us.
16 We will make sure you get a contact in the
17 back to do that.

18 MR. LIBRAMONTE: Okay. So, a few
19 more things. So I like to do some points
20 here.

21 One the price of Medallions has
22 dropped 70 percent in spite of the TLC
23 statutory requirements to protect taxi
24 Medallions.

25 For-hire vehicle crashes have

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2 increased as the TLC changed rules to
3 allow app drivers to interact with apps
4 while driving, which is prohibited for
5 taxi drivers.

6 Accessible cabs have increased no
7 accessibility mandated to TLC, like taxis.
8 Congestion in the streets has increased
9 because of failure to perform required
10 environmental reviews, full EIS for adding
11 2,000 accessibly taxis in 2012.

12 Non-hybrid cars have increased.
13 TNCs, unlike taxis, can choose whatever
14 car they like. Safety and cab decrease
15 (inaudible) monitors.

16 Safety in cabs has decreased,
17 electronically monitored by taxis.

18 Illegal payoffs have increased.
19 Illegal cab activity at the airports has
20 increased. Driver welfare, undermined
21 city and MTA revenue have suffered huge
22 losses. And no accountability or
23 regulatory scheme to track dangerous
24 drivers.

25 Now what I want to go into was the

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2 footage I took. One was at Pier 88 on
3 48th Street and Tenth Avenue. There were
4 solicitors taking rides and poaching rides
5 from taxicabs.

6 Now when I went back a second time,
7 there was an officer enforcing the yellow
8 cabs only. And that was perfect, because
9 there was only yellow cabs. There was no
10 solicitors taking rides from yellow cabs.

11 I also went to 59th Street, between
12 Fifth and Sixth, and there were black cars
13 lining the taxi stands. And that's not
14 supposed to happen because it's for taxis
15 only. So they were just there lining the
16 whole stand, not supposed to be there at
17 all.

18 Also, on 230th Street, off the One
19 Train -- Two Train, actually, they have a
20 taxi stand as well, a taxi relief stand,
21 and that was also lined with black cars.

22 Now a police car did pass by. They
23 talked to the drivers for a second, and
24 then they drove off and nothing happened.

25 So those are the points I want to

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2 bring up, and thank you for your time.

3 CHAIR JOSHI: You can send us your
4 written comments as well as the video, so
5 the Commissioners can each -- or you can
6 hand them in now, if you like.

7 MR. LIBRAMONTE: Yes, thank you.

8 MR. WILSON: The next speaker is
9 Doucouve Mamadou, to be followed by Nina
10 Godashi, to be followed by Debra Monte.

11 MR. MAMADOU: Good afternoon. Since
12 I only have three minutes, let me go
13 straight to the rules.

14 I just want to know how many members
15 of the Commission are former taxi drivers.
16 Is that a possible question? How many
17 members of Commission that is a former
18 taxi driver, ever drove before?

19 (Commissioners indicating.)

20 MR. MAMADOU: None. Okay.

21 The rules of TLC is that actually one
22 that taxi drivers are suffering with.
23 It's not so much of the, you know -- I'm
24 sure there's a lot of other things about
25 the rules.

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2 One example is that MTA fees that you
3 post. We collect 80 cents for MTA instead
4 of New York.

5 Our own vehicle, as independent taxi
6 drivers, we are not allowed to charge a 20
7 percent to collect that money to go
8 towards the vehicle maintenance.

9 It cost us money to collect that
10 money, why? If a passengers come in the
11 car and pay you with the credit card,
12 Veriphone and CFT will charge you five
13 percent of that money. And when you give
14 that money back to TLC, you cannot put it
15 in a paper bag, hand it to them. They say
16 pay it online.

17 When you pay it online, they charge
18 you a convenience fee of three percent.
19 So we are talking about a ten percent of
20 your money that you're collecting free of
21 charge, not towards your vehicle, but you
22 have to pay ten percent to hand that money
23 back to them.

24 That must be immediately --

25 (Applause.)

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2 MR. MAMADOU: -- that must be
3 immediately eliminated. Allow us to
4 collect the money direct to Veriphone,
5 don't charge us five percent or 80 cents,
6 and the TLC also must allow, either bring
7 the money in the paper bag, or if we pay
8 online, it should say zero payment percent
9 of convenience or not. One.

10 How do we find out if your taillight
11 is not working on the vehicle?

12 You can go to inspection. You will
13 pass it with a taillight is not working.

14 If NYPD stop you, they give you a
15 ticket. They say you have a 24 hours to
16 go and fix it and come back.

17 When TLC stop you, they send (sic)
18 you \$200. You must pay --

19 (Applause, whistling.)

20 MR. MAMADOU: -- immediately.

21 Until that cost 199 at the Autozone,
22 most taxi drivers can check themselves.

23 So those rules are the one.

24 If I pick up someone at 96th Street
25 to the West Side, and the same person at

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2 96 East Side -- West Side -- I say, no,
3 no, I'm not allowed to pick up, you have
4 to walk to 110.

5 You divide the City and the poverty
6 lines, which means Spanish Harlem and
7 each -- you can pick up there, or you go
8 to West Side, where there's Columbia
9 University.

10 So --

11 (Simultaneous speaking with
12 applause.)

13 MR. MAMADOU: (Inaudible)

14 I mean most of us, you see we have a
15 hard time explaining.

16 It's very important, because
17 customers ask us, why you cannot pick me
18 up here, you pick me up in the East Side?
19 All we say is TLC rules. What kind of
20 rule can you have --

21 (Timer sounding.)

22 MR. MAMADOU: Okay.

23 CHAIR JOSHI: It is a rule, it's a
24 state law called the Hail Act, that is
25 signed by the governor in 2012.

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2 (Simultaneous speaking.)

3 MR. MAMADOU: It's not the governor.

4 CHAIR JOSHI: For the green taxis?

5 MR. MAMADOU: Yes, I know. It's
6 signed by the governor, but we have a lot
7 of problems explaining to people, because
8 we cannot tell the same person we take
9 away, why we cannot pick you up in the
10 east the same --

11 CHAIR JOSHI: Right. And what I
12 would like to do, then, is for, also, our
13 External Affairs Team to talk to you,
14 because we do some work out in those
15 neighborhoods, explaining what the green
16 taxis can do and can't do, and it would be
17 helpful to get your input so we can
18 improve that.

19 MR. MAMADOU: I would love to do
20 that. And, you know, if you look at most
21 of the rules again, they allow you to pick
22 up Queens, but if you go in the airport
23 you must walk outside to go pick up
24 elsewhere.

25 So who's actually the one that

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2 costing taxi industry?

3 Remember, 150,000 -- I'm leaving.

4 I'm leaving.

5 CHAIR JOSHI: Yes.

6 (Simultaneous speaking.)

7 MR. MAMADOU: -- taxi licenses, they
8 are not driving.

9 MR. WILSON: The next speaker --

10 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you.

11 MR. WILSON: The next speaker is Nina
12 Godashi, to be followed by Steven Savader,
13 to be followed by Nancy Reynoso.

14 MS. GODASHI: Hi, Commissioners.

15 Good morning.

16 (Simultaneous speaking.)

17 CHAIR JOSHI: Quiet, please. Quiet.

18 MS. GODASHI: I am a yellow taxi
19 driver. And you heard everybody, all the
20 yellow cabs complaining, they are not
21 making money, we are not making enough.
22 We cannot pay the mortgage. We have
23 problems in the house with the kids, with
24 everybody. We have a big problem. And
25 nobody is helping us. Nobody.

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2 Like you heard a lot of people, they
3 losing the Medallion, they losing the
4 money, and this has to stop. And Uber is
5 making everybody slaves. I knew it one
6 day it's going to come this day. When I
7 start this job, when Uber came out,
8 everybody was happy, because they were
9 thinking they were going to make a lot of
10 money.

11 (Applause).

12 MS. GODASHI: But today, after five
13 years, you see these people, they not even
14 talk to you, they are so mad, all of them,
15 because none of them is making money
16 today. And worse days is coming.

17 Now it's the beginning, but the worse
18 days, as more drivers is coming in this
19 business, low income they going to make.
20 And you can see that. Everybody can see
21 that and can feel it today.

22 But you are here to help us, and
23 someone has to stop this. The streets in
24 Manhattan is getting like parking lots.
25 It's getting dangerous for emergency

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2 vehicles, for the police. Nobody can
3 drive.

4 (Applause.)

5 MS. GODASH: And everybody know, all
6 these drivers that are sitting here today,
7 they know that, and they feel every day.
8 We're like slaves sitting over there for
9 12 hours in the streets and not making
10 money enough to pay our mortgage and
11 whatever we have to do.

12 So you are here to help us. You have
13 to do something and stop that. You have
14 to stop these people getting blood from
15 this drivers, even they are Uber or
16 whatever they are, doesn't matter.

17 (Applause.)

18 MS. GODASHI: They taking the money.
19 I work. I start working. I said, let me
20 switch from the yellow to the Uber. I
21 want to work for them. And I was making
22 worse than the yellow. Everybody was
23 saying that yellow is not good. Today
24 they have the different opinion, because
25 the yellow is much better than them.

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2 They getting your money, they steal
3 your money. I realize that. I had a fare
4 I sold the lady, \$58 in her phone. She
5 show me the phone. And they -- they keep
6 the 36 percent, whatever, 25 percent. And
7 then text to them, I said: Excuse me.
8 You give me \$25, \$30 for this fare. And I
9 saw. So I text to them and I said, this
10 is not fair. So they give me \$10 back.

11 My son is driving Uber today to pay
12 his college, because I cannot afford to
13 help him any more. So he's driving the
14 same. He's doing the same. They taking
15 his money.

16 Plenty time he has to text them to
17 get \$10 more back. Like they call --
18 how -- like they give you money back,
19 like --

20 CHAIR JOSHI: Rebate.

21 MS. GODASHI: That's not fair.
22 You're stealing my money and you give it
23 to me, the money back, after ten days,
24 when I text you.

25 So someone has to stop, to do

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2 something in this. Everybody is going
3 down. The business is going down.

4 (Timer sounding.)

5 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you so much for
6 your --

7 MS. GODASHI: Thank you.

8 CHAIR JOSHI: -- testimony.

9 (Applause.)

10 MR. WILSON: The next speaker is
11 Steven Savader, to be followed by Nancy
12 Reynoso, to be followed by Syed Mantar.

13 CHAIR JOSHI: And I just want to say
14 the time -- the time now is 12:26. We
15 will take a break at 1:00 o'clock for 45
16 minutes, but 45 minutes only, and resume
17 at 1:45.

18 MR. SAVADER: Good morning, TLC. As
19 a TLC driver, I wanted -- I want some
20 information because I'm a little nervous.
21 I'm complaining about the industry in
22 general. I could say, when they first
23 started Uber and other taxi-based apps, I
24 was making okay money. Now it's less,
25 it's much less, and all of us drivers are

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2 saying the same thing.

3 Because of Uber and other apps like
4 that, it made us earn less money. We earn
5 minimum wage and less minimum wage in the
6 City, other apps, and other cities as
7 well.

8 I have submitted to you guys proof
9 that the we are making less than minimum
10 wage, factoring expenses. It's tough to
11 drive. And we're providing a public
12 service, but we're not treated as such.

13 My experiences from this, it is
14 really hard for me and providing for
15 myself and my family as well.

16 I did some research, and you guys
17 have a Medallion cap. I don't know if you
18 can put a cap on for-hire, but that would
19 be a very good start.

20 Taxi and TLC apps like Uber, Lyft,
21 whatever you call it, doesn't matter, they
22 treat us bad, and Uber was the start of
23 it, to blame.

24 I have gotten to the point where
25 people -- I talk to drivers, other

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2 drivers, they can't apply for Medicaid,
3 driving. That doesn't seem right. Why
4 should I be able to get government help to
5 drive, to make very little income? It
6 just makes no sense.

7 Multiple drivers have told me they
8 could apply for Medicaid, and show me they
9 have a Medicaid card, working. What the
10 heck is going on?

11 I should be able to make a decent
12 income, pay my taxes and make a living. I
13 don't know why I can't any more. It's
14 really tough.

15 Because of the -- all the drivers in
16 the industry, hundreds of thousands of
17 drivers that are coming on board, Uber
18 wants your grandma, your grandpa to drive,
19 your friend to drive. They don't care.
20 They just want to put more drivers on the
21 street.

22 The congestion report in New York
23 City about leasecap, the industry. The
24 (inaudible) proposed a 250 net income, not
25 counting all fees, tipping and stuff,

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2 that's a good start; perhaps even going
3 further to regulate fares -- you guys make
4 a taxi app for the City. Maybe that would
5 be a good idea, something that could
6 regulate complaints like this, because we
7 have a lot of complaints.

8 Thank you so much, guys.

9 (Applause.)

10 CHAIR JOSHI: And we do have people
11 in the back, so if you have specific
12 financial points that you can share with
13 us, that would be extremely helpful for us
14 understanding the issues you're facing.

15 MR. WILSON: The next speaker is
16 Nancy Reynoso, to be followed by Syed
17 Mantar, to be followed by Rafael Rosenio.

18 MS. REYNOSO: Good afternoon,
19 Commissioners. Hi. My name is Nancy
20 Reynoso. I am a TLC licensee for eight
21 years, and a borough taxi for four years,
22 proudly.

23 My concern is how can we make at
24 least my industry, the one I represent,
25 borough taxi, thrive?

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2 We became owners after learning that
3 as a green cab because we street-hailed
4 legally in areas that were already
5 underserved, and serve in legal ways.

6 Also a chance to hopefully have an
7 investment for the future, sometime along
8 the way, something that has almost
9 demolished for all of us.

10 While many of us put our savings,
11 others took out loans towards this new
12 initiative.

13 And the first 18 to 20 months were
14 the most productful (sic). That the slow
15 introduction of TNC's limits, we started
16 feeling the difference. Our incomes were
17 reduced -- or are reduced while the FHV
18 industry grows at astonishing rates. With
19 this lack of enforcing the rules on behalf
20 of the TLC, illegal street-hails have also
21 grown in proportion with the influx of
22 these new vehicles.

23 I ask all of you to find a solution
24 for the many men and women who are trying
25 hard to survive as borough taxi drivers.

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2 How many more TLC licensed vehicles do we
3 actually need in New York City?

4 Also, I suggest a balanced equal
5 system in pricing. The pricing should be
6 all or for none. They should end the
7 undercutting of other segments of the
8 industry, letting passengers pick their
9 preference in car service, and not by
10 pricing. This I ask not own in my name,
11 but for all my green taxi drivers and
12 owners.

13 Thank you.

14 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you.

15 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

16 The next speaker is Syed Mantar, to
17 be followed by Rafael Rosenio, and a
18 speaker who gave only his last name,
19 Mr. Rahman could you identify who you are.

20 MR. MANTAR: My first question is --
21 I know it's very strange question to you
22 guys, TLC Department: Does anyone in TLC
23 Department has any investment or shares in
24 Uber, Lyft or any ride-share company?

25 (Applause.)

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2 MR. MANTAR: The reason is, why I'm
3 asking this question, Uber is charging
4 high Commission, very low fares for
5 drivers. Uber is stealing drivers' money,
6 as everybody said that -- money by
7 charging different prices to the
8 passengers and paying low price to the
9 driver, which is very true.

10 Uber pool is not Uber pool; it's like
11 Uber poop for us.

12 (Laughter/applause.)

13 MR. MANTAR: I give you one example.
14 I pick a passengers from Brooklyn to
15 Manhattan. I asked my passenger, how much
16 you paying -- how much the Uber charging
17 you?

18 He said, \$2.99.

19 Imagine how much Uber drivers are
20 suffering with this low fares, \$2.99 from
21 Brooklyn to Manhattan, Uber pool. That's
22 why I said Uber poop.

23 I said it's more than slavery going
24 on in this industry. Drivers need inquiry
25 about it. Please do it.

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2 And my second question is -- I mean
3 the third one is: Since Mario Cuomo,
4 Albany, passed the legislation in anyone
5 in -- anyone in Westchester, upstate, Long
6 Island, the drivers can drive their
7 private cars. Today they are -- they are
8 in our neighbor, tomorrow they're going to
9 be in City. My question is: What
10 precaution TLC Department taking about it?

11 Thank you so much.

12 CHAIR JOSHI: Can I ask you a
13 question about -- you mentioned something
14 about a passenger fare being different
15 than a driver share.

16 MR. MANTAR: Right.

17 CHAIR JOSHI: And prior to this
18 hearing we were sent some examples of
19 instances where the driver's fare is
20 different than the passenger's fare. So
21 can you just tell me a little about your
22 experience, and whether -- which one is
23 more, which one is less, and what are the
24 taxes based on, and what is the Commission
25 taken out of?

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2 MR. MANTAR: Okay. Thanks for asking
3 this.

4 I picked one passengers from the JFK
5 and I took to the Newark Airport, and I
6 asked the passenger: How much Uber charge
7 you?

8 She said: Uber charge \$127.

9 I said: Can you show me?

10 She show me, and I took the picture.
11 Can I take picture?

12 I did take the picture, and it was
13 \$127.

14 What I get paid from when I check my,
15 what you call, the amount, it was \$59,
16 which is including bridge and the tunnel,
17 Holland Tunnel.

18 CHAIR JOSHI: So that's adding those
19 tolls back into your pay?

20 MR. MANTAR: Yeah, was \$59, including
21 toll in my fare.

22 CHAIR JOSHI: So those tolls add up
23 to 20-some dollars?

24 MR. MANTAR: Yeah, about \$20 and
25 change.

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2 CHAIR JOSHI: So minus those tolls,
3 you're talking about \$39 --

4 MR. MANTAR: Exactly.

5 CHAIR JOSHI: -- conservatively.

6 MR. MANTAR: Exactly, out of \$127.

7 And the other day I pick up -- if she
8 would have Uber pool from --

9 CHAIR JOSHI: Do you know what the
10 total -- what your total that they were --
11 that deductions were taken out of on your
12 side?

13 Because the examples we got, the
14 passenger paid say 127, but the driver's
15 total earnings are a smaller amount, say
16 \$90, and then the deductions are taken
17 from that \$90.

18 MR. MANTAR: Yeah, after deduction,
19 what I got, \$59.

20 CHAIR JOSHI: So \$59 was the total,
21 and then taxes were taken out of that?

22 MR. MANTAR: Exactly.

23 CHAIR JOSHI: And the Commission was
24 taken out of that?

25 MR. MANTAR: That's true.

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2 CHAIR JOSHI: So there was a
3 difference between \$59 and \$127.

4 MR. MANTAR: -- and 27 dollars, big
5 difference. Exactly.

6 And the other day there was JFK,
7 actually picked up JFK pool, anyone you
8 want to pick up JFK pool, they charge \$35
9 for each passenger.

10 I pick up three passenger, three
11 pools, and I drove one in Brooklyn and two
12 in Manhattan. I ask each of them. They
13 charge \$35. What I got after pay off all
14 my Commission and everything, I got paid
15 off \$39 out of \$105.

16 (Simultaneous speaking from
17 audience.)

18 MR. MANTAR: And I tell you one
19 thing. I understand you talking about
20 there's not the TLC jobs to get on the
21 number --

22 CHAIR JOSHI: It's not that it's not
23 our job. We have a certain amount of
24 legal jurisdiction, and it's a state law
25 that says either a state entity or City

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2 Council is allowed to cap the number of
3 licensed vehicles.

4 MR. MANTAR: I got that point.

5 But what TLC can do is to cap on the
6 TLC license on it itself. The more you
7 give the license, the more they going to
8 drive with the company.

9 I'm not against all the ride-share
10 company, but it has to be doing something
11 about it, because they are abusing and
12 they are using us as a slave. It's modern
13 slavey.

14 CHAIR JOSHI: What I would like is,
15 so we can get to the next person, if you
16 don't mind meeting with someone -- if have
17 you some more information on the
18 difference between the driver and
19 passenger fare, that's something we would
20 like to look into.

21 MR. MANTAR: Yes. No problem.

22 CHAIR JOSHI: And anybody else who
23 has those types of examples, there's
24 people in the back with polo shirts. If
25 you could share them with us, that would

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2 be helpful.

3 MR. MANTAR: All right. Thank you so
4 much, Commissioner and everyone. Have a
5 nice day.

6 (Applause.)

7 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

8 The next speaker is Rafael Rosenio,
9 to be followed by Mr. Rahman from GETT, to
10 be followed by Edith Prentiss.

11 MR. ROSENIO (through interpreter):
12 Good morning. I drive a green cab in New
13 York. Good morning, Commissioners of Taxi
14 and Limousine Commission of New York.
15 Good morning, taxi drivers and the public.

16 My name is Rafael Rosenio from the
17 Green Taxi of New York. This is a group
18 that was made by drivers for green taxis
19 of New York. This group feels that Green
20 Taxi of New York has not met their
21 requirements, because we feel like the
22 Taxi and Limousine does not support us in
23 what we were promised.

24 We have the rights to street hail as
25 green taxis in the streets, but we're not

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2 being able to do so. They insult us and
3 they accuse us and they turn against us
4 just for trying to do our jobs with
5 dignity and sacrifice.

6 With all due respect, we like to
7 demand that we get our rights as well as
8 the green cab drivers, and support us. We
9 pay for permit that is really costly, but
10 the benefits of it is low compared to what
11 we pay for the permits.

12 Thank you.

13 CHAIR JOSHI: I just want to make
14 sure I understand. One of your primary
15 points was enforcement, so that's
16 competition with illegal street-hails?

17 THE INTERPRETER: Correct.

18 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you.

19 And there are some people in the back
20 that I would like you to speak to, if you
21 can, to give us some specific areas of
22 concern.

23 MR. ROSENIO: Thank you.

24 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

25 The next speaker will be Mr. Rahman,

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2 who works for GETT.

3 He's not here?

4 The next speaker is Edith Prentiss
5 from Taxis for All, to be followed by Atta
6 Syed and Hildu Wolf.

7 MS. PRENTISS: Hi. My name is Edith
8 Prentiss. I'm the chair of the Taxis for
9 All campaign.

10 I'd like to say first of all, the
11 problem with enforcement is a major issue.
12 I've been in Washington Heights for almost
13 40 years, and every time I've testified on
14 this topic, I've pointed it out. I know
15 of only two occasions when I saw TLC
16 inspectors in the Heights, one being the
17 187th Street Triangle between Dabriny
18 (phonetic) and whatever, all the way over
19 on the West Side, where drivers were
20 eating lunch at the lower park; and
21 secondly at the GW Bridge before you put
22 up signs for the taxis.

23 What's going to come back after the
24 reconstruction will be a surprise to
25 everyone.

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2 The issue for the disability
3 community is very concerning in the number
4 of green waves that have come off, how
5 we've lost this number of green waves,
6 because the bottom line is Central
7 Dispatch will not function if we continue
8 to lose green waves.

9 When you start talking about serving
10 all five boroughs, both in and out of
11 Manhattan, it hearkens back to those of us
12 are old enough, the Ride for All, which
13 had, at various time, between three and
14 five vehicles, and did supposedly serve
15 the five boroughs, and did not.

16 You would call for a trip: "Oh, we
17 can give you one tomorrow."

18 "Well, I don't need the trip
19 tomorrow. I need it today."

20 And I think many of us who are of
21 that generation are very concerning (sic).

22 You know, the issue about
23 enforcement, which many people have spoken
24 about, has never been addressed. Never.
25 I mean, we are used to street liveries,

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2 and now the Ubers doing exactly the same
3 thing. They ride down the street beeping
4 their horns at every corner.

5 Come on. This is ridiculous. Why
6 are they allowed to do that?

7 AUDIENCE MEMBER: It's everybody.

8 MS. PRENTISS: Yes, it's everybody,
9 even without plates.

10 Thank you very much.

11 (Applause.)

12 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you.

13 MR. WILSON: Thank you. The next
14 speaker is Atta Syed, followed by Hildu
15 Wolf, followed by Eric Gyasi.

16 (No response.)

17 MR. WILSON: Ms. Atta Syed is not
18 here.

19 Hildu Wolf.

20 MS. WOLF: Hi, good afternoon. My
21 name is Hildu Wolf. I represent and work
22 for 450 green SHL WAV vehicles that were
23 in distress over a year ago. They were
24 off the road or they were on the road with
25 tremendous fines and violations due to

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2 very bad mismanagement from the management
3 company that is now defunct.

4 With TLC's help over a year ago, we
5 very slowly were asked: Please, put these
6 vehicles back on the road.

7 The investors who own these vehicles
8 are outside investors. They are not
9 owner/operators. They are businessmen who
10 wanted to invest and believed that they
11 could, A, make a nice passive income from
12 this to -- you know, and they wanted to
13 also help, with a very interesting kind
14 of endeavor, where you can also actually
15 be charitable at the same time.

16 We put the cars back on the road,
17 most of them, about 300, back in
18 September. I got them all new plates. We
19 paid off fines, violations, tips. We had
20 a tremendous help from the Licensing
21 Department, and I'll thank them at the end
22 of my little speech here.

23 Six months later, unfortunately,
24 almost all my vehicle owners have told me
25 that we now have to take the cars off the

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2 road. And most of these cars are now
3 sitting in an underground lot in Linden
4 Boulevard and Brooklyn, beautiful cars,
5 brand new, 2015s, 2016s, under, you know,
6 new cars, what you call new vehicles,
7 under a thousand vehicles.

8 The ones that are on the road, a lot
9 of them are no longer eligible for the
10 grants, because we put these cars, at
11 first inspection, in the latter part of
12 2016. You changed the grant program, you
13 increased it. It was wonderful.

14 However, you said that any vehicle
15 that's over a thousand miles can no longer
16 get a grant, not even the \$10,000, which
17 had -- you know, which was in the old
18 grant program.

19 So my cars that came in the latter
20 part of 2016, when they go to inspection,
21 for those inspections, which was in
22 February, March, April, May, they don't
23 even own their permits. At the time when
24 they came in, they didn't have to own
25 their permits.

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2 So I would have to transfer their
3 permits and get that done so that they can
4 get actually their grants. But we don't
5 have time for that.

6 In fact, in five weeks, in the month
7 of February, you couldn't even get in a
8 grant application.

9 But also, the economics of really
10 driving or keeping these cars on the road
11 just does not work, between insurance,
12 full coverage, which includes comp and
13 collision, liability -- liability, which
14 is only --

15 (Timer sounding.)

16 MS. WOLF: I'm sorry.

17 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you.

18 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

19 The next speaker is Eric Gyasi,
20 followed by Roger Portella, followed by
21 Jose Aguagallo.

22 Mr. GYASI: Good afternoon. Thank
23 you for having me.

24 I think at the end of the day the
25 reason why these green taxis aren't doing

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2 very well is it's not a level playing
3 field.

4 Many people have talked about the
5 difference between Uber and the green
6 taxis. I would like to point out five
7 specific areas in which it's not a level
8 playing field.

9 First, with respect to TLC paperwork,
10 as a stands now green taxis have a higher
11 inspection burden than the Uber taxis do.
12 So I'm a green taxi owner. My guys have
13 to take their cars in twice yearly; Uber
14 guys, once a year.

15 And everyone in here knows, once you
16 go in for an inspection, they'll find one
17 thing or another, such as a taillight, the
18 trunk of the car, which puts the car out
19 of Commission for a day or two to be
20 corrected.

21 Also, there's a lack of communication
22 at the TLC office. You'll have a car go
23 to (inaudible), it will pass inspection,
24 and you'll show up at the LIC TLC office,
25 and yet you will be told: Actually, your

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2 license -- your car is suspended.

3 And they'll say, "Well, we haven't
4 heard from Woodside," and as a matter of
5 fact, Woodside system and the TLC system
6 doesn't actually talk to one another.

7 So you even, as the owner or the
8 driver, to go down to the Woodside and
9 then pick up paperwork, which may or may
10 not be given to you, to prove that, in
11 fact, your car has passed inspection.

12 The next point is also with respect
13 to pricing. The economics of the green
14 taxi is quite difficult. As it stands
15 now, Uber can have the best of both
16 worlds.

17 On days like today, when it's raining
18 or it's poor weather, they can surge
19 price. So then they are making more money
20 by charging the customer or consumer more
21 for rides on a rainy day.

22 As a green taxi owner, you can't.
23 You are on the meter. So you can only
24 charge one set fare every single day. So
25 on a day like today, you lose out on the

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2 upside.

3 However, Uber then can also undercut
4 the market. So with products like Uber
5 pool, with Uber special airport fares,
6 they can -- a rider can pay \$32 to get
7 from Central District Manhattan to JFK.
8 That same trip, either from an outer
9 borough or from a yellow taxi, would cost
10 you \$52.

11 So, frankly, why would a consumer pay
12 money for either a yellow or a green in
13 that context? The fact that Uber's
14 pricing is controlled by them, as a
15 private actor, while greens and yellows
16 are stuck to the meter, is another reason
17 why there's a vast difference between the
18 two programs.

19 Finally, with respect to the
20 wheelchair and the Uber pool requirements,
21 green taxis, we have to have a wheelchair,
22 because we're mandated by the state to
23 have 50 percent wheelchair accessible
24 fleet. So we as the owners have put the
25 money and the time into creating these

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2 fleets.

3 However, you turn around with a
4 minivan -- I have Dodge Grand Caravans,
5 and my drivers can't do an Uber pool. But
6 once again, an Uber driver can turn around
7 and take that same car and take more than
8 one or two passengers, once again creating
9 an economic disincentive to be in the
10 green taxi business.

11 The other point I bring up very
12 quickly -- with 20 seconds left -- is also
13 on insurance. There's again a difference
14 between what a Uber driver has to pay for
15 insurance and what a green taxi WAV owner
16 has to pay for insurance.

17 These points -- pricing, coverage,
18 insurance, taken together, leaves it
19 economically not viable to run the green
20 taxi business, notwithstanding --

21 (Timer sounds.)

22 MR. GYASI: -- what the government
23 would love for us to do.

24 Thank you.

25 (Applause.)

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2 MS. MARINO: Are your comments
3 written?

4 MR. GYASI: What's that?

5 MS. MARINO: Are your comments
6 written down?

7 MR. GYASI: No. These are just my
8 notes.

9 CHAIR JOSHI: But if you can, to get
10 some e-mail contact, if you can e-mail
11 them to us and we will make sure all the
12 Commissioners get them.

13 MR. GYASI: Very well.

14 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you.

15 MR. GYASI: Thank you. Appreciate
16 it.

17 MS. MARINO: And what was your name?

18 MR. GYASI: My name is Eric, Eric
19 Gyasi.

20 MR. WILSON: Thank you very much.

21 MR. GYASI: Thank you.

22 MR. WILSON: And the next speaker is
23 Roger Portella, followed by Jose
24 Aguagallo, followed by Muhammad Nawar.

25 MR. PORTELLA: I work for Uber, but

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2 before Uber I used to own a base. I sold
3 the license to Uber. Since then, I work
4 for Uber. So far it's two years and a
5 half.

6 In two hears and a half, the first
7 year was good. The second year is bad.
8 And this next half year is getting
9 garbage --

10 (Applause.)

11 MR. PORTELLA: -- getting worse and
12 worse.

13 Whatever the drivers trying to
14 explain, is very hard to explain. But
15 basically we're going to tell something
16 about you guys.

17 With Uber, a big corporation, make a
18 lot of money. The second company who make
19 a lot of money from us is Taxi & Limousine
20 Commission, because the 150,000 --

21 (Applause.)

22 MR. PORTELLA: -- 150,000 drivers,
23 plus 100 cars -- 100,000 cars, all those
24 people is paying for these light, for this
25 office, and we paying you salary, and you

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2 guys are not doing nothing.

3 (Applause.)

4 MR. PORTELLA: Let me explain to you
5 why. TLC milking and the drivers. All
6 the City is no standing, no parking. When
7 TLC inspector come, they stop you, they
8 give you ticket.

9 Who has to pay? The driver.

10 The police, NYPD, any mistake, NYPD
11 give you a ticket.

12 They all think you don't speak
13 English. But when some American, who has
14 police car, they show they speak good
15 English, they get away with tickets. But
16 the stupid immigrant who doesn't speak
17 English, they get a ticket. That money
18 goes to New York City.

19 The next milking, milking on the
20 driver. Okay. We're talking TLC traffic
21 agents. The things -- all the streets say
22 no parking, no standing. You stay in some
23 place waiting for passenger.

24 At the inspec- -- and I call them
25 strident animals. They are

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2 animals strident by New York City. They
3 stand behind the car. They took your
4 plate. After 30 days, you get ticket, not
5 to Broadway show. You have to pay \$115.

6 And that's you guys is milking in the
7 drivers. And now what? What is the last?
8 The last thing was milking is those
9 arrogant and selfish New Yorkers. Because
10 any mistake when the driver make, they
11 complain.

12 When they complain, what happen with
13 Uber? You go in the pothole and the
14 stupid -- the rider complain about the
15 driver went to the pothole, whatever,
16 blah, blah, blah, and they claim the money
17 back.

18 (Timer sounding.)

19 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you so much for
20 your testimony.

21 MR. WILSON: The next speaker is Jose
22 Aguagallo, followed by Muhammad Nawar,
23 followed by Chris Demergis.

24 MR. AGUAGALLO: Hi. Good afternoon.
25 Commissioners. My name is Jose Aguagallo.

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2 Members and other drivers.

3 A couple points, hopefully, can help
4 us. We start with the wheelchair
5 accessible situation, which really is
6 destroying the industry and myself. As
7 you know, TLC forced the regular owners to
8 become wheelchair accessible vehicles.

9 So the same we have with the existing
10 wheelchair vehicles, where we, as a
11 wheelchair vehicles, we are happy to serve
12 the wheelchair community, unlike the
13 companies like Uber, Lyft, they give a
14 damn, the community.

15 But we as owners of the -- have
16 become wheelchair Medallions, have been
17 punished by your Commission. And very
18 hard to make payments, and all expenses
19 that come with this. And that costs
20 hundreds of Medallions, wheelchair
21 Medallions. And you know that. They're
22 in your shelves, TLC shelf.

23 And there you go. With those
24 Medallions, burning the retirements of
25 many peoples, my own retirement, which I

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2 worked so hard for it, and the American
3 dream.

4 My suggestion is very simple. As you
5 had the power to change (inaudible)
6 Medallion to a wheelchair Medallion, you
7 should also exercise the power to put the
8 drivers, regular drivers, to drive
9 wheelchair Medallions. Put in your time.
10 That has to be forever.

11 You put us to hold four years in
12 wheelchair vehicle, so at the same time
13 you have the power to change and put all
14 the drivers, every driver, that has a TLC
15 license should be able to drive
16 wheelchair. I don't know why you can't
17 solve that problem.

18 Also, this meeting I think is very
19 important to express our situations and
20 our problems, but I think why not every
21 year? Why two years? By the time you
22 made it two years, lives is being
23 destroyed, dream is being burned, while
24 Uber is boasting \$60 billion profits.

25 You allowed it to change, all the

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2 hard money, hard-working money that we pay
3 for those licenses and Medallions, to
4 burn, and benefits of Uber and other
5 companies.

6 And so many ways, help them with
7 insurance, either. We have to help them
8 we (inaudible) the insurance (inaudible).

9 The vehicles, or black vehicles for
10 hire because they have two shifts. And I
11 don't know if you have a mechanism to
12 check --

13 (Timer sounding.)

14 MR. AGUAGALLO: -- if they are forced
15 to have also Workers' Compensation.

16 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you for your
17 testimony.

18 MR. AGUAGALLO: Thank you.

19 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

20 The next speaker is Muhammad Nawar.
21 And following Mr. Nawar there will be
22 Chris Demergis and Brad Gerstman.

23 (Simultaneous speaking.)

24 CHAIR JOSHI: After Mr. Nawar, we're
25 going to take a break for 45 minutes, and

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2 then we will start again with the speakers
3 list.

4 MR. NAWAR: Hi. My name is Muhammad
5 Nawar, and I drive yellow cab like three
6 years.

7 And like six months back I pass
8 through the toll plaza, and something was
9 wrong with my EZ-Pass. And they took my
10 EZ-Pass and they gave me new EZ-Pass after
11 one week. In that time, I went and I pay
12 cash, and like six times.

13 So TLC give me letter that: Give us
14 \$1,200, because you charged \$8.

15 I said to them that they took my
16 EZ-Pass.

17 And they said to me: Okay, go to the
18 judge(inaudible). You did nothing. So
19 you take \$8, if you pay \$8 cash, everybody
20 knows that.

21 And the judge said to me: You have
22 to pay \$600 and you get your license back
23 after three years.

24 CHAIR JOSHI: I would like you to
25 speak to someone in the back about the

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2 specifics.

3 MR. NAWAR: You listen to how much we
4 make. We make \$600. I even don't have
5 \$500 to pay.

6 My wife and my daughter is with me.
7 You want to see my phone, my landlord is
8 telling me, "Give me \$1,500."

9 CHAIR JOSHI: I would like to learn
10 more about your case, and we have members
11 in --

12 (Simultaneous speaking.)

13 MR. NAWAR: -- fine me for this,
14 because I don't have my EZ-Pass on me,
15 what you (inaudible) toll plaza? This is
16 not fair.

17 CHAIR JOSHI: What you've said is
18 disturbing. So I want to --

19 MR. NAWAR: Give me one, two, three
20 hundred dollar fine, I pay. But how I can
21 pay \$600?

22 And everybody know it's \$8 toll,
23 people are not mad. In fact, I'm taking
24 one dollar more from someone else.

25 This is ridiculous. Please give me

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2 my license back, and please remove this.

3 (Applause.)

4 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

5 And before we break for lunch, I just
6 want to say who the next three speakers
7 are, and ask them to be back promptly at
8 1:45, so that we can commence and get
9 through the list.

10 The next three speakers are Chris
11 Demergis, Brad Gertsman and Michael
12 Rosner.

13 (Whereupon, a break was taken from
14 1:00 p.m. to 1:48 p.m.)

15 CHAIR JOSHI: The time now is 1:48,
16 and we're going to resume our hearing.

17 Commissioner Jiha and Commissioner
18 Aguado were not able to stay for the
19 afternoon. I thank Commissioner Marino
20 and Commissioner Polanco who are able to
21 stay.

22 I have asked a few members of the
23 senior staff to also sit on the dais, so
24 we make sure that everybody hears your
25 comments. So we're being joined by Deputy

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2 Commissioner Valdivia, Assistant

3 Commissioner Stiles, and Deputy General

4 Counsel Wanttaja.

5 MR. WILSON: So the first speaker is

6 Chris Demergis, to be followed by Brad

7 Gerstman and Michael Rosner.

8 MR. DEMERGIS: Good afternoon,

9 Commissioners. My name is Chris Demergis.

10 I am the president of All City Corporate

11 Transportation, Incorporated. We are a

12 black car company. We're a cooperative.

13 We were awarded, a couple years ago,

14 by the City of New York, as perhaps the

15 first one, as being an MBE, minority

16 business enterprise, owned and operated

17 entity.

18 All these years in the business,

19 since 1992, since I came out of the

20 Persian Gulf War, serving the United

21 States Armed Forces (inaudible) and coming

22 to this business, driving, working with

23 the yellow cab driver, buying my own

24 Medallion, to this day I still own the

25 Medallion. Believe it or not, I still

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2 drive it once a month, just to see what's
3 going on out there on the streets.

4 And I never hear anything about
5 supporting our vets, and maybe the TLC
6 creating some kind of a discounted program
7 for veterans to get licensing for the
8 discounted program. I don't know if any
9 of you have ever served in combat or in
10 wartime, but coming back home, the
11 veterans need support from every angle
12 they can get.

13 Additionally, we, as being certified
14 as a minority business enterprise by the
15 City of New York, supposedly that would
16 help us to get contracts through private
17 entities and through the City of New York.
18 I don't see anything on the TLC side to
19 actually mention things like this, or to
20 try to help us or to create a program to
21 help us even further. Basically it
22 becomes a piece of paper hanging on the
23 wall.

24 About enforcement, enforcement,
25 everybody here is talking about

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2 enforcement. If you don't go on the
3 streets to know what's going on, you
4 cannot see what's going on. Okay?

5 The other companies, the TNC
6 companies, they drive down the streets
7 with their little lights, with the huge --
8 the big (inaudible) lit up at night like
9 flashlights. Okay?

10 The only thing that I am supposed to
11 have (inaudible) shining is a roof light,
12 or in a yellow cab or in a green cab.
13 They drive down, put it in the middle of
14 the windshield. Yet everybody is
15 concerned about, oh, safety.

16 I think that decal being lit at night
17 is an invitation -- because I see it with
18 my own eyes -- hailing with your hand,
19 getting in, then doing the app. Okay?

20 So, in essence, it doesn't become any
21 more an electronic hailing system. It
22 becomes, "Hey, there's an Uber. Let me
23 open the door. Hey, how are you?" Click,
24 I do the app, I get in the car, close the
25 car, this is me inside the car. There I

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2 go. Okay?

3 So there's a lot of things here to be
4 considered, respectfully so.

5 We're also members of the BCAC.
6 Commissioner, you've been -- I've seen you
7 many times in our meetings, the BCAC. You
8 come there, respectfully, you give great
9 speeches, and we have all kinds of
10 concerns. Okay?

11 I came here today just to say a
12 couple of words, and that's it. Have a
13 nice day.

14 (Applause.)

15 CHAIR JOSHI: I also just want to
16 mention, we do have a program for vets who
17 want to get licensed. And if you talk to
18 somebody in the back we can give you more
19 details on that, as well as any other
20 thoughts you have that would help vets
21 that are interested in getting into the
22 taxi business.

23 Thank you.

24 MR. DEMERGIS: Enforcement is the
25 key.

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2 MS. MARINO: I'd like to say thank
3 you for your service.

4 MR. DEMERGIS: Thank you.

5 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

6 The next speaker is Brad Gerstman, to
7 be followed by Michael Rosner and to be
8 followed by Alan Sapoznik.

9 Mr. Gerstman is not here. Okay.
10 Michael Rosner.

11 MR. ROSNER: And It's Michael.

12 MR. WILSON: Michael.

13 MR. ROSNER: I'm not a minority, you
14 know, just to let you know.

15 Let me know when the time starts,
16 I'll just stop at three minutes. You guys
17 tell me when.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: When the green
19 light comes on, it starts.

20 MR. ROSNER: Okay. Great.

21 How are you guys doing? Thanks for
22 seeing me, hard-working people.

23 (Applause.)

24 MR. ROSNER: I'm probably the last
25 person who should be up here because I'm

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2 three and a half weeks into this industry.

3 I have an insurance license. I was a

4 business owner for ten years, stock

5 broker, real estate, IT recruiting. Okay?

6 So I say to you this: How did you

7 let a company like Uber into this city?

8 And I work for them. It's the most

9 disgusting, disgraceful, inhumane company

10 I've ever seen in my life.

11 (Applause.)

12 MR. ROSNER: They rob and steal,

13 38 percent. The fares are insane.

14 Entitled riders walk in, walk out, don't

15 have respect to leave a dollar, all right?

16 It's inhumane. How is someone supposed to

17 make a living?

18 These people here, yellow cab

19 drivers, Lincoln cars, they are the

20 backbone for international travelers for

21 the last 50, 60, years, and you abandon

22 them.

23 Why? What are you going to do about

24 it?

25 These are family people who have been

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2 destroyed by paperless companies with no
3 employees.

4 And all you hear about in the news
5 are their executives, from sexual
6 harassment to the stealing of Google's
7 patents --

8 (Applause.)

9 MR. ROSNER: -- to the president and
10 COO stepping down.

11 How about the drivers that are
12 getting robbed and raped in finances? I
13 mean, what you guys need to do is step up,
14 you know.

15 In all disrespect, have you guys ever
16 sat with a driver, spent a week in a car
17 and seen what they earn?

18 Again, I'm three weeks in it, but I
19 see the whole industry already. From the
20 insurance, the five insurance companies
21 that, you know, charge astronomical money,
22 they don't play claim and they take their
23 time when they do, to the rental car
24 companies who charge \$400 to start, a
25 week. I mean, that's highway robbery.

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2 That's \$21,000 a year.

3 It's just insane, that you guys got
4 to do something about it.

5 I work for Uber, but get them out of
6 our lives.

7 (Applause.)

8 MR. ROSNER: What's next? What's
9 next? We're going to take away another
10 industry, an industry of people, so no one
11 can make money?

12 If they make money, then they have a
13 right. But they're losing money faster
14 than any technology in the history of
15 technology companies.

16 So, you know, that's all I have to
17 say. Bring back the lives to these
18 people, you know. Really.

19 (Applause.)

20 MR. ROSNER: If I could drop the mic,
21 I would, guys. Thank you.

22 (Laughter.)

23 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

24 The next speaker is Alan Sapoznik, to
25 be followed by Celestin Rossini and Ebrima

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2 Jobe.

3 MR. SAPOZNIK: Hello. I'm Alan
4 Sapoznik. A small disclosure, I work for
5 the City of New York, a different agency.
6 I own two Medallions, which I bought back
7 in 2004.

8 I'm not quite sure if you,
9 Mrs. Joshi, or TLC could do anything to
10 help the yellow cab industry, because
11 what's going on behind closed doors, there
12 is corruption.

13 (Applause.)

14 MR. SAPOZNIK: I don't have the
15 proof, but I could tell you something:
16 How come Mayor de Blasio, a few weeks ago,
17 said he will not bail out the yellow cab
18 industry. I believe the commissioner is
19 appointed by the mayor, so technically he
20 is your boss.

21 How you going to tell your boss that
22 we're in distress?

23 I own two Medallions. My negative
24 cash flow was \$700 for the month of March.
25 It's \$2,100. So now I could have given

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2 back to you. You cannot do a thing to fix
3 the situation. Just walk.

4 Uber should not even be on the same
5 pedestal as the yellow cabs. They're
6 buying their way in.

7 And also -- and yeah, license this
8 question is not for you, but how come
9 former Commissioner David Yassky now
10 consults for Lyft? And Ashwini Chhabra
11 the former deputy commissioner for policy
12 and planning at TLC, now works for Uber.
13 How about --

14 (Applause.)

15 MR. SAPOZNIK: How about --

16 (Applause.)

17 MR. SAPOZNIK: Stu Loeser who was the
18 press secretary under Mayor Bloomberg, now
19 works for Uber as well?

20 Those were the people that were
21 involved in policy making that were
22 detrimental to yellow cabs.

23 Also, I spoke to some of you -- I'm
24 not going to mention names -- on the
25 phone. Oh, you know what? I paid

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2 \$650,000 for the exclusive right to
3 operate in New York City. And the Uber,
4 oh, no, you need an account. That's a
5 share -- that's a ride that is planned.

6 No, it's not. Within 30 seconds you
7 get a car. A planned ride is something,
8 if I want to go to JFK tomorrow, I make a
9 reservation today. So it's not the same
10 thing. And it's just a technicality, or
11 just pressing a button versus raising a
12 hand; or, you know what, raising a hand,
13 there's still exclusive to yellow cabs.

14 You know what? Technology goes
15 forward. I'm in the computer field.
16 Today it's an app, pressing a button. The
17 result is the same. You're still getting
18 a ride right away tomorrow.

19 It might be something else. We don't
20 know. People are -- we're not stupid
21 people. We understand.

22 How come Governor Cuomo, when De
23 Blasio wanted to put the cab on Uber, all
24 of a sudden Governor Cuomo got involved?
25 Oh, no, don't -- oh, you know what?

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2 They're not going to put. I'm going to
3 order a report --

4 (Timer sounding.)

5 MR. SAPOZNIK: -- which came
6 negative, right? Because, oh, no, 30,000
7 cars --

8 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you.

9 MR. SAPOZNIK: -- don't do anything.
10 Thank you.

11 (Applause.)

12 MR. WILSON: The next speaker is
13 Celestin Rossini, to be followed by Ebrima
14 Jobe and then Fernando Galleria.

15 (No response.)

16 (No response.)

17 MR. GALLERIA (through interpreter):
18 Good afternoon to all the Commissioners,
19 and good afternoon to all the brothers
20 that came to fight for their rights.

21 I see that the taxi industry in
22 general is getting on the same page. In
23 the past, the yellow and green taxi
24 industry were a bit separated, but he sees
25 that they're now coming together because

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2 they're all affected.

3 We know that the Commission cannot
4 resolve all the issues, but you can help
5 with some of the issues.

6 We have to destroy Uber because
7 they've come to --

8 (Applause.)

9 MR. GALLERIA: -- sabotage the work
10 of the drivers who have families in the
11 City of New York. If Uber -- he spoke
12 with a lawyer, one of their lawyers, and
13 told them, if they were so good then are
14 cars being set on fire in Europe and why
15 is their business going backwards in
16 Europe?

17 Ten or fifteen years ago he spoke
18 with the previous commissioner regarding
19 the basis. They made a list of prices,
20 minimum prices. The minimum fare was \$7.
21 However, he's been a car driver and his
22 meter is 4.80. He's experiencing a lot of
23 losses. Out of the 4.80, he could drive
24 20 blocks and he gets just the minimum.
25 Uber is creating a huge competition --

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2 (Timer sounding.)

3 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you.

4 MR. GALLERIA: (Continues speaking,
5 not interpreted.)

6 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you.

7 (Applause.)

8 MR. WILSON: So the next speaker is
9 Beresford Simmons, to be followed by
10 Abraham Zachi, to be followed by Charlie
11 Smith.

12 MR. SIMMONS: Good afternoon,
13 Commissioners. My name is Beresford
14 Simmons. I'm also a member of the Taxi
15 Workers Alliance, but today I'm here on my
16 own. I've been driving since 1973 in this
17 industry. And I would hope --

18 (Applause.)

19 MR. SIMMONS: -- that today's meeting
20 would give you guys a lot of education on
21 what's going on in the street.

22 I've never seen it so desperate. I
23 have known seven guys within the last six
24 months that have lost their Medallions,
25 hard-working men. Okay?

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2 I personally -- I would love to
3 retire. I just had a heart attack. I'm
4 on kidney dialysis. But I'm still here
5 and I'm still driving, because the
6 industry is on the way down.

7 You guys can help. And I know that
8 some of the problems that are here today
9 does not belong to you; it belongs to the
10 state, the governor and to the City
11 Council of New York City. So some of the
12 things I hear today, I very much
13 sympathize with you guys, but you need to
14 get the word out.

15 The City is shrinking, and the
16 pressures of this City has caused a lot of
17 health problems to drivers. To survive --
18 you can't survive in the City. Too much
19 traffic. Uber has dominated the City with
20 cars.

21 Business, Wall Street, losing a lot
22 of money because drivers are sitting with
23 passengers for hours to get from one point
24 of New York City to another. From going
25 to the East Side to the West Side, it

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2 takes at least an hour to get there.

3 Okay?

4 So like I said, I sympathize with you
5 guys very much, and I wish you guys could
6 do something to help the drivers
7 health-wise, because I've seen too many
8 drivers -- for instance, I have one friend
9 here who is kind of senior, like myself --
10 I'm close to 70 years old -- and he has to
11 change to a wheelchair accessible car, and
12 I don't think he can handle it physically,
13 to help pushing the passengers in and out.
14 So you need to do something about the age
15 brackets and the wheelchair cars, too.

16 And I thank you very much for hearing
17 what I have to say, after 43 years in the
18 industry.

19 (Applause.)

20 MR. WILSON: The next speaker --

21 (Applause continuing.)

22 MR. WILSON: -- followed by Charlie
23 Smith, to be followed by Firhntz Noel.

24 (No response.)

25 MR. WILSON: No Gibaki. Charlie

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2 Smith.

3 MS. SMITH: Hello to the TLC and to
4 my fellow drivers. This is a very
5 layered, layered cake subject. Really, I
6 have come to understand by driving -- with
7 driving with the TLC for a year and a
8 half, that it's not about us yellow,
9 green. We're all in the same boat, just,
10 we get customers by different mediums.

11 For me, ignorant at the time, Uber
12 was an opportunity to gain financial
13 freedom, to support myself, to be able to
14 have a decent roof over my head.

15 The only thing that I'm going to hit
16 today, because the majority of everything
17 else has been hit and will be hit again
18 and again, is that I get 19-year-old girls
19 in my car, to 50-something-year-old women
20 in my car, and they ask about the
21 business.

22 And I don't dog Uber, because that
23 would be dogging everybody, but I educate
24 them as much as I can and let them know
25 the sacrifice that they would have to put

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2 in, and I educate them on what it would
3 take.

4 So for the younger ones under me and
5 for the women, this industry has provided
6 employment. We can create our checks.
7 And corporations have come in with the
8 faces of eagles, but behind they are like
9 crows and hawks, and they have swooped
10 down on the whole industry.

11 And now we are electric cars and all
12 of these things. And nobody is mad at
13 anyone for getting wealthy, but why do you
14 have to be greedy about it? It's
15 unnecessary.

16 Women have kids. They do this
17 part-time. It helps. Not everybody is
18 owning a Medallion. But there are
19 issues -- everybody is earning money and
20 the drivers are on the bottom of the totem
21 pole. And women, statistically speaking,
22 financially, we're on the bottom of the
23 totem pole, and this is an opportunity.

24 So as women who are on this
25 Commission, and as men who have

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2 girlfriends or wives or friends, this is
3 something that definitely needs to be
4 thought about before taking food out of my
5 mouth, out of women's mouths, out of the
6 mouths of the men who support their
7 families, to be able to grow; and not
8 survive, but live.

9 Thank you.

10 (Applause.)

11 MS. MARINO: I have a question. I
12 haven't wanted to ask many questions, or
13 any, because of the volume of speakers,
14 but are you -- I'm a little confused. Are
15 you supportive of Uber or not supportive
16 of Uber?

17 MS. SMITH: I am not supportive of
18 what they stand for now. So, I used to
19 be. I used to be.

20 MS. MARINO: And are you currently
21 driving for them?

22 MS. SMITH: I drive with Lyft now.
23 I'm still affiliated with them because of
24 politics and technicalities. Does that
25 answer your question?

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2 MS. MARINO: Yes, you did. Thank you
3 very much.

4 MR. WILSON: The next speaker is
5 Firhntz Noel, and the speakers after that
6 will be Sohail Rana and Jose Molina.

7 MR. NOEL: Good afternoon,
8 Commissioners. We need your help.

9 CHAIR JOSHI: Just for the record,
10 would you mind stating your name? We said
11 several names, and I want to make sure I
12 know who you are.

13 MR. NOEL: My name is Firhntz Noel.

14 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you.

15 MR. NOEL: We need your help. All
16 the drivers need your help. Some agent,
17 some TLC agent, thinks you hire taxi, you
18 drive a taxi, you have no degree. You
19 nothing.

20 I want you make sure the driver work
21 same like a lawyer, same like a police
22 officer. But some TLC officer, not
23 everyone, treat the driver like nothing.

24 (Applause.)

25 MR. NOEL: And we have couple rules

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2 that TLC make, the rules just to make
3 money, not for help.

4 Last time, one people crush -- almost
5 crush my car. I call a police. When the
6 police come, police say, okay, everything
7 fine.

8 The girl have a cigarette, try to
9 smoke a cigarette. She put it in my wool
10 (phonetic). I tell her I'm supposed to
11 call the police, because you almost make a
12 fire in my car. Okay?

13 When the police come, they say,
14 "Okay, everybody fine. Everybody okay.
15 No car crush. Okay. Everybody go home."

16 I say, "Thank you, Officer."

17 The officer asks us, "Who need
18 report?"

19 I say, "No."

20 The girl say, "No."

21 After couple weeks, I receive one
22 letter from TLC, say I have to -- to go in
23 Queens.

24 When I go there, the girl make a
25 false report, say I'm hurt her car, and I

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2 just go. Four percent was there, but TLC
3 asked me to pay it, \$1,800, for no reason.

4 CHAIR JOSHI: Did you go to a
5 hearing?

6 MR. NOEL: First of all, I go -- my
7 attorney have a problem. I'm sick.

8 (Timer sounding.)

9 MR. NOEL: I have the letter for my
10 doctor. I brung it. They just say no, I
11 have to pay the money. But I don't have
12 money to pay for that.

13 CHAIR JOSHI: I would like it if you
14 could speak to somebody in the back about
15 your particular case. Thank you.

16 MR. NOEL: Thank you.

17 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

18 The next speaker is Sohail Rana, to
19 be followed by Jose Molina and then
20 Fernando Garcia.

21 MR. RANA: Thank you. Good
22 afternoon, Commissioner. My name is
23 Sohail Rana. I have been driving
24 23 years, driving from yellow cab to black
25 car to app-based company now. Over the

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2 years I have seen a lot of changes, not
3 like favor -- in favor of drivers.

4 So, I now drive SUV. I invested
5 \$70,000. I pay the dealer. I pay the
6 bank. I pay the TLC, the DMV. And in the
7 end I don't even like able to get minimum
8 fare wage.

9 And then all these app-based
10 companies, they advertise for \$1,500 a
11 week, \$2,000 a week. And I don't know.
12 How many of you guys make \$1,500 a week,
13 \$2,000 a week?

14 No. So this is like -- it should be
15 illegal to advertise false advertisement.

16 (Applause.)

17 MR. RANA: And on top of everything,
18 if you're working for Uber, you're not
19 even like allowed to take tips.

20 And if you guys been like, you know,
21 take care of all these things, we wouldn't
22 be talking about fatigue rules, we had
23 hearing last time, because drivers are
24 forced to work many, many hours because
25 they are not getting paid like what

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2 they're supposed to get paid. And that's
3 it.

4 Thank you.

5 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you very much.

6 (Applause.)

7 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

8 The next speaker is Jose Molina, to
9 be followed by Fernando Garcia and then
10 Rafael Estrella.

11 MR. MOLINA: Good afternoon. My name
12 is Jose Molina. I've been driving for
13 about a year and a half now. Just like
14 somebody else, I invested \$75,000 in my
15 vehicle. It lasted six months. I had to
16 return it back. I can't do \$5 rides any
17 more.

18 So out of that \$75,000, my trade in
19 New York was \$15,000. I had to go out of
20 state in order for me to make some money
21 out of it. Now I had to get another
22 vehicle. Keep doing the same rides.

23 So unless you guys decide to do
24 something about it, where we can make a
25 little bit more money so we can sustain

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2 what we do for a living, it's not even
3 worth it.

4 Uber takes Commission, and so does
5 everybody else. TLC makes money, and the
6 companies that rent the vehicles and the
7 insurance companies.

8 I also own another business as a tow
9 driver, and owner-operator, we're capped
10 on how much we can make: \$5 a mile, 125
11 base.

12 So why can't we do that for everybody
13 else in here? We're all trying to make
14 the same living. It doesn't matter if
15 you're yellow, green, Uber, Lyft; it
16 doesn't matter. We're trying to make a
17 living. We are trying to feed our
18 families. We all have a mortgage -- most
19 of us do. My mortgage is \$2,500 home.

20 How am I supposed to pay a car, a
21 \$75,000 car? I can't.

22 So it's up to you guys to decide for
23 us, see if we're worth it. Because the
24 way it's going, none of us can afford
25 anything. Everything is going up, except

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2 our fares. Everybody else is getting paid
3 except for us.

4 And the funny thing is, the ones
5 that's supposed to make money, the
6 drivers, we're not making it. We're
7 barely surviving. We're becoming the next
8 slavery. That's what it is.

9 And the Uber pool is just going to
10 get bigger and bigger. Next thing you
11 know, we're going to have buses. That's
12 what the next Uber pool is going to be, a
13 bus, and the driver is going to make \$3.25
14 for every single ride; 10 miles for one
15 person. Doesn't pay off, not to me, not
16 to anybody else.

17 Thank you.

18 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you.

19 (Applause.)

20 MR. WILSON: The next speaker is
21 Rafael Estrella, to be followed by Jose
22 Fermin to be followed by Steven Moore.

23 Rafael Estrella?

24 (No response.)

25 MR. WILSON: Okay.

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2 MR. FERMIN: Hi everyone. Thank you
3 for listening to me. My name is Jose
4 Fermin. I have about \$40,000 invested in
5 my car, and I come on behalf of me and my
6 family only.

7 The first (inaudible) we have is TLC,
8 the first one. I think so because they
9 have very high fines, over nothing.

10 You have a hybrid car, hybrid. You
11 have to put one sticker on the side
12 because you, who pay your car, you don't
13 know it's a hybrid. This makes no sense
14 at all.

15 We are not (inaudible). We are
16 business people, family people.

17 TLC, after the term of Michael
18 Bloomberg, it bring thousands of traffic
19 enforcement officers and thousands of TLC
20 (inaudible).

21 We don't need no more police. Over
22 here, in this building, today, we have at
23 least 50, 50 TLC enforcement officer. To
24 me, I'm not criminal. I'm a family man.

25 And TLC have harassment (sic) us

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2 every single day. You go to drop off at
3 the hospital, there's TLC behind you.

4 After you receive a ticket, \$150.

5 Probably for you \$150 is nothing. You
6 probably make, I don't know, 125, 200 a
7 year?

8 I don't. I need that money for my
9 family, my kids to go to college. And my
10 kids, believe it or not, they eat. They
11 do. I don't want give my money away to
12 you guys. With all respect, I don't want
13 to offend nobody.

14 Second, TLC have a lot employees, can
15 pay people. I suggest you can send some
16 of them to Fire Department. Maybe they
17 have diverse people, not only white.

18 And I think TLC is still with the
19 Michael Bloomberg campaign against
20 minorities, Dominican, Arab, black people.
21 I believe that's hundred percent.

22 I have an investment in my car. I
23 don't want nobody chasing me.

24 (Inaudible) -- on the sidewalk, they want
25 yellow, blue, green. They passengers, not

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2 TLC.

3 Why you give the airport? Why?
4 Everybody pay for the airport, me, too; no
5 TLC. And I sure it's not your fault,
6 because we have a transportation president
7 from (inaudible). I saw him and
8 complained, not any more. When you call,
9 they don't do nothing.

10 But I want --

11 (Timer sounding.)

12 AUDIENCE MEMBER (Jose): Thank you.

13 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you so much.

14 (Applause.)

15 MR. WILSON: Next speaker will be
16 Steven Moore, to be followed by Hassan
17 el-Kark (phonetic) and by Satwinder Singh.

18 MR. MOORE: Good afternoon. I'm
19 going to first just start by saying it was
20 a lot of things I was going to talk about,
21 but I hear a lot of the men and women here
22 already bring up a lot of the points. I'm
23 going to just talk about my experience as
24 a driver.

25 I've done a lot of things. I have --

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2 I even come here and look at the setup
3 here and am really interested in that. I
4 even notice some of the workers, because I
5 used to do that, also. But my experience
6 as a driver, I really like driving. I have
7 the opportunity to work in the greatest
8 city in the world and meet the greatest
9 people from all over the world. So every
10 day that I get behind the wheel it's like
11 an honor, and I'm excited about it, still.
12 Been driving for years.

13 But lately, when I came back the City
14 to start working, I noticed that there's
15 been like a form of like vampirism that is
16 going on, blood-sucking from -- from TLC,
17 from the app-based and yellow cabs. I did
18 all of them and do all of them still, and
19 definitely from the police officers.

20 And I feel that there's like a
21 feeding frenzy that's going on here. I
22 don't know how it's able to be justifiable
23 that you charge \$600 to inspect a car, or
24 register, just to start off period, \$500
25 to register a car.

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2 You speak to passengers about that.
3 They say, "Well, you know, you know, can't
4 you do this part-time?"

5 No. You can't drive part-time,
6 because your bills are not going to allow
7 that. So you have to do this full-time.
8 And you can't even do it full-time. You
9 have to work overtime just to make what
10 you would make as a full-time worker. So
11 I don't see that it's possible for me to
12 do other things that I should do, like
13 spend time with my family and/or maybe any
14 of the hobbies.

15 One thing that I do see is that
16 there's a lot of traffic, and it's not
17 only because of app-based companies. It's
18 also the traffic from the construction, a
19 lot of construction. Every city (sic) in
20 that block has construction. And if one
21 doesn't, the next block has two.

22 They close the lanes. They close the
23 sidewalks. Don't turn here. Don't turn
24 there. And I don't know if these people
25 that make these laws actually drive in the

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2 City, but it's hard.

3 Double park UPS trucks, Fed Ex
4 trucks, triple park. They just -- no one
5 says nothing to them. And they make so
6 much traffic. You can't even get by.

7 And their fines are the same amount
8 as our fines. Why don't they charge a
9 business like UPS or FedEx \$700, the same
10 way you would charge me \$100? You charge
11 me \$100, that's almost my day pay or half
12 a day pay. But FedEx is going to keep
13 doing it because they can incorporate that
14 in their stuff.

15 Only thing I wanted to tell everybody
16 that's here, if you have one of these
17 things (indicating), it's a driver's
18 license, a TLC driver's license. That's a
19 vote. There's 150,000 voters right here.
20 Make it last.

21 (Timer sounding.)

22 MR. MOORE: Make it work for
23 something, because we're one of the
24 biggest agencies --

25 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you so much --

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2 MR. MOORE: -- if we actually stick
3 together.

4 CHAIR JOSHI: -- for your testimony.

5 MR. MOORE: Thank you.

6 (Applause.)

7 MR. WILSON: The next speaker is
8 Hassan el-Kark, to be followed by
9 Satwinder Singh, to be followed by
10 Jashinder Singh.

11 (No response.)

12 MR. WILSON: Okay. Satwinder Singh.

13 MR. S. SINGH: Good afternoon, Madam
14 Chairwoman, Commissioners. My name is
15 Satwinder Singh. I'm a member of TMODA,
16 Taxi Medallion Owner/Driver Association.

17 Firstly, I would like to thank you
18 for the opportunity to speak --

19 CHAIR JOSHI: Do you mind just
20 repeating the name of our organization?

21 MR. S. SINGH: TMODA, Taxi Medallion
22 Owner/Driver Association.

23 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you.

24 MR. S. SINGH: Firstly, I would like
25 to thank you for the opportunity to speak

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2 here today.

3 We are going through the worst year
4 that we ever faced in taxi industry. Some
5 of us already filed for bankruptcy, some
6 in the middle of it. Others are planning
7 to file it.

8 We have many friends who have
9 invested their lives in the City, and
10 hundreds of thousands of dollars. With
11 the banks and credit unions now refusing
12 to finance due to the drop in Medallions.

13 Many of my friends are unable to
14 afford enormous bill payments. Because of
15 the same reasons Jashinder Singh, who is
16 with me today, who (inaudible) accessible
17 Medallion four years ago from the City
18 auction (inaudible) for a 60-year-old man,
19 own three and a half corporations, which
20 is considered seven Medallion, is being
21 forced to foreclose by the bank and thrown
22 out from his house, with four young
23 children.

24 Would you imagine losing everything
25 in one shot, when he worked for 30 years?

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2 Another, Mr. (Inaudible) own
3 Medallion, never missed a payment ever,
4 and credit union refused to renew his
5 balloon because of insufficient income,
6 and they forced him to foreclosure.

7 Mr. Lugni (phonetic) was forced to
8 put 15 grand to renew his balloon, or
9 otherwise have to file for bankruptcy.

10 The question arises, why all of a
11 sudden happen this? What is responsible
12 for this mess? Where did something go
13 wrong?

14 Let me say that there's no longer a
15 value in the Medallion system because the
16 City gives the right of (inaudible) for
17 free to the app-based companies, thus
18 reducing the value of the Medallion
19 system. And because of this, the banks
20 refuse to accept loans, as it no longer
21 see that value.

22 In reality, these app-based companies
23 are cabs, and the cabs drivers too.

24 When you raise your hand, what do you
25 see? Cab and driver. And the same thing

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2 when you press the button on the phone,
3 same thing you're doing that.

4 Just without the strange (inaudible)
5 demolition and debilitating mortgages,
6 that maybe more than yellow and having
7 inspection once in two years, but the
8 yellow has six inspections in two years.

9 There are many differences in rules
10 and regulations in yellow and app-based
11 cabs (inaudible) the same. We are not
12 against technology. But technology should
13 be our cabs. Please have the right to
14 make money through existing cabs like us,
15 rather bypassing us and creating their own
16 50, 60,000 cabs. But misusing the
17 technology can make some millionaires and
18 others slum dog like us.

19 There are many --

20 (Applause.)

21 MR. S. SINGH: -- full-time drivers
22 losing their jobs, retirement, and their
23 kids' future. Could you please help them
24 in any manner --

25 (Timer sounding.)

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2 MR. S. SINGH: -- or could you please
3 take the Medallions back with half the
4 loans --

5 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you.

6 MR. S. SINGH: -- over the City.

7 Thank you.

8 (Applause.)

9 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

10 The next speaker is Jashinder Singh,
11 to be followed by Rafael Estrella, to be
12 followed by Fredy Teno.

13 MR. J. SINGH: Good afternoon
14 everyone. My name is Jashinder Singh.
15 And unfortunately, I am also part of this
16 yellow cab industry.

17 There is no place of justice, and
18 today we got three minutes to explain the
19 story of three years. Anyway, I will try
20 to convey my message to this hearing to
21 all those lawmakers and responsible for
22 provisions who rule our lives, and have
23 failed us so badly by using their power.

24 My family had four yellow cab
25 Medallion, which we lost all of them last

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2 year. And now everybody is bankrupt in my
3 family because of the mismanagement of the
4 New York lawmakers and (inaudible) of New
5 York City.

6 Which is no need to explain.

7 Everything is in front, which is total
8 injustice and ignoring those hard-working
9 people who are in this taxi industry for
10 last seven, eight decades.

11 I am driving yellow cab for last
12 13 years, and I bought a Medallion,
13 keeping in mind as a good investment
14 and (inaudible) a job for me and I can
15 sell my family part of it. Because I
16 believed at that time this industry is
17 being controlled and managed by the most
18 responsible and trustworthy administration
19 of New York City.

20 (Applause.)

21 MR. J. SINGH: We had a blind
22 faith -- we had a blind faith on them, and
23 keep on working without any fear of losing
24 our job for the last twelve years.

25 But in few years before, City

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2 betrayed us so badly, which would never
3 expect, and shaken the future of our life,
4 where we won't be able to revive it again.

5 Everybody knows what the City did. I
6 don't want to repeat it again. I lost my
7 driver and could not find another one, and
8 drove alone for 14 months. But
9 unfortunately, I could not make my
10 mortgage on time, and bank repossessed my
11 Medallion.

12 In spite of my (inaudible) and put
13 down \$1 million lien on my house, too.
14 After filing bankruptcy, I am still in
15 debt. Who is responsible for that?

16 There could be so many ways to
17 protect and keep and maintain the yellow
18 cab industry, by keeping these (inaudible)
19 also. But none of the intelligent
20 lawmakers try it ever.

21 As usual, power takes one-sided
22 decisions, and they did, and we have no
23 right to ask anything. We are crying for
24 last three years, but they never been
25 listened.

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2 And here we want to ask some
3 questions. We want the Medallions, by
4 keeping in mind, by keeping blind trust,
5 is that our fault?

6 Why we are being punished? Even
7 behaviors of --

8 (Timer sounding.)

9 MR. J. SINGH: -- is better than
10 yours. If you are really --

11 (Applause.)

12 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you so much for
13 your testimony.

14 (Applause.)

15 (Simultaneous speaking.)

16 CHAIR JOSHI: I would like to get one
17 of the members in the back to get your
18 contact information, because it's clear
19 you have --

20 MR. J. SINGH: My Medallion is in the
21 garbage right now, and I am helping. Who
22 is responsible for my loan?

23 And nobody want to listen (inaudible)
24 last two years. I was in the newspaper,
25 but in the media I spoke in City Hall

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2 (inaudible) nobody want to listen. This
3 is the first time you invited us, and we
4 have just about three minutes. We have
5 very long stories.

6 CHAIR JOSHI: We have a lot of
7 drivers --

8 (Applause.)

9 CHAIR JOSHI: -- and I invite you to
10 please give your contact information to
11 one of our staff members, so we can give
12 you much more than three minutes one on
13 one.

14 MR. J. SINGH: Thank you.

15 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

16 The next speaker is Rafael Estrella,
17 to be followed by Fredy Teno, to be
18 followed by Bhairavi Desai.

19 MR. ESTRELLA: Good afternoon,
20 Commissioners. My name is Rafael
21 Estrella, and I start driving from 1986,
22 trying to accomplish my American dream.

23 I was very happy. 1986, Taxi and
24 Limousine Commission give me an hour for
25 being an honest and responsible driver. I

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2 was very happy and proud to be a New York
3 City cab driver.

4 But, unfortunately, on 1999, I
5 suffered a traumatic brain injury. After
6 two and a half months in a coma, I wake up
7 and I start fighting to get better. But
8 due to my (inaudible) my two kidneys fail.
9 Then I went for dialysis and wait for a
10 kidney transplant. Now I have the kidney
11 now.

12 But now I'm going to lose my
13 Medallion and probably my wife, because I
14 can't afford it no more. I had two
15 drivers. They put the food and the
16 payment for my mortgage until the last
17 month, when the -- one of drivers, he
18 quit, and now I just have one driver. I
19 don't -- I don't know what to do.

20 TLC give me an hour. Now I would
21 like TLC give me financial advisor to do
22 something for my -- you know, or probably
23 I'm going to (inaudible) yellow cab
24 driver, proud to be, I own this cab. I'm
25 going to be proud to be homeless in front

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2 of the Taxi & Limousine Commission.

3 Because until now --

4 (Applause.)

5 MR. ESTRELLA: -- one penny from the
6 government. Everything comes from my
7 Medallion.

8 But now I really don't know what to
9 do. Please, dear Commission, try to give
10 me somebody to help me to not go to
11 bankruptcy. Because I still have my wife
12 and hopes to keep going and going.

13 You know, I'm like a rabbit -- I'm
14 like a turtle, that I walk slowly to
15 accomplish my dream as the American people
16 that I am now.

17 Thank you very much, and I hope you
18 listen to me, and I have some result, good
19 result.

20 Thank you and have a nice day.

21 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you.

22 (Applause.)

23 MR. WILSON: The next speaker is
24 Fredy Teno, to be followed by Bhairavi
25 Desai, to be followed by Gary Farberov.

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2 MR. TENO: Good afternoon,
3 Commissioner. Good afternoon, other TLC
4 staff and, more importantly, good
5 afternoon fellow drivers. My name is
6 Fredy Teno. I'm the black owner --
7 black-base owner of a base called
8 Semperide. I retired from the military
9 after 22 years of service, and then opened
10 up the base shortly after my retirement in
11 2012.

12 My first experience with this
13 industry was with Uber. And like everyone
14 else here, I was sold on a dream. I was
15 sold on a lot of promises. I was sold on
16 a lot of great opportunities, you know,
17 that were presented, but only, you know,
18 to come down crashing, you know, to what
19 it is fast-forward today, an industry of,
20 you know, that has been undervalued,
21 under-appreciated, and certainly being
22 transformed into what it is now.

23 So the TLC set up three levels of
24 bases for a reason, right, livery, black
25 car and luxury. Uber -- not just Uber,

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2 but all the TNCs have transformed the
3 black car industry into something that is
4 probably sublevel than livery. I don't
5 even know how to describe it, when you're
6 using black car, \$80,000 vehicles, to pick
7 up \$3 fares.

8 So -- and I know, when I opened up my
9 own company, I am here also to fight on
10 behalf of the other black car base owners,
11 because it's very hard. The competition
12 is not level. It's totally unfair.

13 When I have people calling me to get
14 prices, and as I did, you know, at the
15 beginning when I set up the base, I submit
16 my prices to TLC. I don't change my
17 prices dramatically, like other companies
18 do, like the TNCs do.

19 They are very shocked when I (sic)
20 hear my prices, because the customer is
21 now always thinking \$3. So it's hard to
22 make a living. It's hard to stay in
23 competition. It's hard to stay in
24 business.

25 I set up a wheelchair accessible

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2 program within my base, because I thought
3 that was important, to be able to serve
4 everyone equally. And then I'm not making
5 money with that either, because obviously
6 I didn't even -- as a black car owner, I
7 was not able to get any kind of grants,
8 any kind of subsidy, you know, even though
9 I pay the same TLC fees, I pay, you know,
10 diamond stickers, I go along with all the
11 insurance and all the other regulations
12 that everyone does, you know, the black
13 car industry is looked at as an outcast
14 or, I don't know what.

15 But I'm trying to offer a service to
16 the community, you know (inaudible) and I
17 feel that I'm being shortchanged. And a
18 lot of obstacles in the way.

19 I feel the TLC could do more. I know
20 that you're here to regulate, but you also
21 should be here to train. And the reason
22 why you are getting so many complaints and
23 so many people coming here today is
24 because this should have been set up a
25 long time ago, or more periodic, so people

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2 could actually come and you can listen to
3 the things and not let it accumulate, you
4 know, five years down the road, when I was
5 sold that dream in 2012 as an Uber driver.

6 I was one of their poster child, if
7 you will. If you go on their website, you
8 will see me -- they wanted to advertise my
9 veteran status, you know, to bring other
10 people in, because they're masters of
11 advertisement and --

12 (Timer sounding.)

13 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you so much for
14 your testimony.

15 MR. TENO: Thank you.

16 (Applause.)

17 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

18 The next speaker is Bhairavi Desai,
19 to be followed by Gary Farberov, to be
20 followed by Ali Ashraf.

21 MS. DESAI: Hi. Good afternoon. I'm
22 Bhairavi Desai. I'm the executive
23 director of the New York Taxi Workers
24 Alliance.

25 Gosh. I got to tell you it's like

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2 half my heart is just crushed and the
3 other half is just on fire, and I imagine
4 most people in this room feel this way.

5 I mean, you've heard me testify for
6 almost 21 years, and all -- we're an
7 organization of 19,000 drivers. And all
8 we have ever done is represent drivers'
9 interests.

10 And in my 21 years of organizing in
11 this industry, I have never seen people in
12 such crisis. You know, just hearing -- I
13 mean, the bankruptcies, the foreclosures,
14 eviction notices, having to answer -- I
15 now go with, you know, phone calls about
16 homeless services, to people wanting to
17 know about suicide prevention hotlines.

18 There is such a deep-seated level of
19 crisis amongst the drivers, I have to say
20 to you from the bottom of my heart, I, as
21 an advocate, just on some days don't know
22 what to do. I mean, this is a serious
23 human crisis because of the financial
24 plague that has happened in this industry
25 over the past three years.

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2 And, you know, it just brings me to
3 serious concern about what people's
4 futures are going to be looking like, and
5 certainly the level of crisis that they're
6 facing today in their day-to-day life.

7 So it's a vicious race to the bottom.
8 To starve the taxi drivers, Uber starves
9 the Uber drivers. That's the heart of it.
10 They drop the fares, which leaves drivers
11 in crushing poverty, and they do that so
12 they can poach the fares of the other
13 sectors. No driver wins in this race to
14 the bottom.

15 The issues that Uber drivers have
16 been talking about, upfront pricing,
17 that's where Uber will say to the -- quote
18 one price to the passenger and pay the
19 driver something else.

20 One thing you should know is not only
21 does the driver get shortchanged on the
22 amount that Uber collects from the
23 passenger, but on top of that, if Uber --
24 the tax amount that Uber has to pay on the
25 higher fare that's paid by the passenger,

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2 they charge that higher tax amount to the
3 driver. That comes out of the driver's
4 pay. Most drivers don't even know about
5 it.

6 The sales tax and the black car fund
7 surcharge, again, come out of the driver's
8 pay.

9 The predatory leasing. We have a
10 member who was granted unemployment by the
11 New York State Department of Labor. He
12 was unemployed. He was found to be
13 unemployed on the grounds that he earned
14 poverty wages. He was a 4.8, five-star
15 driver. On weeks where he worked 45, 50
16 hours, there were weeks where he earned
17 less than \$5 an hour.

18 (Timer sounding.)

19 MS. DESAI: He's completely bankrupt
20 by that economic policy.

21 (Applause.)

22 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you very much.

23 MS. DESAI: There is power that you
24 do have as regulators, and I hope the
25 number one thing you do is take the tapes

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2 of the testimonies of the drivers, deliver
3 them straight into the hands of the mayor,
4 and ask him to wake up and fight this
5 fight. It's far from over.

6 (Applause.)

7 MS. DESAI: Thank you.

8 MR. WILSON: The next speaker is Gary
9 Farberov, to be followed by Ali Ashraf and
10 then Luis Suarez.

11 Mr. FARBEROV: Good afternoon,
12 Commissioners, Commissioner Marino.

13 We're here again. Okay? I've been
14 here many times before in front of you. I
15 don't understand why an organization that
16 has the word "taxi" as the first word in
17 its title, forgets about the industry
18 entirely.

19 When are we going to realize and
20 admit the fact that the taxi industry is
21 dead? It is completely dead.

22 The people behind me are telling you
23 horrible stories. All you're doing is
24 listening to them and at best telling them
25 to talk to somebody in the back. And

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2 that's where it's going to end. Because
3 time and time again you've heard all these
4 stories and you've never done a thing
5 about it, not one thing.

6 Your tallying your numbers, that you
7 made 70 million pickups in New York, yet
8 the Medallion now costs 240,000. You are
9 not mentioning the fact that three months
10 ago you had 8,000 green permits on the
11 roll. Now you have less than five.

12 If you're doing so many pickups,
13 where are these cars going? Why is the
14 Medallion worthless now?

15 When are we going to hear the truth?
16 Tell these people the truth: Find another
17 job. Get into another business. They're
18 never going to recoup their money, ever.

19 And as I've told you before, this
20 farce of a program for wheelchair
21 accessible dispatch is exactly what it is,
22 a farce. It's never going to work.

23 And I told you it's never going to
24 launch, and you told me you think it's
25 going to work. And who was right?

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2 And the reason I was right is because
3 you will never ever support this industry.
4 There's no money in it. And when you tell
5 people it's not your concern, it's the
6 City or the State, you as Commissioners
7 have to go to the City and to the State
8 and argue for us.

9 (Applause.)

10 Mr. FARBEROV: It's time to take
11 action for come clean and say, "Get out of
12 the industry." This industry cannot
13 support 150,000 drivers. It cannot,
14 physically. It's not a wonderment why our
15 fares are so little.

16 Yet the handicapped community or the
17 wheelchair accessible community cannot get
18 a ride. Whose fault is that?

19 There's enough cars on the street.
20 Why can't they get service?

21 The contract that you took on for
22 that accessible dispatch is a farce. It's
23 not working. It's not going to work. You
24 will never be able to launch it because
25 you're not addressing the underlying

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2 problem. You are not. There are no
3 drivers to support your dream.

4 This system has to change. It has to
5 be put back together from the start. It's
6 broken completely. You will have no
7 wheelchair accessible vehicles. You will
8 not. And you know that yourself. You can
9 see how many permits have been given back.
10 Every single day we're selling these green
11 cars, painting them black and sending them
12 to different states, because they don't
13 have drivers. Where are all these
14 drivers? Why are you getting more
15 drivers? 150,000 drivers, what do you
16 want to have, 200,000 cars in the city?

17 (Timer sounding.)

18 MR. FARBEROV: It's impossible to do.
19 It is not possible.

20 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you for your
21 testimony.

22 (Applause.)

23 (Simultaneous speaking from
24 audience.)

25 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

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2 The next speaker is Ali Ashraf to be
3 followed by Luis Suarez, to be followed by
4 Bernardo Celerino.

5 (No response.)

6 MR. WILSON: Okay. Luis Suarez.

7 MR. SUAREZ: Hi everyone.

8 I came here today because I'm
9 thinking of making a multimillion dollar
10 investment in the yellow cab industry, and
11 I wanted to hear a little bit about the
12 industry.

13 I stood downstairs for two and a half
14 hours. People -- there are only 40 people
15 in this room. There were 250 people
16 downstairs, half of them waiting in the
17 rainy.

18 I see a terrible disconnect between
19 your Commission and the industry that you
20 regulate. There doesn't seem to be any
21 empathy. And I think part of the
22 problem -- I heard one of the drivers
23 earlier ask if any of you had ever been a
24 taxi driver. And there's no empathy.

25 What I suggest that you do is that

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2 you make it a requirement for anybody that
3 sits in this dais, you don't have to drive
4 for a month. Drive one shift, one 12-hour
5 shift --

6 (Applause.)

7 MR. SUAREZ: -- and you will
8 completely get it. Because you don't get
9 it now. These people are virtual slaves,
10 and there's nothing that you all are doing
11 about it.

12 And I'm also very concerned, as an
13 investor to make an investment of
14 multimillion dollars -- I was talking to
15 Melrose, one of the unions that has taken
16 back hundreds, untold numbers of -- from
17 these poor souls, terribly concerned that
18 people that work in this Commission,
19 high-level salaries, creating regulations
20 that are stifling to the drivers, that
21 then quit and go and work for Uber for
22 high salaries.

23 I can't think of anything that sounds
24 more fraudulent to me than that, and it
25 surprises me that in the very glare of

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2 daylight this is being allowed to occur.

3 It's just -- it's incomprehensible to me.

4 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you very much.

5 (Applause.)

6 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

7 The next speaker is Bernardo

8 Celerino, to be followed by Sunu Miah, to

9 be followed by Zaheer Ahmed.

10 MR. CELERINO: Good afternoon. My

11 name is Bernardo Celerino. I started

12 driving yellow cab in 1988. I'm an

13 individual Medallion owner.

14 I have seen 11 points on the table

15 today. It's impossible to address it in

16 three minutes. But if I have to ask the

17 TLC chairwoman or the TLC council members,

18 what is the input today received by the

19 drivers advisory board regarding those

20 eleven points, the answer will be: What

21 is the drivers advisory board?

22 Local law number 60 of the year 2003

23 was never enforced by either TLC or NYC.

24 It is time to do it. After 14 years of

25 sleeping, the public (inaudible) and to

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2 create the drivers advisory board.

3 I want to be part of that drivers
4 advisory board (inaudible) independent
5 Medallion owners. Hopefully soon we can
6 go back to the happy road of the NYPD.

7 Changing the subject, the not in
8 motion time should be adjusted for 50
9 cents a minute to 50 cents every 50
10 seconds, to increase the not in motion
11 time from 30 to \$36 an hour.

12 Regarding tolls, the yellow cab
13 industry has been sending money to MTA for
14 all these years. So it's time for MTA to
15 pay back to the yellow cab industry by
16 giving us free tolls in New York City.

17 Regarding Uber, is (inaudible) for
18 the Taxi & Limousine Commission to run the
19 app business.

20 That's it. That's all I have to say.

21 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you.

22 (Applause.)

23 MR. CELERINO: I handed a copy of
24 local law number 60, my number, any way
25 you can contact me.

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2 CHAIR JOSHI: We will definitely
3 follow up with you.

4 MR. CELERINO: Please do it.

5 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

6 The next speaker is Sunu Miah, to be
7 followed by Zaheer Ahmed, to be followed
8 by Juan (inaudible).

9 MR. MIAH: Hi. How are you everyone?
10 (Inaudible).

11 Me and my partner, we bought a
12 Medallion in like 2014, from auction. So
13 we didn't win. We buy from private owner,
14 880 plus City tax, 940 altogether. So we
15 have a loan like \$815,000. So our payment
16 is monthly. Before it is 6,000, now it's
17 monthly payment, \$5,000.

18 We can't even make a payment for the
19 mortgage. We don't make money for that.
20 We make less money, not even for mortgage
21 money.

22 So we have two kids. My partner have
23 three kids. So we have a very hard time.
24 So we're not sure right now what to do.
25 Maybe can you help us or maybe take your

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2 Medallion back.

3 (Applause.)

4 MR. MIAH: Because we don't have any
5 passenger. People don't want to take
6 (inaudible) they taking black car
7 everyone, Uber.

8 I'm sick. I'm still working for the
9 payment --

10 CHAIR JOSHI: May I ask you, do you
11 have trouble finding another driver?

12 MR. MIAH: Nobody want to drive.
13 It's a handicap.

14 CHAIR JOSHI: So you're having
15 trouble finding a driver that wants to
16 drive an accessible taxi?

17 MR. MIAH: Not even one person want
18 to drive. That's it.

19 CHAIR JOSHI: Okay. Thank you.

20 (Applause.)

21 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

22 The next speaker is Zaheer Ahmed, to
23 be followed by Juan Heredia (phonetic), to
24 be followed by (inaudible).

25 MR. AHMED: Hi. Good afternoon

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2 everybody. My name is Zaheer Ahmed, and I
3 have few quick questions to the
4 Commissioner.

5 My first quick question was: Why is
6 it that Uber car, when it is not passed on
7 an inspection center, has to pay \$10, and
8 a cab, yellow cab will have to pay \$35 to
9 get back into the inspection center again?

10 And the other question is: Why is it
11 that a yellow cab driver have to go
12 through inspection every four months,
13 meanwhile Uber cars have to go through
14 inspection every two years, if I'm not
15 mistaken?

16 And we pretty much stay on the road
17 12 hours a day, each shift, no matter if
18 it's a green cab driver, black cab driver
19 or any other cab driver. Why is it that a
20 yellow cab driver would have to only go
21 through -- a green cab driver only have to
22 go through four months of inspection every
23 year?

24 And like Uber drivers or any of the
25 limousine drivers, we all have families,

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2 too. They're allowed to use the phone.
3 They're (inaudible) calls are coming in,
4 they're touching their phones, they are
5 operating the phones, they are calling the
6 passengers, they are texting.

7 Meanwhile, if I have a family or all
8 of the cab drivers sitting behind me, they
9 have families, if some emergency calls
10 come along and if I have a passenger in my
11 car and I have to take that call,
12 meanwhile there is a TLC officer around,
13 they can pull me over just because I'm on
14 the phone.

15 This is not fair. And everybody
16 knows that Uber drivers are using the
17 phones while they are operating their
18 cars. It's not even like they're taking
19 calls, they have to pull over the car and
20 take the phone call.

21 The other question that I have is:
22 We pay 50 cents to MTA on each fare, and
23 we not allowed to use bus lanes. We are
24 not allowed to pick up or drop off people
25 close to bus stops. There are cameras on

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2 each bus stop, bus lanes, and you get \$115
3 fine for that.

4 Why can't you make a rule that says
5 that if you have a passenger, you are
6 allowed to go in a bus lane? Meanwhile,
7 these bus lanes are pretty empty all day
8 long.

9 And why is it that we are going to
10 get charged \$4 fee for pickup or drop off,
11 to bill that has passed (inaudible)
12 registration to approve it?

13 And one last quick question to you is
14 that: Why is it that you cannot regulate
15 prices for Uber?

16 Why is it that Uber sometimes on and
17 off, put a \$5 flat rate toward Manhattan
18 or Brooklyn; meanwhile a cab driver can't?
19 And we are losing money -- a lot of our
20 fares are going towards those companies
21 because they have far more better prices.

22 (Timer sounding.)

23 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you so much for
24 your testimony.

25 (Applause.)

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2 MR. WILSON: The next speaker is Juan
3 Heredia, to be followed by Waheed Ahmad,
4 to be followed by Pablo Urena.

5 (No response.)

6 MR. WILSON: Okay. Mr. Ahmad?

7 (No response.)

8 MR. WILSON: Pablo Urena.

9 MR. URENA (through interpreter):
10 Good afternoon. My name is Pablo Urena.
11 I drive a green cab.

12 This is a big deal, this meeting.
13 The ones that are trying to make the money
14 for the industry is asking for help from
15 the TLC. It doesn't make sense, but we
16 will try to make it.

17 We're just asking for justice, for
18 all the drivers to be treated equally and
19 fairly. Right now, instead of sitting
20 here, we should all be working, us
21 drivers, being out there driving the
22 passengers around, and TLC is doing what
23 they have to do to support us so we could
24 have an easier and stress-free life.

25 That you understand that the

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2 drivers -- that us drivers are picking up,
3 according to the TLC, 1 million passengers
4 per day. If each ride is \$10, can you
5 imagine how much we're putting into the
6 City? But we're not taking some of them.

7 We're asking for your help that --
8 because this industry bloomed when the
9 City was in crisis, with job losses and
10 the recession. This is when all of the
11 drivers came and started applying for TLC
12 licenses, and that's why we have more
13 drivers, and we're trying to fulfill that
14 need. But we can't if we don't have the
15 backbone of TLC.

16 We're asking -- I'm asking you to
17 help for the black livery fund, since I
18 work for the livery base, that they help
19 us with the livery insurance.

20 They have two rules that is absurd.
21 First, that the driver has a passenger
22 from the base. Second, that the driver
23 picks up a wheelchair accessible.

24 Thank you.

25 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you very much.

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2 (Applause.)

3 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

4 The next speaker will be Zafar Khan
5 to be followed by Joseph Cadet, to be
6 followed by Javaid Tariq.

7 (No response.)

8 MR. WILSON: Okay. Is Joseph Cadet
9 here?

10 (No response.)

11 MR. WILSON: Javaid Tariq?

12 MR. TARIQ: Good afternoon everybody.
13 My name is Javaid Tariq. I'm working with
14 the New York Taxi Workers Alliance.

15 As you see that all the long
16 (inaudible) people were talking about this
17 economical situation about the taxi
18 drivers, what is affecting on them by
19 Uber; it's not Uber economics.

20 But I have come to some different
21 thing. As you know, maybe a couple days
22 ago, you guys saw in the New York Times a
23 big article about how Uber is manipulating
24 the drivers and playing their games.

25 They are not just people who started

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2 manipulating people by the technology.

3 They learned from TLC.

4 I tell you how. Yeah, it's in the
5 technology. Yeah, they are manipulating
6 drivers through their technology. But TLC
7 is manipulating drivers, sending summons,
8 unfair summons.

9 Nine million people (inaudible) who
10 just pick up the phone (inaudible). You
11 could ask (inaudible) and send them \$500
12 summons. This is not fair.

13 You people have to do proper
14 investigation and send someone to the
15 drivers. When someone is goes through
16 whole week's income of drivers
17 (inaudible).

18 TLC is the most revenue-making
19 machine in New York City.

20 (Applause.)

21 MR. TARIQ: (Inaudible) -- drivers.
22 Every day in our office, if we have 100
23 people, 80 people come with those summons,
24 but they have no idea that any private
25 motorists or any other things, and TLC is

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2 sending those summons.

3 Those summons are so scary. They put
4 five, six allegation, and then
5 manipulating them, if you're not going to
6 pay, you're going to lose your license,
7 you're going to lose -- like that other
8 gentleman -- and \$6,000 fines.

9 Please think about it and lower your
10 fines. Because it is not just making
11 machine. Everybody is taking money from
12 hard-working people.

13 The second thing you have to control
14 on your TLC office are the agents who are
15 telling everybody -- because when driver
16 got those summons, they got upset.
17 There's so many people (inaudible) who has
18 no TLC representation by the rules and
19 regulations of TLC, and they're looting
20 those people.

21 So you have to control that, if you
22 have to allow only TLC certified
23 representation as a TLC.

24 CHAIR JOSHI: I just want to make
25 sure, you're talking about people that

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2 are -- they're offering services to rep
3 TLC licensees.

4 MR. TARIQ: Yeah.

5 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you.

6 MR. TARIQ: So they are neither --
7 because before (inaudible) certified by
8 the TLC. They are able to stand there.
9 But now everybody wearing suit and telling
10 people --

11 (Timer sounding.)

12 MR. TARIQ: -- give me \$200. I will
13 do that, I will do this. That is
14 corruption going on there.

15 THE CHAIR: Thank you so much for
16 your testimony.

17 MR. TARIQ: Thank you.

18 (Applause.)

19 MR. WILSON: The next speaker will
20 be Arvind Kumar, followed by Emmanouel
21 Wambrin, and followed by Xenia Rodas.

22 (No response.)

23 MR. WILSON: Emmanouel Wambrin?

24 MR. WAMBRIN: Good afternoon, ladies
25 and gentlemen, Commissioners. I'm here to

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2 talk about the yellow Medallion industry.

3 I'm going to read through my notes.

4 The yellow Medallion taxi industry
5 has been decimated. The taxi garages are
6 closing left and right. Medallion owners
7 are declaring bankruptcy. Medallion
8 owners with large loans who cannot make
9 their payments are dropping off their
10 taxis (inaudible) Medallion at the lending
11 institutions. The drivers cannot make
12 ends meet. More than half the yellow
13 Medallion taxis are sitting idle in the
14 taxi garages. What is going to happen to
15 them?

16 This has happened because New York
17 City and TLC both have given the app
18 for-hire companies free rein to operate an
19 unlimited number of vehicles, over 9,000
20 as of last year.

21 Without regulations or concern, we
22 are drowning the existing yellow Medallion
23 owners and bases that operate them.

24 There is unfair competition. Yellow
25 taxis are required to have wheelchair

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2 accessible vehicles. The for-hire
3 companies do not have the same
4 requirement. And by any chance the TLC
5 has made any push for this rule with them,
6 they, Uber, Lyft, have managed to bypass
7 by diverting the cost to other wheel
8 accessible companies.

9 There are a limited number of
10 Medallions (inaudible) which are regulated
11 by New York City and the Taxi & Limousine
12 Commission.

13 The app for-hire companies are
14 asphyxiating the yellow taxi industry by a
15 margin of seven to one. Uber, Lyft and
16 every other app company have an agenda to
17 take over the yellow taxi industry.

18 With all due respect, what is the
19 TLC, in honoring its commitment to protect
20 the Medallion owners and its taxi drivers
21 as stated in its mission statement?

22 There's a question from the yellow
23 taxi industry that cries for an answer.
24 Can the TLC auction yellow Medallion taxis
25 for over a million dollars, and then turn

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2 around and allow every app company and
3 every scheme thought out by everyone else,
4 decimate their own supposedly protected
5 industry, the yellow Medallion taxi
6 industry?

7 I have great respect for Attorney
8 Matthew Dowdy and I quote an article from
9 Taxi Magazine from May 2015 by Matthew
10 Dowdy, esquire. According to the article
11 he wrote: "Why the New York City
12 Medallion is alive and well and will
13 survive. I have extensively studied and
14 helped oversee the most successful
15 Medallion system in the world. The New
16 York City Medallion system is alive and
17 well, and it will survive minor disruption
18 by smart phone app (inaudible) Uber, the
19 New York green borough taxis and other
20 competitive regulatory forces. But the
21 facts available data" --

22 (Timer sounding.)

23 MR. WAMBRIN: -- "available data in
24 the unique aspect of the regulatory
25 system" --

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2 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you so much for
3 your testimony.

4 MR. WAMBRIN: -- "show" --

5 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you.

6 MR. WAMBRIN: -- "progress in the
7 long term," end of quote.

8 Unfortunately, this is not a fact any
9 more.

10 CHAIR JOSHI: Can I ask you if you
11 have --

12 MR. WAMBRIN: Thank you.

13 CHAIR JOSHI: -- if you have your
14 notes available that we could take a copy
15 so we have a record of it, if you're
16 comfortable sharing that?

17 MR. WAMBRIN: Sure, ma'am.

18 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you.

19 (Applause.)

20 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

21 The next speaker is Xenia Rodas, to
22 be followed by Mohammad Hossen, to be
23 followed by Mr. Hang.

24 (No response.)

25 MR. RODAS: Commissioner, judges, my

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2 fellow hard-worker driver brothers. We
3 are here just for hundred people, but
4 also (inaudible) hundred thousand driver
5 do their best service in everyday life.

6 This is the business industry of
7 taxi. And you are here, the Taxi &
8 Limousine Commission. I am a new
9 immigrant people here, just three years.
10 I don't have so much idea how this country
11 and the rules and regulations.

12 But today, when I listen, the
13 drivers -- history, like one brother is
14 1973 driving, but what is his future? Can
15 anyone answering me? What is his future?
16 What is my future, my four-year son?

17 No, there is no future. I drive
18 every day. If I don't drive tomorrow,
19 what will happen? Who is paying my lease
20 amount? Who is paying like every
21 (inaudible)? Nobody. Nobody. So there
22 is no life.

23 But we are saying that Medallion
24 driver is the first ambassador of the New
25 York City. When we speak to the

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2 foreigners in the airport, they are
3 asking, where do I have to go? Which is
4 the best thing?

5 We are always giving our best
6 service. We are the drivers. We are the
7 first ambassador of New York City. But
8 nobody say in the papers, only say in the
9 by mouth, the word.

10 I'm sorry to say that I'm speaking
11 the different language, I'm speaking
12 Bengali, you know. I'm from Bangladesh.
13 But I'm looking for the interpreter, but
14 she is not here available. Anyway, I'm
15 trying to explain something.

16 Almost everything is happening, you
17 know. Almost drivers think everything for
18 their life --

19 CHAIR JOSHI: We do have someone who
20 could provide Bengali interpretation.

21 MR. RODAS: Anyway, let me finish,
22 because there's no time, only three
23 minutes.

24 CHAIR JOSHI: By the way, your
25 English is extremely good.

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2 MR. RODAS: Thank you so much for
3 your cooperation.

4 Anyway, I'm just saying a few word
5 because there's a limited -- three minutes
6 in nothing. The life is 300,000 minute.
7 Every driver's life is suffering here
8 every day. So three minutes is nothing.

9 I just want to say something cheery.
10 I don't complain to any other particular,
11 like yellow, black, nothing. We are
12 working here. We all want to do -- New
13 York City is much better and beautiful
14 city. This is our duty as a driver.

15 So my purpose at least for the driver
16 future, that every driver should be --
17 after one year, they should be listed in
18 the Taxi & Limousine Commission for their
19 future.

20 The (inaudible) one percent goes to
21 the driver's account, so then after I say
22 every year (inaudible) return, the money
23 goes, and I don't need to beg to the other
24 person, give me some money, give me some
25 money, because this money is my working

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2 money, my blood money. So this is my
3 (inaudible).

4 The minimum fare should be \$10, and
5 that equal opportunity for everyone, so
6 that the yellow driver -- you know, the
7 yellow is our heritage with the New York
8 City. I'm driving the black car, but I
9 know the history of yellow, and I respect
10 all other brothers.

11 Anyway, the Commission, they don't
12 take more than ten percent Commission.
13 That Taxi & Limousine Commission is the
14 highest authority.

15 How the Uber, Lyft, Juno and other
16 companies take the different Commission?

17 (Timer sounding.)

18 MR. RODAS: This is not fair. If the
19 Commission is fair, then do something
20 because --

21 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you.

22 MR. RODAS: Thank you.

23 (Applause.)

24 MR. RODAS: By the way, I submitted
25 my application already by e-mail. Thank

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2 you.

3 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you.

4 MR. WILSON: The next speaker will be
5 Mohammad Hossen, followed by Mr. Hang,
6 followed by Moncef Fadili.

7 Mohammad...

8 MR. HOSSEN: Good afternoon,
9 Commissioner, and my colleagues.

10 So we came to this country as with
11 dreams, and we have 200,000 to buy the
12 Medallions. And after now it's going to
13 bankruptcy.

14 This is -- why the bankruptcy are
15 happening? Due to these big companies,
16 now we have invested 500,000-something and
17 those billion investments. We have
18 company that (inaudible) the street. They
19 don't have any law. They don't have to
20 follow the law, and they don't have to pay
21 the high insurance. So we pay the high
22 insurance.

23 So we work in the same street, same
24 street, and they have very different
25 rules, different type of rules.

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2 There is -- how to say? There's big
3 discriminations for us, the yellow cabs.
4 And now most of my friends, they're going
5 to bankruptcy. So banks, they don't
6 refinance. All these left to take care
7 of (inaudible) this industries.

8 That's all.

9 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you very much.

10 (Applause.)

11 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

12 The next speaker is Mr. Hang, to be
13 followed by Moncef Fadili, to be followed
14 by Celestin Rossini.

15 MR. HANG: Good afternoon,
16 Commissioners. I wish to greet everyone
17 in this room, and a big thanks to my
18 friend (inaudible) for coming here today
19 with me instead of working out there.

20 My name is Hang. I came by to
21 represent not just myself, but my fellow
22 relatives, my friends, and friends of
23 friends who are also driving for a living.
24 That's roughly 300 families I personally
25 know who are struggling because the

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2 industry is out of order. High expenses
3 and unstable income is hitting each and
4 every one of us hard.

5 Some of us are living in fears and
6 worries, not knowing how to pay for the
7 expense of car loans. I pay 50,000. I
8 just started the business, and I want
9 out --

10 CHAIR JOSHI: What's your weekly or
11 monthly payment, if you don't mind sharing
12 it?

13 MR. HANG: Six hundred.

14 CHAIR JOSHI: A week?

15 MR. HANG: A week. Less sometimes.

16 Back to story. We need to set a
17 limit on the numbers of for-hire vehicle
18 license issued every year, to reduce our
19 current lease driver oversaturated
20 condition. That's the problem.

21 Hoping to restore the balance of
22 supply and demand. And as of now, we
23 drivers so very often find ourselves in a
24 situation where we have to wait more than
25 one hour for just an \$8 job. That's gross.

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2 After net we are left with \$5.20.

3 And for-hire vehicle drivers --

4 CHAIR JOSHI: I'm sorry. On those
5 like minimum fares where you get \$8, is
6 there Commission taken out of that?

7 MR. HANG: Yes, of course.

8 CHAIR JOSHI: Okay.

9 MR. HANG: Not to mention gas and
10 other costs.

11 For-hire vehicle drivers deserve more
12 relief stands. With more resting points
13 established, we can schedule our meal time
14 more easily, take relief when driver needs
15 to do so.

16 Driving for a living is not an easy
17 task, especially in Manhattan. One must
18 be a hundred percent focused on the job,
19 for both the sake of the client and driver
20 and the pedestrian. We are not asking for
21 an easy life. But we just simply believe
22 that hard work should be well-rewarded.

23 Thank you.

24 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you very much.

25 (Applause.)

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2 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

3 The next speaker will be Moncef
4 Fadili, to be followed by Celestin
5 Rossini, to be followed by Carol Guerra --
6 Garza, excuse me.

7 MR. FADILI: Hi everybody. I came
8 today to share an idea to reduce drivers
9 being in the street, or to drive for share
10 companies.

11 Why not TLC give these black cars
12 Medallion, so that we can stop new drivers
13 buying the Medallion, you know? And also,
14 there's -- like for this new driver will
15 buy the Medallion, but the old driver, if
16 you want to sell the Medallion, so TLC
17 will have 15 percent.

18 And also, why not the TLC will have
19 their own app, so we can kick all these
20 companies out? Because in five, ten years
21 we -- it's not going to be no TLC office
22 with this other (inaudible). It's true
23 story.

24 Thank you.

25 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you.

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2 (Applause.)

3 MR. WILSON: The next speaker will be
4 Celestin Rossini, followed by Carol Garza,
5 followed by Gloria Guerra.

6 MR. ROSSINI: Good afternoon
7 everybody. I do believe this is not first
8 time I walk over you to see the
9 Commission. (Inaudible) -- I cannot, but
10 I miss 22nd floor. You always receive me
11 very nice. Very good. I'm so happy, from
12 security to the top.

13 My problem is, I've been driving
14 since 1978, drive car service for four
15 years, yellow cab for 34 years. I have my
16 Medallion since 1983, which I was so
17 young. Now I'm old. I'm sick. I'm
18 diabetic, cholesterol, nerve problems, and
19 sugar -- diabetes, high blood pressure, I
20 mean.

21 This is now the same Medallion to
22 (inaudible) which I do believe is very
23 good to someone to have a handicap, but if
24 you can. If you cannot, like, you know, I
25 know (inaudible) of the United Nations

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2 said, you cannot push someone do a job it
3 cannot do, which believe me, I cannot do.

4 I got my Medallion (inaudible) nine
5 months. I cannot tell you more
6 (inaudible) the bank (inaudible) in my
7 house.

8 That mean in the next two, three
9 years I can be (inaudible) and at the same
10 time I will work, and then I can work. I
11 cannot work -- but I can work.

12 My Medallion sit on the windshield.
13 This is for the Commissioner. This is not
14 the first time. Every person I met from
15 the Queens Boulevard to here told me it's
16 only the Commissioner can help me.

17 Please, after 38 years driving cab, I
18 can't work. Do not let me lose my family,
19 my house, my everything, because I can't
20 work. Change my Medallion. Take it off
21 from the wheelchair to normal car.
22 Because it doesn't mean I don't want to
23 help people. I want to help people. My
24 life -- I lost everything and help people,
25 help you, help that, help this. But the

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2 wheelchair, I cannot do it.

3 And if I put the wheelchair

4 (inaudible) who's going to be responsible?

5 Me. I (inaudible) help nobody. Help me

6 out. Take off my Medallion on your

7 windshield. Let me back in a car to help

8 my family, my grandson, my granddaughter,

9 everybody. Please, this is for

10 Commissioner.

11 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you.

12 MR. ROSSINI: This is not the first

13 time I come here.

14 (Applause.)

15 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you.

16 MR. ROSSINI: I got so many things to

17 say, but everybody is here (inaudible)

18 already.

19 Please, take off my Medallion on the

20 windshield, please.

21 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you very much.

22 MR. WILSON: The next speaker is

23 Carol Garza, to be followed by Gloria

24 Guerra, to be followed by Zulker Hyder.

25 MS. GARZA: Good afternoon

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2 Commissioner, committee member, and to my
3 fellow brothers and is sisters, TLC
4 drivers. My name is Carol Garza, and this
5 is my first TLC meeting that I've
6 attended.

7 I became a driver for Uber two months
8 ago at the encouragement by friends, who
9 said that while I was completing my
10 doctoral dissertation to get my PHD
11 degree, that I could drive for Uber and
12 make money to pay my bills until I find my
13 dream job.

14 Coming to this meeting today and
15 experiencing the things that I have as a
16 new Uber driver and a new member of the
17 Taxi & Limousine Commission, I'm astounded
18 by the horror stories of these
19 hard-working men and women and how they
20 are being oppressed by the green cabs, the
21 yellow cabs, Uber, Lyft, the TLC
22 Commission.

23 This is not what I expected to become
24 a part of, being a new owner of a TLC
25 license. I have amassed so many parking

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2 tickets, I've had my car towed, because I
3 don't understand the terrain. I don't
4 know how it works. This is all new for
5 me.

6 But in the process of experiencing
7 all the things that I've had and the
8 things I've heard here today, it has
9 caused me to do research about this. I am
10 a sociologist. And I am now going to take
11 all of these experiences from myself and
12 these people, and I'm going to do research
13 and write and produce a documentary about
14 all of this, because these are real lives.
15 These are people's lives, and these
16 stories need to be told.

17 Thank you so much for listening to
18 me. And I hope and pray that these
19 people's words and their pleas to you will
20 not fall on deaf ears. That is what I
21 have been hearing since I've been here
22 today, that nothing is going to change.
23 There's no reason to come here, because
24 nothing changes. And the politicians are
25 in bed with Uber and Lyft and all -- and

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2 the list goes on and on.

3 But I pray and ask that you will take
4 these pleas and cries from myself and all
5 these other people seriously.

6 Thank you.

7 (Applause.)

8 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

9 The next speaker is Gloria Guerra, to
10 be followed by Zulker Hyder, to be
11 followed by Abubakr Mohamed.

12 MS. GUERRA: Good afternoon. My name
13 is Gloria Guerra. How are you?

14 I'm here today because my husband and
15 I bought a dream in 1984. We bought a
16 Medallion. We bought the right to street
17 help.

18 Today, we paid that Medallion in
19 1997, took out my money from my 401(k),
20 hard-earned working money, and paid off
21 the Medallion with the dream that this
22 past year my husband and I could retire
23 after putting my kids through college,
24 buying our home.

25 Now my husband is sick. He can't

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2 drive any more, and he's still doing it
3 because we don't have a choice.

4 Nobody wants his Medallion, because
5 again it's a wheelchair accessibility. My
6 husband is disabled. He needs to be
7 pushed into a car, because he had heart
8 failure, has three stints, diabetes. He
9 lost his youth driving that cab for
10 35 years.

11 This man -- I'm going to get
12 emotional -- he was sent here from Cuba,
13 by himself, to get the American dream,
14 16 years old, by himself. He was lucky to
15 meet me, though --

16 (Laughter.)

17 MS. GUERRA: -- I hope.

18 And today I sit in my house and I
19 feel like Linda Blaire, because in my
20 wildest dream -- you know who Linda Blaire
21 is, from the Exorcist?

22 In my wildest dream, I thought that
23 this Medallion today would be worth zero.
24 I can't get anybody, no brokers, to take
25 this Medallion, because the first question

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2 is: "Oh, is it wheelchair accessibility?

3 Oh, sorry."

4 So today, I'm here to ask you, as a
5 businesswoman, what is it that I should do
6 so that I could just pull my husband out
7 of this depression? Because I'm going
8 down right with him. Because right now we
9 should be sitting in Florida with our feet
10 up, because we did our time. We worked
11 hard.

12 My father came here also as an
13 immigrant -- I'm also Cuban. I was six
14 years old. He built his life. He was the
15 first restaurant, Cuban restaurant in Long
16 Island City. He taught old us to work
17 hard.

18 He did not take one penny from the
19 City to help him with his children,
20 because he had pride. So did my husband.
21 So do I.

22 What do I do today with this piece of
23 metal that's worth nothing?

24 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you for your
25 testimony.

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2 (Applause.)

3 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

4 The next speaker is Zulker Hyder, to
5 be followed by Abubakr Mohamed, to be
6 followed by Tendi Sherpa.

7 MR. HYDER: Hi. Good afternoon
8 everybody. I can only speak long because
9 all my friends explained a lot of things.
10 You, Commissioner, you know better than
11 us.

12 But I ask of you guys, take the gun
13 and shoot us (inaudible) because it is
14 very harmful. Because I live almost --
15 over 18 years. I live hard like this
16 time. I bought the Medallion, no problem.
17 I pay every single month over how much I
18 have to pay, over I pay still now.

19 But my (inaudible) company call me,
20 sit down, give me \$100,000 cash, I write
21 down the people in my bag, how I got. I
22 don't have money, cash money. I have to
23 pay every month. It's hard. I don't have
24 a lot of income. Look at my income. Nor
25 my driver. My driver pays \$750 before,

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2 right now I couldn't find out two, three
3 months, my driver -- I'm the oldest guy,
4 almost 60 years old, but I work eight day
5 a week. I can't afford it.

6 My wife says, "What are you doing?
7 Honey, what do you do?"

8 I tell her, "Honey, I don't have any
9 choice."

10 After I took lease, I have lovely
11 girl, and my son -- I (inaudible) three
12 days ago. The guy said, give me \$100,000
13 (inaudible) \$100,000 -- I have to pay.

14 Why you ask me later? How my wife
15 name.

16 Bring your wife and sign up the
17 paper. I have to talk with the wife.
18 Okay.

19 After they decide the 18,000, I pay
20 \$2,900 a month. My insurance going to be
21 \$1,000 (inaudible) and liabilities, all
22 coming like that.

23 My car payment is almost \$1,000.
24 Right? My cost of fixing everything is
25 going to be a lot of money, almost \$700

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2 that I pay every month (inaudible) how
3 much I make. (Inaudible.)

4 I tell you, Commissioner (inaudible)
5 I take care of you. There is not enough
6 room. I give you room, the whole team,
7 and I put up the five, six hundred people
8 (inaudible). If you give me chance, I
9 work for you. I bring all people, ask
10 them, each and every one. It's a big
11 problem, a very, very big problem.

12 And we complain about you guys and we
13 complain about the City --

14 (Timer sounding.)

15 MR. HYDER: -- but why is (inaudible)
16 not problem?

17 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you for your
18 testimony.

19 MR. HYDER: And after my son, my
20 son -- my wife give them \$5 each every day
21 in their school. They don't eat --

22 (Timer sounding.)

23 MR. HYDER: -- they don't take
24 (inaudible)

25 (Simultaneous speaking.)

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2 MR. HYDER: -- because daddy have to
3 pay --

4 (Simultaneous speaking.)

5 MR. HYDER: (Inaudible) thousand
6 dollars, the down payment.

7 (Applause.)

8 MR. HYDER: That's why (inaudible) my
9 money.

10 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you for your
11 testimony.

12 MR. HYDER: Thank you very much.

13 Go, I bring the big hall, I call 500,
14 600 people (inaudible) tell you what --

15 CHAIR JOSHI: Sir, it's time for the
16 next speaker.

17 MR. HYDER: Thank you.

18 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

19 The next speaker is Mahamed Abubakr,
20 to be followed by Tendi Sherpa, and then
21 Asim Aknter.

22 MR. MOHAMED: Thank you for the
23 opportunity to talk tonight, this
24 afternoon here. Hi everybody. Good
25 afternoon. My name is Abubakr Mohamed.

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2 My company is All Ride, Inc. And as a
3 permit owner (inaudible) transportation.

4 When the green taxi come in, I say,
5 okay, I'm going to take a chance and get
6 into small business, because I feel like
7 the taxi is so hard. So I put all my
8 money into this business. I bought City
9 permits. I couldn't put in my name, so my
10 friend put down in his name, and we start
11 this business.

12 Everything goes wrong, because nobody
13 anticipate how the TNS or this E-hail
14 would come into play and, you know, just
15 change the whole game.

16 The car cannot be leased right now
17 for more than 300. Because it is
18 accessible, it use a lot of gas. Many
19 drivers don't like it. Sometimes
20 (inaudible) at least one of them at some
21 point. We are suffering.

22 So I would say basically it's like
23 \$300. I have to pay 770 for the car, 700
24 for insurance, which I (inaudible) about
25 it, \$700 for the insurance every month for

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2 each car; 770 for the payment for five
3 years.

4 I (inaudible) promised that I will
5 get 15,000 when I do that. Yes, I bought
6 the car with a permit, with accessible
7 wheel. It goes to 41,000. With the
8 interest, is almost 50, with interest for
9 five years.

10 Then I had little problems at the
11 beginning. The permit owner want to
12 travel, because there is no (inaudible) at
13 that point. I have to lose immediately
14 5,000, because the cars are already in.
15 The insurance is in. Everything is in.
16 The DMV is in.

17 Just the TLC office at that point, it
18 was 11:00 a.m. Just we have a problem in
19 the base signature, says, "Please, I'm
20 just going to run his car -- it's around
21 there, so I will just run and do it."

22 She said, "No, we cannot do that."

23 I said, "I'm going to" (inaudible)
24 permit."

25 She said, "I don't care."

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2 Okay. When I stop talking -- because
3 two of them are okay, one of them is
4 (inaudible). So I'm trying to run and do
5 that so I can have them all go out
6 together.

7 So once she said, "Sit down," I sneak
8 out of the TLC in Queens Boulevard, and
9 I (inaudible) and came back.

10 She said, "How dare you leave the
11 building? How dare you leave the
12 building?"

13 It's in the middle of (inaudible).
14 I'm afraid to lose that much money. So I
15 have to make the payment for the three
16 cars, that are already financed.

17 So this shouldn't happen. A
18 supervisor should be able -- a TLC
19 supervisor should be able to see the
20 severity of the loss that you're going to
21 lose at that point. She didn't see that.

22 (Timer sounding.)

23 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you for your
24 testimony.

25 MR. MOHAMED: I complained. Nobody

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2 did.

3 The permit -- the permit --

4 (Simultaneous speaking.)

5 MR. MOHAMED: -- 15,000, I get only

6 10,000 --

7 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you for your

8 testimony, sir.

9 MR. MOHAMED: (Inaudible)

10 Commissioner.

11 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you --

12 MR. MOHAMED: Because I supposed to

13 get 15,000, I get 10,000, because of the

14 day of application of --

15 (Simultaneous speaking.)

16 MR. MOHAMED: (Inaudible) of the --

17 an inspection.

18 CHAIR JOSHI: We're going to make

19 sure that you speak to somebody.

20 MR. MOHAMED: Thank you.

21 CHAIR JOSHI: There's people in the

22 back.

23 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

24 (Applause.)

25 MR. WILSON: The next speaker is

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2 Tendi Sherpa, to be followed by Asim
3 Aknter, to be followed by Sarwar Rafi.

4 MR. SHERPA: Good afternoon TLC
5 Commissioner (inaudible) City Council
6 member, lawmakers, service media groups,
7 and all hard-working ladies and gentlemen.
8 Thank you for having me.

9 My name is Tendi Sherpa. I'm a green
10 cab driver. I have been driving green cab
11 since 2013, the new green cab taxi program
12 was started. Green cab are probably
13 our (inaudible) but owners are returning
14 back to TLC, anticipating green cabs day
15 by day, months by months.

16 As you know, the Commissioner, since
17 the first year there were 6,000 green cabs
18 and second year around 8,000 green cabs,
19 but today around 5,226 green cabs
20 available (inaudible) every day.

21 Green cabs are (inaudible) base.
22 There is not allowed to hail and pick up
23 e-mail, pick up below 95 -- East 96 and
24 West 110, and (inaudible).

25 Each day we pick up four trips

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2 (inaudible) green zone to the red zone.

3 Red zone means like inside Manhattan.

4 When we drop a passenger red zone, we need

5 to go back to (inaudible) green zone,

6 which takes around two hours every day.

7 That means I used to drive 6 days,

8 12 hours, no paid time, which is like

9 624 hours in a year for each driver.

10 Everybody knows that time is money.

11 That's why the TLC and the lawmakers need

12 to understand this issue. I mean, get a

13 92,000 license TLC on the road. Each

14 (inaudible) accept e-mail and dispatch any

15 place in New York City, except the green

16 taxi. This is the way, the

17 reason (inaudible) are every day.

18 Last three years, we don't have any

19 improvement, rule changes in our green cab

20 industry.

21 For the (inaudible).

22 2013 to 2014 (inaudible) the grant

23 money for (inaudible) as today. The grant

24 money accessible vehicle today is \$4,000

25 at the beginning, when the (inaudible) and

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2 each inspection permits to give like
3 \$2,000 we pay, according to TLC.

4 For the street hail, the one of the
5 most important things we need to
6 understand is, most of the -- some of the
7 permit owners, they are using their retire
8 yellow cab vehicle, make it green.

9 (Timer sounding.)

10 MR. SHERPA: This vehicle is
11 dangerous for the industry --

12 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you for your
13 testimony, sir.

14 MR. SHERPA: -- dangerous for the
15 industry.

16 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you for your
17 testimony, sir.

18 (Applause.)

19 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

20 The next speaker will be Asim Aknter,
21 followed by Sarwar Rafi, followed by
22 Karimul Haider.

23 (No response.)

24 MR. RAFI: Good afternoon,
25 Commissioner and all. My name is Sarwar

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2 Rafi. (Inaudible) -- all the friends and
3 family, with all of our friends basically
4 in here, since we are same page. I'm
5 driving taxi. I am Medallion owner
6 (inaudible) \$1 million.

7 Is everybody getting the problem
8 about the mortgage? I don't have to
9 explain so many thing, because you know
10 better than me. You are making good.

11 So it's my idea -- it's my idea, not
12 your idea, which is we are paying
13 mortgage, \$4,000, and \$1,000 for the
14 insurance. So it's almost \$5,000 only for
15 the car and Medallion -- insurance and
16 Medallion, not with the car. So if you go
17 with all together, that's almost \$6,000.
18 I think nobody makes \$6,000 every month.

19 So it's my idea, if you go
20 (inaudible) see to it that the insurance
21 company or the bank, they do (inaudible)
22 with us, they give us. We're not going to
23 walk over (inaudible) and go back. This
24 is our job. I need to do something. I'm
25 not going to go for any other job.

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2 CHAIR JOSHI: Can I ask you
3 something? Most mortgages that we've seen
4 for Medallions are three-year -- they
5 finance every three years.

6 MR. RAFI: I -- explain --

7 CHAIR JOSHI: Is there any products
8 where the monthly payments could be lower
9 and they are spread out over a longer
10 period of time, like a 30-year house
11 mortgage that you usually see?

12 MR. RAFI: (Inaudible) -- like that.
13 If you go with the bank -- I spoke with my
14 attorney, and my attorney give us advice
15 to help us into two percent interest
16 rate (inaudible) the seven year. After
17 that, 35 year. Then I think affordable
18 for everybody. It's going to be like 200
19 -- 2,200 to 2,800 --

20 CHAIR JOSHI: It would reduce your
21 monthly?

22 MR. RAFI: Yes.

23 CHAIR JOSHI: Do you see many banks
24 offering that?

25 MR. RAFI: I do that only, and we're

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2 almost 200 people together.

3 CHAIR JOSHI: Okay.

4 MR. RAFI: So I -- my attorney spoke
5 with Signature Bank. They offered us
6 2.99. But it's still fighting with the
7 two percent, two and a half percent. They
8 give us (inaudible)

9 CHAIR JOSHI: We would like to maybe
10 get your contact information and learn
11 more about some of that. We don't,
12 obviously, regulate banks or insurance
13 companies, but it is very helpful for us
14 to know what the common practices are.

15 MR. RAFI: But you still have power,
16 you still have power. You (inaudible).
17 So you should talk with them, if you
18 pressure them. So I think we are safe.

19 If we pay like 2,800, 2,500, 2,600, I
20 think most owners are happy, and we
21 (inaudible). We're not going to walk
22 away. Where I going to go? I have kids,
23 family, and everybody. We're not going to
24 go back to our country. We have
25 (inaudible) 23, most people live there.

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2 So I think if you help us with our
3 loan (inaudible) for most people
4 (inaudible) I so far am fine.

5 (Applause.)

6 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you very much.

7 MR. WILSON: Thank you. Let me call
8 Mr. Asim Aknter again.

9 MR. AKNTER: Good afternoon. My name
10 is Asim Aknter. With the New York Taxi
11 Workers Alliance.

12 The thing -- I mean, a lot has been
13 said. One thing I wanted to mention is
14 that we filed the federal lawsuit against
15 Uber Technologies, alleging, you know,
16 the -- offer pricing issue, black car
17 fund, sale tax, predatory leasing, minimum
18 wage and overtime.

19 And Uber had filed a motion to
20 dismiss all the charges, which was denied.

21 Not only that, the federal judge also
22 said that he's going to fast-track the
23 case because of the economics and the
24 drivers that are involved.

25 We don't have to wait for the, you

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2 know, ruling from the courts. I really
3 believe all drivers -- that's why all
4 those drivers that came, that TLC had a
5 power to regulate.

6 You have one sector, yellow sector,
7 which have all the regulation, and then
8 you have all the drivers, you know, have a
9 regulation for all the drivers. But then
10 you have a black sector, which are not
11 regulated as the other sector.

12 And that's where really cause
13 economic hardship to the drivers. You
14 know, you have yellow expense here, and we
15 have to pay 60 percent more than the
16 black, but then the black, they're paying
17 less but they're making less money, and
18 then they have to work more hours. It has
19 to be done something.

20 And then there are lenders out there
21 who are selling the cars to the driver,
22 where they will sell them a car for the --
23 over the two-year agreement, and they will
24 charge them \$500. And (inaudible) driver,
25 by the end they will pay them \$80,000 --

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2 60,000 -- sorry -- from \$70,000 to
3 \$80,000.

4 We have done that in yellow industry,
5 where there was a cap of how much of the
6 down payment and (inaudible). The same
7 thing has to be done for the black car
8 sector.

9 And also, we have to bring all the
10 app-based companies under TLC regulations.

11 Thank you.

12 (Applause.)

13 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

14 The next speaker is Caramel Hada
15 (phonetic).

16 Okay. Lhakpa -- excuse me for
17 butchering it -- Lhakpa Ringi Sharpa.

18 MR. SHARPA: Good afternoon. My name
19 is Lhakpa Sharpa, and I'm representing
20 like (inaudible) communities from Nepal
21 and Tibet. We have almost like 25
22 Medallion owners here in New York City.

23 And due to like -- we bought
24 Medallion like 2009, like ten, we almost
25 pay 600,000, some pay 800,000.

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2 Due to TLC negligence, like now we
3 are suffering and getting hard time to pay
4 the mortgage. And we got a call from bank
5 like every morning, every evening, you
6 know. So what I do now? What are you
7 going to do now?

8 CHAIR JOSHI: Could I ask you the
9 same question I asked the other
10 gentleman --

11 MR. SHARPA: We have like 200 driver
12 now. We have meeting every week.

13 CHAIR JOSHI: Have the banks offered
14 you any --

15 MR. SHARPA: They offer like every
16 length. So sometimes they offer, "Give me
17 \$10,000. Give me \$20,000."

18 CHAIR JOSHI: Do they offer different
19 terms for the loan?

20 MR. SHARPA: They offer like, you
21 know, three percent, I'll give you 2.5.
22 This is not like work, you know.

23 And I have one more question, like --

24 CHAIR JOSHI: Do your mortgages now
25 balloon after three years?

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2 MR. SHARPA: My mortgage is about --
3 I'm waiting for refinancing last eight
4 months. Most all of them, they waiting
5 almost a year to refinance.

6 CHAIR JOSHI: Okay. Like I said to
7 the other gentleman, we don't regulate the
8 banks, but I would very much like to
9 continue the conversation on what kinds of
10 deals they're offering you, and see if
11 there's anything that we can help or
12 assist in that situation.

13 MR. SHARPA: Because either we have
14 to -- we want to leave this job now. It's
15 like we can't survive this kind of way,
16 like every day like hustling with like,
17 you know. I just want to say that.

18 And I want to say one more thing, the
19 price, like if it comes from 96th to
20 Houston Street, like for the taxi drivers,
21 according to TLC rule, if you charge \$10
22 more, you lose your license.

23 But this app company, like the same
24 destination, every day you have to pay a
25 different price. You pay like some days

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2 you pay \$10, another day when it's raining
3 you pay like \$50. They don't lose their
4 license. So we lose a lot of business,
5 please. I just want to say.

6 Thank you very much.

7 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you very much.

8 (Applause.)

9 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

10 The next speaker is Hassan Sherpa
11 (phonetic).

12 AUDIENCE MEMBER: He's already.

13 MR. WILSON: He's already spoken?
14 Thank you.

15 The next speaker is (inaudible).

16 AUDIENCE MEMBER: He had to leave.

17 MR. WILSON: Okay. And then our last
18 speaker is Mohammad Chaudhary.

19 MR. CHAUDHARY: Good evening. I have
20 two things that I want to express. One is
21 like you guys have no sales tax in the
22 yellow cab business, right? As we Uber
23 drivers, we do pay the sales tax.

24 The second thing is, there should be
25 a minimum wage, with no overtime. Like we

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2 are living in the apartment, right. Every
3 year it's increase. I pay more. So with
4 this business I'm here, like I've been
5 doing cab for like Uber and the cab for
6 like eight years. But everything is
7 coming down. Nothing has gone up.

8 I remember the yellow, prices went up
9 but, over here, Uber should run underneath
10 the TLC, because today it's ruin the
11 yellow cab business. Tomorrow it's going
12 to be the black cars. And then it's the
13 self-driving cars.

14 And then how you guys going to find
15 self-driving cars too, right? And we're
16 all going to lose our job, if you have
17 done nothing today. So that's all.

18 Thank you.

19 (Applause.)

20 CHAIR JOSHI: Thank you.

21 Do we have one other person?

22 AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Previous speaker.)

23 Yes, Commissioner. When I came here, I
24 didn't say my point. The main reason I am
25 here. This can be off the book. It's

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2 okay.

3 Just, the way they calculate my
4 grant --

5 CHAIR JOSHI: You know, I'm sorry,
6 we're going to have to cut you off,
7 because everybody has been allotted the
8 same amount of time, and I want to make
9 sure we treat everybody the same.

10 So you're happy to speak to people in
11 the back about your grant. We have people
12 that can stay and speak to you for as long
13 as you need to.

14 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you.

15 CHAIR JOSHI: Okay. I want to thank
16 everybody. I want to thank also the TLC
17 staff who are here today, who have helped
18 put this hearing together.

19 It is now -- you know, the people
20 that are left, good for you, because it
21 was a very long hearing. It's the first
22 hearing of this kind that's been really
23 focused on drivers across all sectors.

24 I don't think it's been an easy
25 hearing for any of us. It certainly has

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2 not been an easy hearing for the
3 Commissioners, and I know it hasn't been
4 an easy hearing for all the drivers, no
5 matter what sector they work in, talking
6 about some of the difficulties they face.

7 And we will -- certainly, this won't
8 be the last time we have this kind of
9 hearing. It's obviously needed. And
10 though this is the first time, the need is
11 apparent from the number of people that
12 came today.

13 And we really appreciate, one, that a
14 lot of people actually sacrificed money
15 today by coming here, especially on a
16 rainy day when it's easier to earn money,
17 and two, by telling us some of the
18 personal details of their own struggle,
19 which may not be that comfortable to talk
20 about in a public arena, in order to help
21 advocate for yourself and your fellow
22 drivers.

23 So thank you everybody very much for
24 coming. It has been a long and difficult
25 day, but I don't regret that we had this

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hearing. I think that we'll all be better
for it. Thank you.

(Applause.)

CHAIR JOSHI: And that ends the
meeting at 3:50 p.m.

(Time noted: 3:50 p.m.)

