

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

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October 8, 2021
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HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING (VIRTUAL ROOM 2)

B E F O R E: YDANIS A. RODRIGUEZ, CHAIRPERSON

COUNCIL MEMBERS: SELVENA N. BROOKS-POWERS
FERNANDO CABRERA
RUBEN DIAZ, SR.
ROBERT F. HOLDEN
PETER A. KOO
STEPHEN T. LEVIN
MARK LEVINE
CARLOS MENCHACA
I. DANEEK MILLER
ANTONIO REYNOSO
DEBORAH L. ROSE

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK, Taxi and
Limousine Commissioner

BHAIRAVI DESAI, New York Taxi Worker's
Alliance, Executive Director

RICHARD CHOW, New York Taxi Worker's
Alliance

ZOHRAN MUMANDI, Assembly Member

ZUBIN SOLEMANY, Senior Staff Attorney at
New York Taxi Worker's Alliance

ALLI LANGLEY, Staff attorney of New York
Taxi Worker's Alliance

PETER MAZER, General Counsel to
Metropolitan Taxicab Board of Trade

CIRA ANGELES, behalf of base owners and
customers

ROSE IMPERATO, CUNY

LIONEL MORALES, New York City Black Car
Fund

AVIK KABESSA, Car Mail and the Livery
Roundtable

QUDRATULLAH SABERRY, Driver

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

MD Z. ISLAM, driver

GERSON FERNANDES, driver

SUVES BAIRAGI, driver

AUGUSTINE TANG, driver

HARJIT SINGH, driver

MOHAMMED TIPU SULTAN, driver

JOSE HERRERA, driver

VINOD K. MALHOTA, driver

CHIME GYATSO, medallion owner

TILAK RJ, medallion owner

WAIN CHIN, medallion owner

BALKAR SINGH, taxi driver

PABITRA SAHA, driver

DOROTHY LECONTE, driver

RANDAL WILHITE, staff attorney
at New York Legal Assistance Group

MOHAMMED ISLAM, driver

MOHAMMED ISLAM #2, driver

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

TARIQ MUNIR, driver

IBRAHIM DIALLO, staff attorney for New
York Taxi Worker's Alliance

ERHAN TUNCEL, driver

VAL GEORGE, driver

JOAN BOTTEX, driver

JASLIN KAUR, daughter of taxi driver

GALINA KAMINKER, daughter of taxi driver

TILAK RJ, relative of taxi owner

2 SGT. KEVIN KOTOWSKI: Sergeants, please
3 start your recordings. Computer recording started.

4 SGT. MARTINEZ: Cloud recording has
5 begun.

6 SGT. POLITE: Sergeant Martinez, you
7 may begin with your opening statement.

8 SGT. MARTINEZ: Good morning and welcome
9 to today's remote, New York City Council Hearing of
10 the Committee on Transportation. At this time would
11 all panelists please turn on their video? To
12 minimize, uh, disruption please silence your
13 electronic devices and if you wish to submit
14 testimony you may do so via email at the following
15 address, testimony@council.nyc.gov, once again that
16 email address is testimony@council.nyc.gov. Thank
17 you for your cooperation. We are ready to begin.

18 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank you
19 Sergeants and everyone on the Council that works so
20 hard to be sure that not only myself and my
21 colleagues, the represented administration and the
22 advocate give you the opportunity to be part of this
23 remote hearing but also so others can have the
24 opportunity to be able to follow how we discuss this
25 important issue. Good morning, thank you all for

2 joining the Committee on Transportation Bay Shore
3 Hearing today on the oversight topic of PLC Medallion
4 Relief Program and also, and how it appears that he
5 is working supporting the block hard and the libre
6 sections. First, I am going to turn it over to our
7 Committee Counsel to go over some procedure items and
8 also including acknowledge that my other colleagues
9 are here.

10 COUNSEL JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN:

11 Thank you Chair. First, I would like to
12 recognize the following Council Members, Council
13 Member Rose, Council Member Cabrera, Council Member
14 Holden, Council Member Koo, Council Member Brooks-
15 Powers, and Council Member Menchaca. I am Jessica
16 Steinberg Albin, Counsel to the Transportation
17 Committee of the New York City Council. Before we
18 begin, I want to remind everyone that you will be on
19 mute until you are called on to testify when you will
20 be unmuted by the host Please listen for your name
21 to be called. I will periodically announce who the
22 next panelists will be. The first panelist will be
23 from the Administration, Commissioner Aloysee Heredia
24 Jarmoszuk from the Taxi and Limousine Commission.
25 During the hearing if Council Members would like to

2 ask a question, please use the Zoom Raise Hand
3 Function and I will call on you in order that you
4 have used the Zoom Raise Hand Function. Unless
5 otherwise indicated by the Chair, we will be limiting
6 Council Member Questions to five minutes including
7 answers. Chair Rodriguez, I would like to turn it
8 back to you for your opening statement.

9 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ:

10 Thank you Jessica. Today the Committee on
11 Transportation, sorry, today the Committee on
12 Transportation convenes remotely to hold this
13 important hearing on the Taxi and Limousine
14 Commission Medallion Relief Program in supporting the
15 black car and livery sectors. As we know, the TLC is
16 charged with a regulation and oversize of taxi cars
17 which include yellow taxi cars, street hail livery,
18 for hire vehicles, community van and impaired transit
19 vehicles. Over the last several years the, for hire
20 industry had experienced tremendous changes with the
21 introduction of for hire vehicles in the city. The
22 number of licenses for hire vehicles has dramatically
23 increased in 2011. This has led to a decrease in the
24 number of medallion taxi trips in the city, they had
25 declined in the daily fares collected per taxi

2 medallion. As we all know, taxi medallions have seen
3 a rapid decline in value. In 2013, they average sale
4 price for corporate medallions and individual
5 medallions was about \$1,289,000.00. Six years later,
6 the average sale price fell to about \$165,000 as
7 medallion value decreased so did the number of fares
8 collected causing many taxi and medallion owners'
9 unimaginable financial hardship. Many owners,
10 drivers and advocates have called for the city to
11 create a taxi medallion forgiveness program. I was
12 part of the team when the Council passed a bill
13 creating the Yellow Taxi Medallion Task Force that
14 put a specific and strong recommendation. Recently
15 the TLC announced the creation of a \$65 million Taxi
16 Medallion Owner Relief Program to help financially
17 distressed medallion owners work with lenders to
18 restructure medallion related loans and provide up to
19 9,000 in additional monthly payment assistance. This
20 is a good initiative but this is not enough and
21 that's why I would like to ask City Hall to add an
22 additional \$93 million over the next 80 years a mean
23 around \$3.2 million every year in order to help more
24 medallion owners and to help to alleviate this
25 crisis. As of September 27, 2021, the TLC

2 Commissioner indicated that 26 participants have
3 received over \$5 million in debt, in debt forgiveness
4 and constellations with an additional 900
5 participants waiting to be served. The
6 Administration believes that the program could
7 resolve \$500 million of debt forgiveness for
8 thousands of drivers. Although this sounds promising
9 we have heard many advocates and drivers led by the
10 New York Taxi Workers Alliance that the financial
11 assistance provided by this relief program is not
12 enough. Just this week, members of all New York City
13 Congressional Delegation also including Senator
14 Majority Leader Chuck Schumer sent a letter to the
15 Mayor supporting the creating of a new program such
16 as that proposed by the Taxi Workers Alliance and
17 also supported by all members of the Medallion Task
18 Force that worked for months before COVID. Many
19 believe that the City failed to prevent the Medallion
20 Debt Crisis. It is now our responsibility to ensure
21 that we face this issue and hope that many drivers
22 who are still facing a financial hardship. Many of
23 them were the ones providing the service during COVID
24 and we have the responsibility to provide all
25 financial support that we can to bring the back.

2 During today's hearing, the Committee hopes to gather
3 additional information on the Medallion Relief
4 Program to determine how effective it will be in
5 helping med-, more medallion owners. The Committee
6 will also discuss the problems that the traditional
7 black car and livery sectors are currently
8 experiencing and explore ways in which the City can
9 support this service. After we hear from the
10 Administration we will hear from Medallion Owners and
11 their representatives, medallion owners and
12 representatives of, of taxi drivers to, to learn more
13 about how they have been affected by this crisis and
14 whether they believe the Assistant TLC Relief Program
15 will provide the support they need and to hear from
16 them why they also believe that by adding additional
17 \$93 million over the next 30 years will expand the
18 numbers of medallion owners and taxi drivers that
19 will benefit from this program. Before we hear from
20 the administration, I will now have our moderator and
21 Committee Counsel recognize if there are any other
22 members and also, then call on Administration to
23 testify and administer the oath.

24 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

25 COUNSEL: Thank you Chair. I would like to

2 acknowledge that Council Member Miller has joined us.

3 I will now call on TLC Commissioner Aloysee Heredia

4 Jarmoszuk to testify. At this time, I will

5 administer the affirmation. Please raise your right

6 hand. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole

7 truth and nothing but the truth in your testimony

8 before this committee and to respond honestly to

9 Council Member questions?

10 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Yes.

11 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

12 COUNSEL: Thank you. You may begin your

13 testimony when ready.

14 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Good morning

15 Chair Rodriguez and members of the Transportation

16 Committee. I am Aloysee Heredia Jarmoszuk,

17 Commissioner and Chair of the New York City Taxi and

18 Limousine Commission. Thank you for inviting me to

19 speak with you about the TLCs progress implementing

20 the Medallion Relief Program, the MRP as well as our

21 efforts to support the black car and livery sectors.

22 First, I would like to discuss the current state of

23 our Taxi Industry which has continued to gain

24 strength as the City recovers from CO-, from the

25 COVID-19 pandemic. As you know businesses and

2 tourists are returning to New York City and passenger
3 demand for taxi service is steadily increasing. For
4 the week of September 26th, taxis made 739,964 trips,
5 a more than 1300% increase from the week of April
6 5th, 2020. During the same period of time in 2019,
7 pre-pandemic, taxis made around double number of
8 trips showing that there is still room for
9 significant growth. In fact, there is more demand
10 for TLC licensed transportation than the current taxi
11 supply is meeting. Of the 13,587 licensed yellow
12 taxis, approximately 6,600 are in storage, meaning
13 they are not being operated on the streets. Of the
14 medallions held by owner drivers, the mass, the vast
15 majority are on the road and providing passenger
16 service. So, the difference right now is that the
17 individuals who own medallions that are non-fleets
18 are the ones that in large part operating. TLC is
19 working with owners to get taxis out of storage and
20 back on the road picking up passengers to meet the
21 growing demand for service. Importantly, the amount
22 of money earned by taxis consistently operating on
23 the road has significantly increased and is
24 approaching pre-pandemic levels. Last month the
25 average fare box earnings for an active yellow taxi

2 was \$7080 per month plus \$1133 in tips. A year ago,
3 it was less than half of that. Taxis making over 25
4 trips a day are not bringing in an average of \$10,019
5 a month plus \$1,710 in tips. Those are robust fare
6 box earnings and indicate substantial recovery in the
7 Yellow Taxi sector. In addition to the growth and
8 demand driven by the recovery, the pause on new for
9 hire vehicle licenses is also working to strengthen
10 the taxi industry market share. Before the change in
11 local law that empowered TLC to stop new for hire
12 vehicles from flooding our streets, more than 2,000
13 new cars went on the road every month creating a race
14 to the bottom for TLC licensed drivers and worsening
15 traffic congestion. Since the cap was successfully
16 implemented, TLC has seen the attrition of
17 approximately 25,000 for hire vehicles, meaning there
18 are 25,000 less for hire vehicles than there were 20
19 months ago. We anticipate additional attrition over
20 time which we believe will help achieve a more
21 equitable balance across all segments of the industry
22 including traditional livery and black car basis.
23 While the taxi sector is rebounding in tandem with
24 our city's recovery, too many taxi medallion owners
25 have experienced financial distress. We are all

2 aware that the industry has faced tragedy,
3 technological change, disruption and uncertainty over
4 the past several years. The path of this reality was
5 paved by those who did not act when market forces and
6 bad actors took advantage of owner drivers and it
7 pains me to see how ill-served they have been a
8 system that treated the medallion as a speculative
9 asset. Today, a number of taxi owner drivers face
10 unsustainable monthly loan payments. Solving this
11 debt crisis is the single most important issue that
12 we must resolve. Doing so will unlock our ability to
13 take aggressive action to increase economic
14 opportunity and quality of life for medallion owners.
15 The TLC is working to determine the exact number of
16 medallion owners who have debt as well as to assess
17 how much of this debt is unsustainable for each
18 individual owner. As you know, the local law 111 of
19 2020 established the Office of Financial Stability to
20 monitor and evaluate the financial stability of the
21 medallion industry. Over the summer, the TLC
22 released a survey to medallion owners in an effort to
23 meet the requirement that any person who has an
24 interest in medallions submit an annual financial
25 disclosure. While these surveys are voluntary, they

2 have given the TLC the opportunity to gather personal
3 data that is not publically available. As we
4 continue to receive survey results, the TLC can rely
5 on financial information received from those
6 participating in the MRP for data on the scope of
7 medallion debt. Since April 2021, approximately
8 1,000 medallion owners have applied for the MRP. The
9 90 medallion owners who were approved to receive
10 grant money as of yesterday, October 7th had a median
11 original debt of around \$400,000 with monthly
12 payments of approximately \$2500. Through the
13 medallion relief program, they were able to achieve a
14 median average debt forgiveness of nearly \$200,000
15 supported by monthly payments of \$1600 or less.
16 These figures change daily as more loans are
17 restructured. Through the distribution of the MRP
18 funds, the TLC will have a data driven assessment of
19 the true extent of the medallion debt for individual
20 owners in New York City alleviating this debt is
21 crucial to improving the health and longevity of that
22 iconic New York City Yellow Taxi Industry. I would
23 also like to ask that the 90 medallion owners who
24 have been approved through the program have achieved
25 a total of \$15 million of debt forgiveness and

2 cancellation. So that is the multiplier effect of,
3 of the grant program. The TLC Owner Driver Resource
4 Center opened remotely during the pandemic in the
5 spring of 2020. Among other resources, the center is
6 a space where owners and drivers can access free
7 financial counseling and legal services related to
8 medallion debt. This includes help with reviewing
9 loan terms, renegotiating financial agreements,
10 challenging debt collections or judgments and filing
11 for bankruptcy if appropriate and halting back
12 bankruptcies where appropriate. Lawyers from the New
13 York Legal Assistance Group provide these free legal
14 services at the center to all medallion owners who
15 arrive there. Over a seven month period after the
16 center opened, TLC learned that medallion owners
17 working with the center and with means for a down
18 payment for refinancing were able to achieve improved
19 loan terms and better financial stability. TLC also
20 learned that a number of medallion owners were unable
21 to afford the down payment needed to refinance.
22 During this time, TLC also engaged in numerous
23 discussions about how to address the debt issue with
24 the industry, stakeholders including medallion
25 owners, drivers, advocates, attorneys and financial

2 experts. Ultimately the City secured \$65 million and
3 Mayor de Blasio and the TLC announced the MRP on
4 March 9, 2021. In the ensuing months, TLC published
5 proposed rules outlining eligibility criteria for the
6 MRP and held a public hearing and voted on the rules
7 for the program. Additionally, TLC embarked on a
8 procurement process and signed contract with Pursuit,
9 a financial institution with rich experience with
10 COVID-19 relief programs and lending to small
11 businesses in September to distribute grants under
12 the program. The MRP is designed to give individual
13 medallion owners who have five or fewer medallions a
14 critical tool to restructure loans, reduce principal
15 on those loans and lower monthly payments. As
16 previously noted over 1,000 people have applied to
17 participate in the MRP and are in various stages of
18 debt restructuring. The Owner Driver Resource Center
19 is working with these owners and approximately a
20 dozen lenders to significantly reduce debt and loan
21 payments and to achieve settlements where
22 appropriate. The program provides a \$20,000 grant to
23 all participants to be used as a down payment to help
24 restructure medallion related loans. In fact, we are
25 recreating what we saw work for owners when the Owner

2 Driver Resource Center was established. This \$20,000
3 can mean hundreds of thousands of dollars off loan
4 principal. Through the multiplier effect of the
5 grant payment a \$65 million program can achieve as
6 much as \$500 million in debt forgiveness. Some
7 medallion owners will reach settlements owing nothing
8 while others will attain over \$100,000 in debt
9 forgiveness. Furthermore, we are aware that the
10 industry has not recovered to pre-pandemic levels and
11 owners may still need assistance keeping up even
12 after substantially reduced payments. To help, the
13 city is providing participating medallion owners with
14 an additional \$9000 to cover loan payments. This
15 means that if restructured, if a restructured loan
16 monthly payment is \$1600 with a medallion owner's
17 contribution combined with the city's debt service
18 assistance the monthly payment for the first year
19 will be \$850 a month, well under \$1000. TLC
20 Medallion, the TLC Medallion Relief Program offers an
21 owner-driver first model that is tailored to the
22 individual financial situations. It focuses on the
23 owner drivers not the fleets and it takes into
24 account the personal circumstances of each medallion
25 owner through a client-centered and holistic

2 approach. Unfortunately, a one size fits all
3 approach even ones that sound good in theory cannot
4 adequately account for the different circumstances of
5 medallion owners. Additionally, the MRP allows the
6 medallion to be valued based on the income it
7 generates for owners. Price fixing the medallion
8 value at an artificially low price as has been
9 suggested treats the medallion as a speculative asset
10 and deeply threatens its long-term value. We owe it
11 to the hard working owner drivers who have invested
12 in their medallion to restore this asset rather than
13 fix a set price which would distort the market far
14 into the future. Furthermore, proposals that call
15 for a back stop for all medallion owner debt for 30
16 years would mean New York City Tax Payers are
17 assuming all risks for all borrowers and lenders.
18 This is true regardless of whether the borrower is an
19 individual owner-driver or a large fleet owned by a
20 multi-million dollar corporation or if the lender is
21 a large financial institution capable of covering its
22 own losses or was once the predatory lender that
23 exploited medallion owners in the firsts place. That
24 is unworkable. What is working is the MRP and as I
25 shared earlier, as of last night 90 medallion owners

2 have been approved for grants and will receive close
3 to \$14 million in debt forgiveness. Furthermore,
4 over 1,000 medallion owners and a dozen lenders are
5 in various stages of working with the TLC Owner
6 Driver Resource Center to restructure loans and lower
7 monthly payments. If the need is there, we
8 anticipate being to help over 2,200 medallion owners
9 and we hope to allocate all \$65 million in funding as
10 soon as possible with a goal of reaching all
11 applicants by the end of this calendar year. The
12 yellow taxi is one of the most iconic symbols of New
13 York City and a healthy taxi industry is critical to
14 the City's recovery. We are heartened to see the
15 industry showing a lot of strength with trip volumes
16 and fare box earnings rising substantially during the
17 recovery from the COVID 19 pandemic. Beyond our work
18 on the MRP, TLC has met with owners, drivers, and
19 other industry stakeholders to develop a yellow taxi
20 strategic plan outlining recommendations for
21 innovation and growth for the sector going forward.
22 And of the course, the MRP is up and running now and
23 it is delivering the relief that hardworking taxi
24 medallion owners urgently need to achieve financial
25 help and stability that they deserve. We owe it to

2 them to ensure that the medallions continue to be an
3 important asset and an irreplaceable part of New York
4 City's Transportation Network and the MRP does just
5 that. In addition to the TLCs work with the yellow
6 taxis, we are also focused on supporting the
7 traditional black car and livery sectors. A great
8 conduit for us to identify best practices, new
9 policies, and recommendations is through the black
10 car and livery task force which you are a member of
11 Chair Rodriguez. The task force began meeting in
12 June after the last member was appointed. As of
13 today, the task force has two more scheduled meetings
14 to discuss the recommendations that will be put forth
15 in a public report. We hope to publish this report
16 before the end of the year and look forward to
17 continued collaboration with this committee regarding
18 implementation. With those recommendations remain
19 and development we can share some preliminary themes
20 that have come up during our meetings with the task
21 force. These include issues related to
22 prearrangement and payment, educating licensees and
23 car services basis, enhancing regulations for leasing
24 companies, coordinating across sectors on insurance
25 and worker's compensation, the feasibility of

2 internal and external advertising, increased use of
3 wheelchair accessible and battery electric vehicles,
4 and parity along the sectors including with respect
5 to inspections and vehicle retirement. The task
6 force has also discussed unmet demands in the
7 traditional black car and livery sections and the
8 potential for new FHB licenses to meet that need. We
9 are reviewing this recommendation carefully since we
10 must ensure that the City does not lose crucial gains
11 we have made and reduce congestion, increase driver
12 pay and a more balanced number of vehicles across the
13 sectors that the TLC regulates. Beyond our work with
14 the task force, TLC is conducting a regulatory
15 review, a top to bottom review of all agency rules
16 and regulations. We have received input from our
17 licensees to identify ways to modernize, strengthen,
18 streamline and otherwise improve and update our rules
19 and polices. TLC will also hold a public hearing
20 that is going to gather additional input for our
21 review. As always we welcome ideas from the City
22 Council and on how we can improve operations and bet
23 support our licensees in the industry at large. So,
24 thank you again for the opportunity to speak at
25 today's meeting. I'm happy to take questions and

2 engage in a fruitful and a productive discussion with
3 you. Thank you.

4 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

5 COUNSEL: Thank you very much.

6 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

7 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

8 COUNSEL: Oh I'm sorry Chair.

9 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: That's
10 okay and I put it back to you.

11 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

12 COUNSEL: Commissioner, your screen seems to be a bit
13 narrowed is there any way to fix your camera?

14 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Are you
15 unable to see me?

16 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

17 COUNSEL: We can see you but it looks like you are in
18 a circular lens.

19 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Yeah, I don't
20 know that I can, I can, and I can adjust it.

21 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

22 COUNSEL: That's o- that right there actually is a
23 little better but we can see you though so, perfect.

24 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Okay.

25

2 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

3 COUNSEL: Thank you so much Commissioner.

4 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Sure.

5 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

6 COUNSEL: At this time Commissioner if you could
7 please stay unmuted if possible during the question
8 and answer period and I will now turn it back over to
9 Chair Rodriguez for questions, Chair?

10 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank
11 you, thank you Jessica. I have many questions but
12 I'm going to asking it probably two or three first
13 and then bring it back and invite my colleagues if
14 they have questions and then back after.
15 Commissioner, first of all I appreciate all the
16 dedication that you have in trying not bring a
17 solution to this crisis and again this is not
18 personal at all for anyone. You know I personally
19 being members of this Committee since 2009 but I
20 serve as the member of the 2003 and being served on
21 this Committee from 2013 to today. So we know that
22 we are today as a result of accumulation of many
23 years where we have failed and, and, and, and I think
24 that we got to the moment of this crisis where now we
25 have the responsibility to think outside the box. We

2 feel that the program, the MRP is a good start but we
3 don't think that this is enough. A, first question,
4 do you have, uh, has OMB released all the assisted
5 \$65 million of TLC at this moment?

6 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: All \$65
7 million is allocated, correct.

8 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Okay.
9 So, so what is a universe or how many of those
10 medallion owners you feel that TLC has a capacity to
11 work, especially if you are aiming for whatever we
12 can do from here to the end of this Administration?

13 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: So far, um,
14 based on the applicants to the program and our
15 calculations on the potential number of medallion
16 owners that need debt assistance we feel that the \$65
17 million should be enough to cover that population,
18 based on our data.

19 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Okay.
20 How many medallion owners do you think that can be
21 covered and be able to be helped?

22 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Sure. So
23 that's a two part question. Um, if we look at the
24 \$65 million by the numbers as I shared in my opening
25 statement that's enough to cover 2,250 loans. We

2 have 13,587 medallions. We have roughly half of
3 those medallions are owned by fleet owners and the
4 other half is owned by individual owners so the
5 universe of individual owners is approximately 6,000
6 owners. If we consider that not every one of those
7 6,000 owners is holding debt, um, we can probably
8 deduce that 2/3 may be holding some debt, so
9 approximately 3,400 medallion owners potentially have
10 some level of debt associated with their medallion
11 and that debt can range anywhere from \$1 to over \$1
12 million and so we think that the medallion fund is,
13 is adequately sized when you look at make
14 considerations around those numbers. But how many
15 individual medallion owners can get financial support
16 under the MRP with those \$65 million. Based on the
17 data that we are seeing right now we believe that
18 every single medallion owner who is facing insolvency
19 should be able to be helped through the \$65 million
20 fund. So we have an average of, how many individual
21 medallion owners do we have right now?

22 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: 6,000 sir.

23 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: 6,000.

24 So you feel that with \$65 million assuming that every
25

2 single individual medallion owner bring home that \$65
3 million would be enough to cover it, that number?

4 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: No sir. We
5 have 6,000 medallion owners and not every single
6 medallion owner is holding debt. We, we know that
7 there are several thousand medallion owners that do
8 not have any debt associated with their medallions
9 and so what we approximate is that roughly 2/3 of
10 that universe may have debt. That does not mean that
11 the 2/3 of that universe is facing insolvency. The
12 debt issue can range on an individual basis from \$1
13 to over \$1 million. So on average we believe that
14 the \$2,250 loans that could be potentially serviced
15 through the \$65 million medallion relief program is
16 sufficient for the universe of medallion owners who
17 may be facing insolvency.

18 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: This
19 program is structured to help individuals that own
20 less than five medallions, right?

21 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Those are the
22 parameters, yes sir.

23 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: So
24 whatever that we are looking at is based on working
25 with that group. I just feel that and again we had

2 to, all of our focusing on getting results and I
3 appreciate all the hours and time that you've been
4 putting as a TLC Commissioner to work on the yellow
5 taxi crisis and also with the livery and black car
6 task force in order to being accessible to speak to
7 them when it is needed. So I appreciate that. I, I
8 just feel that. I just hope that we can come to the
9 table where we can bring the OMB directors, city
10 hall, you as a Commissioner, the stakeholder, you
11 known from the leaders of the Taxi Alliance our
12 offers and have a discussion with an open mind,
13 revising that good pieces of the MRP and how also
14 city hall should be having an open ear to also hear
15 the other proposed that include an investment
16 addition of \$93 million over the next 30 years. So,
17 again I'm not even going after putting you on the
18 spot I just believe that you know it is a fair call
19 that crisis is so big. This is the result of so many
20 year where we have failed in the past on the current
21 and previous administration to that industry and I
22 feel that beside what we can go over, the details
23 from your testimony asking questions that you are
24 doing here from the leadership today of the Taxi
25 Alliance and the taxi drivers, I hope that we also

2 can follow up having a roundtable conversation with
3 all the stakeholder having an open mind to go over
4 the MRP, MRP program but also being open to hear also
5 the details of the proposal asking city hall to
6 invest the additional \$93 million over the next 30
7 year which mean around like \$3.2 million every year.
8 So this is what I want everyone to know that this is
9 the most important thing that I want to bring to the
10 table. We know that we can ask as many questions but
11 I know that this crisis is being for so many years.
12 I think the MRP is a good beginning. I know that you
13 have put up many hours. You have put in your
14 dedication here but I also want to see how we can put
15 a roundtable conversation. Will you be open to
16 advocate and talk to the rest of your partners at
17 city hall to get that roundtable conversation
18 happening?

19 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Chairman you
20 know that I'm always available and accessible,
21 everyone at the TLC is available and accessible. We
22 are always happy to meet with all stakeholders to
23 discuss the best interest of the industry. I am
24 happy to continue to connect with all of you on same.

2 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Okay. I
3 as the other two people, the other members of city
4 hall including the OMB director should be asked to be
5 with us too. And again I'm not putting you on the
6 spot to say yes or no because I know that you have to
7 consult but this is a recommendation that I
8 personally have been making to city hall so, as we
9 will hold this hearing today I think that, and
10 hopefully we can make progress getting details for
11 many questions I, I also want to give a heads up for
12 me that roundtable conversation must happen because I
13 think this is only a beginning. What happened with
14 those individuals who owns from 5 to 10 medallions?
15 I know some of those who are struggling to who use
16 the value of those medallion to buy a house and the
17 bank is looking at the house as the collector and try
18 to go after those properties too. So, it, how can
19 TLC identify a way not to, I think that those who own
20 500 medallions, 1000 medallions at some point they
21 have all the investment, all the portfolio and many
22 of them are good investors so not everyone are bad
23 investors but I feel that the financial crisis is
24 another thing and I think that the city is coming
25 back after COVID and we should also be able to bring

2 the taxi industry back as we, hopefully by next year
3 we will be back as a city. So, what is a plan to
4 help those individuals who also own from 5 to 10
5 medallions?

6 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: So the
7 universe of individuals that own more than 5
8 medallions is very small, um, and so if anyone fits
9 that dynamic is suffering from in- or facing
10 insolvency they should reach out to us at the TLC so
11 that we can evaluate their, their situation. The
12 good thing is that it's a fine eye group of people
13 and, and the majority of those are corporations and
14 not individuals and I want to just remind everyone
15 that the MRP is very focused, laser focused on the
16 individual medallion owner who, who was facing
17 insolvency but luckily to your question, we have very
18 few medallion owners that have less than five and as
19 I said if there is somebody who is facing insolvency
20 they should reach out to us so that we can evaluate
21 their case.

22 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: By the
23 program being structured to work and help
24 financially, broad financial assistance to medallion
25 owners that own less than five medallions, right?

2 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: It's focused
3 on individual medallion owners with a focus on owner
4 drivers the ones who are working their cars every day
5 and individual medallion owner that are not
6 corporations. Um, and those, those entities that
7 tend to have five medallions or more tend to be fleet
8 companies and not individuals but if there is a,
9 let's give you an example. If there is a female
10 medallion owner who had a family of, of taxi owners
11 who now finds herself having inherited six medallions
12 and is facing insolvency and wasn't a driver and just
13 has accumulated these assets and needs help, we will
14 evaluate that case on an individual basis. So, the
15 MRP has maximum flexibility to help the, the small
16 person, the individual medallion owner who needs
17 assistance and so if there is somebody who meets that
18 sort of criteria and that you've outlined I would
19 like for them to reach the TLC so that we can take a
20 close look at their particular situation.

21 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Okay.

22 Will the TLC support a city backed guarantee program
23 as the strategy to lower the debt to no more than
24 \$20,000 to \$25,000 and more than \$800 per month?

2 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: The TLC
3 launched a \$65 million program to help individual
4 medallion owners to be able to restructure and from
5 what we are seeing right now based on our data, what
6 we have launched is working and it is not necessary
7 at this time to create an artificial price or to
8 price fix the asset or to try to right side every
9 single medallion owner into the same debt construct.
10 Again, our medallion owners have varying levels of
11 debt. Through the 90 medallion owners who have
12 already restructured, the debt ranges, the original
13 debt ranges from \$22,000 to \$744,000 so I don't think
14 that you or anyone might suggest that we make
15 somebody who has less than \$145,000 in debt to raise
16 them to \$145,000 so we have to look at all of these
17 cases individually, um, and refinance and restructure
18 them individually.

19 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: You know
20 there is a level of disconnection when it comes to,
21 and again I don't want to call it as, as you as when
22 I address any agency about commission or any agency
23 but this is not a level of corporation when
24 recommend-, a specific recommendation came out from
25 the Taxi Medallion Task Force and city hall came

2 hours before releasing a plan not engaging the City
3 Council into their discussion and thinking that we
4 will be only witness on a plan when there is a plan,
5 other recommendations they have been putting on the
6 table. And I know that you had to play your role as
7 a commissioner but City Hall has failed on not
8 engaging the Council before they released this plan.
9 And we are asking, demanding city hall to come back
10 to the table to revise together this plan and the
11 proposed to act in additional \$93 million over the
12 next 30 years cannot be run that all congress members
13 of New York City, Senator Schumer and many other
14 leaders saying we support such initiative. I'm going
15 to leave it here and I'm going to go to now my other
16 colleagues to ask questions we are going to put in a
17 time in five minutes and after they're finished I
18 would come back to other questions.

19 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

20 COUNSEL: Thank you Chair. Before we turn to
21 Council Member questions I would like to recognize
22 that we have been joined by Council Member Levin. We
23 will now call on Council Members for questions in the
24 order they have used the Zoom Raise Hand function.
25 Council Members, please keep your questions to five

2 minutes. The Sergeant at Arms will keep a timer and
3 will let you know when your time is up. We will
4 first hear from Council Member Holden followed by
5 Council Member Menchaca followed by Council Member
6 Brooks-Powers. Council Member Holden you may begin
7 when the Sergeant calls time.

8 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

9 ROBERT HOLDEN: Thank you Chair and thank
10 you Commissioner, I know it's a tough situation but
11 you said it is really based on an individual, um,
12 assessment and that's, that can get quite complicated
13 because obviously the different medallion owners are
14 paying different prices for obviously their loans.
15 But on the average what are the loans being reduced
16 by? I think you said the 90, 90 medallion owners
17 have been helped so far?

18 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Yes, Council
19 Member. Uh, 90 medallion owners have been helped so
20 far. The original principal balance owed ranging for
21 those 90 between \$22,000 and \$744,000 and the
22 outstanding principal uh, uh percent reduction ranges
23 from 10% for obviously the smaller, uh, principals
24 owed to up to 77% in debt forgiveness. And so the
25 new principal owed after the restructure range from 0

2 for settlements to under \$300,000 for the larger
3 loans.

4 ROBERT HOLDEN: So.

5 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: And \$14
6 million has been forgiven for that group of 90.

7 ROBERT HOLDEN: Right. So, um,
8 generally the, the 90 medallion owners that were
9 helped so far did you speak to some of them or any of
10 them about, you know, how was the process? How could
11 it be improved? Are they happy? Will they be able
12 to work with the restructuring? Did you, did you
13 talk to any of them?

14 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: We've, we've
15 engaged with several, with several of them. Um,
16 everyone that we have connected with of, of the
17 individuals who have come through the Resource Center
18 they are all very, um, um, relieved and happy to be
19 on, on this path. Um, and, and grateful.

20 ROBERT HOLDEN: Okay. And, uh, you
21 mentioned the number of 2,300 medallion owners that
22 you expect to help, is that, and is that accurate?

23 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: So we expect
24 to help all individual medallion owners who need
25 assistance but because we have never been able to

2 figure out what the debt issue is or what, um, what,
3 how many medallion owners actually need assistance
4 because that, these were all private deals?

5 ROBERT HOLDEN: Right.

6 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Um, there's no
7 data on this. What we are seeing based on the intake
8 and, and smart mathematical assumptions is that, you
9 know we have 6,000 owners, not everybody's holding
10 debt and, and everybody that's holding debt is not
11 insolvent so we are assuming that 3,400 or so people
12 and that is at a high range have some level of debt,
13 um, and that about 2,250 may be facing insolvency and
14 as we move through the Medallion Relief Program and
15 have intake we are getting data and I, I, I think
16 that a silver lining here is at the end of this
17 program and as we move through the program we will
18 finally have answers on what the total debt issue is,
19 um, and, and how many medallion owners need help and
20 I think that I cannot wait until we get to the point
21 so that we have something actual to fall back on, um,
22 in terms of what, what was the impact of the shift in
23 market share after the apps ascended.

24 ROBERT HOLDEN: Yes. But it sounds like
25 the city is coming back and, and like, like you said

2 in your testimony that it looks like, you know, we,
3 we're in for brighter days at least, um, with not
4 only this for the MRP but and helping the medallion
5 drivers but we are getting more obviously more
6 customers, right? For the medallions and, and so
7 forth but my final question is step by step how does
8 staff at the Owner Driver Resource Center help
9 participants navigate their medallion debt and
10 receive funding through the MRP? So it's a, it's a
11 labor intensive process, um, we have a website and/or
12 email address, um, that every medallion owner who
13 needs can visit. It's available in all languages.
14 Um, we schedule an intake appointment first to make
15 sure that the medallion owner is a medallion owner
16 and, um, and that they have all their documents in
17 order including the loan documents. They are then
18 paired with a financial and legal advisor from Nylag
19 for free. All of these services are at no cost to the
20 medallion owner and then once all of the, um, I guess
21 financial assessments are done ...

22 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

23 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: ... the.

24 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: I'm
25 sorry, you can continue. Yeah. I'm sorry.

2 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Thank
3 you, the, the attorneys and, um, and the lenders get
4 together with the borrowers and begin to negotiate,
5 um, better terms and once the medallion owner is, is
6 comfortable and we know that the new terms are
7 financially viable from them, and, an agreement is
8 executed and then at the end of that agreement, um,
9 which has to meet the parameters of the program to
10 significantly reduce principal, to reduce the
11 interest rates, to reduce the monthly payments and/or
12 entirely settle the debt, then, then things are
13 finalized and at the end of that, if the medallion
14 owner is still holding, um, debt which is
15 significantly reduced in comparison to what they were
16 holding originally then we will help provide debt
17 assistance if they need it to ensure that the monthly
18 payments are manageable for the first year.

19 ROBERT HOLDEN: Oh, that sounds, uh, it
20 sounds interesting, it sounds like, it, uh, we can
21 solve this problem. So I thank you Commissioner.
22 Thank you for your hard work and, and thank you
23 Chair.

24 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Thank you.
25

2 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

3 COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member Holden. We
4 will next here from Council Member Menchaca followed
5 by Council Member Brooks-Powers. Council Member
6 Menchaca, you may begin when the sergeant calls time.

7 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

8 CARLOS MENCHACA: Thank you. And I want
9 to say thank you to the Chair, the Committee that's
10 here listening, offering some new ideas and
11 Commissioner. Thank you so much for your time
12 tonight, or today and the other time where we spent
13 an hour talking about all of this and I want to do
14 some follow ups with you that really center us in the
15 demographic that we are speaking to but I think some
16 of the most being and those are, are aging medallion
17 owners and immigrant with some kind of immigrant
18 experience and so to get a sense from you if you have
19 done the research of any older, elder, immigrant
20 owners that we are talking about in your analysis?

21 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: So we, as we
22 move through the applicants we are flagging and
23 looking for our older medallion owners that are 65
24 years old or older. We understand that they have
25 circumstances that are very different than somebody

2 who is a 30-year-old driver or a 40-year-old driver
3 or a 50-year-old driver, um, and we want to make sure
4 that they are taken care of and get the attention and
5 the supports that they need, um, and for instance,
6 two weeks ago I had an elder medallion owner who owed
7 about \$25,000 in his debt total and we are working,
8 actively working with him and his lender to reach a
9 settlement so that he doesn't owe any more money at
10 the end of his restructure so we are very, very
11 committed in focus. We will not forget about our
12 older, um, medallion owners who have devoted their
13 livelihood to this work. They will not be left
14 behind.

15 CARLOS MENCHACA: Awesome. I, I should
16 have started with that I know you are committed to
17 them, my question was number? How many are we
18 talking about in anticipation? And is that something
19 that you have data around and/or are collecting?

20 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: That is
21 information that we're, we're collecting, we're,
22 we're isolating the medallion owners who are coming
23 to us who are of an age older than 65 and we will
24 have that data in time but the, the overall
25 population of our licensees that are older than 65

2 is, is quite large, um, but we don't know just yet
3 how many of those are medallion owners who are facing
4 insolvency. We will learn that in time.

5 CARLOS MENCHACA: Okay. Um, that's a big
6 flag that I raised last time and I, I just want to
7 raise it here for, for this committee and as we move
8 forward. The second area is really is just that has
9 continued to come to light, yesterday we, we even
10 heard the protest, the kind of ever growing and
11 everlasting protest that is outside City Hall while
12 we were at stated and I think some of us engaged
13 them. And I think there is a real problem here that
14 we're not talking about that's beyond the MRP plan
15 that you are here to push and get support for. But
16 the, the fact that there's just a lack of trust with
17 this community and when I engaged them with new
18 information that I had from you, it was just clear
19 that it didn't matter what the program is, the, the
20 kind of classic misstep of the de Blasio
21 Administration across the board, like this is just
22 how de Blasio has run his Administration for the last
23 eight years, is you know if you build something for
24 us, without us it's not for us. And that's just
25 classic, that's just like this DNA that has seeped in

2 to all agency operations, especially this one. So,
3 how do you, how do you plan to confront that?

4 Because what I believe that what you have created is
5 good for many, not all, many off the drivers but they
6 will never come to you the way that you had asked and
7 need them to come to the table to negotiate and sit
8 down that's, that's the poison pill here and I'm just
9 realizing how much that's the biggest issue you can,
10 you can kind of tell the procedural and access to the
11 \$60 something million dollars left but that, how do
12 you get across that? How do you, how are you
13 planning to confront that directly?

14 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: I think
15 that we have to continue to build bridges and trust.
16 And I think that as this program, um, continues to
17 provide definitely ...

18 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

19 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: ... that relief
20 effort ...

21 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE
22 COUNSEL: You may finish answering.

23 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: ... as the
24 program continues, um, to ramp up and, and provide
25 relief I'm confident that more people, um, will come

2 forth or that everybody who needs to come forth will
3 come forth. I think that is evidenced in the
4 thousand, um, individuals who have already applied
5 for, for the program and anyone else who, who needs
6 we are here and we're available and I will not stop
7 until, um, we have exhausted all of our outreach
8 abilities.

9 CARLOS MENCHACA: Okay. Um, Chair, can I
10 ask one more question?

11 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Yes.

12 CARLOS MENCHACA: Okay. Just the last
13 question, I'm actually walking to Senator Schumer's
14 house, we have a big protest and rally in support of
15 immigration reform but Schumer has supported the
16 oppos-, oppositional plan and he's not alone, uh, it
17 was mentioned earlier today, what, what is that worth
18 in this conversation to really force the Mayor to
19 force the city to sit down and come up with an
20 alternative plan to point, to the point that the
21 Chair made? Like, is that worth anything to, to
22 offer something that looks more like what they're
23 offering and is that something that can be part of
24 these negotiations as you move forward? I think a
25 gesture in that way will help build the trust that

2 you need, uh, to build something that they helped
3 create with their DNA. So, yeah, what's, what is it
4 worth at all that all these other elected officials
5 have signed on to this alternative plan and, I mean
6 if they're wrong I think now is the time to hear that
7 all of the elected officials that signed on are wrong
8 and why they're wrong so that we can take that back
9 when we are engaging Nyqua and Medallion owners.

10 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: No. I'm
11 really that you that you brought this up council
12 member. It is critical that we all acknowledge that
13 everyone is coming from a place of wanting to provide
14 medallion owners and drivers with financial relief
15 supports, um, and I think that we can all agree that
16 there are multiple ways to solve the debt issue and,
17 and, and I think that we, you know as a, I, I just on
18 a, on a personal note as a, as a daughter and as a
19 parent I've always been taught and teach that we can
20 disagree and still be friends and still be
21 productive. Um, and, and the congressional
22 delegation wants to ensure that we are providing
23 medallion owners with the relief that they need, um,
24 and we believe that the MRP is providing that. Um,
25 what the congressional letter said was that they

2 would like a guarantee of medallion loans in exchange
3 for firm commitments from the lenders to restructure
4 medallion loans to a viable market of the valley of
5 the medallions and the city's plan achieves
6 commitments from the lenders to restructure the
7 medallion loans without a guarantee. And the
8 delegation is asking that the city provide owners
9 the, the needed resources to restructure their
10 medallion loans and the city's plan is achieving
11 that. Um, and if I may suggest is what we really
12 need now from the congressional delegation is to help
13 advance Congressman Meeks' Bill to exclude debt
14 relief from gross taxable income. That's the next
15 hurdle in this debt forgiveness and cancellation
16 process regardless of the plan and, and we need to
17 make sure that we continue today, regardless of what
18 happens, may or may not happen in the future, our
19 program is up and running right now. We have 90
20 people that got help over the last 14 days. We want
21 to get to the 1,000 people before the end of the year
22 and we cannot delay, we cannot stop, we cannot halt,
23 we have to get the money out because these people
24 need help, right now, today. And then once they are
25 restructured we want to make sure that they have the

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2 protection from the federal government around
3 taxation, um, and so if, if you can, you know,
4 support that in your conversations with the
5 delegation I would be much obliged.

6 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

7 COUNSEL: Thank, thank you Council Member.

8 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank
9 you.

10 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

11 COUNSEL: Thank you Chair.

12 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: And
13 Jessica before, before, uh calling the next Council
14 Member.

15 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

16 COUNSEL: Please.

17 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ:

18 Commissioner we definitely you know, when you
19 look at the numbers. I should say how many, how
20 many, at some point we have 15,000 medallions in the,
21 in the street. How many of those 15,000 are now hold
22 by TLC because you know, not being able to sell it,
23 people are returning. From those 15,000 how many are
24 under TLC?

25

2 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Chairman, I
3 just want clarify that the TLC by, by law only has
4 13,587 medallions.

5 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: How many,
6 13,000?

7 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: 13,587
8 medallions, half of those medallions are owned by
9 fleets, half of the medallions are owned by
10 individuals.

11 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: So, so,
12 you keep saying, you know how difficult it is from
13 TLC to know there is some data that you don't have it
14 yet because, not because of lack of effort, not
15 because of lack of style, but because you know, their
16 relationship basically with a private sector, the
17 bank but we as talking about well then, well like
18 3,000 are individual medallion owners. What is the
19 exact numbers of medallion, individual medallion
20 owners?

21 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: It's
22 approximately 6,000 sir.

23 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Well.

24 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Are you asking
25 a question about storage numbers or are you trying to

2 ascertain the number of medallion owners who are
3 holding debt and, and what, and the population who
4 are holding debt that are facing insolvency, is that
5 what you are asking?

6 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: No first,
7 first the total is that by law right now TLC has
8 13,587 and half of them are individual medallion
9 owners, so it means that there's, if we divided it
10 split by half this is like almost 6,300 individual
11 medallion owners. And you got it.

12 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: It's roughly
13 6,000 individual medallion owners.

14 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Again,
15 Commissioner I'm following what you are saying. TLC.

16 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: I, I just want
17 to make sure that I'm following what you are saying.
18 I want to make sure that I answer your questions.

19 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Okay.
20 You are saying TLC, not in TLC you are just saying
21 there are by law 13,587 medallions and you say half
22 of them are individual medallion owners is that the
23 case? Or is different?

24

25

2 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Roughly half
3 of the fleet is owned by individual medallion owners
4 that is the case.

5 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: So if
6 it's half from 13,587 then is not 6,000 it's like
7 6,250.

8 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: We're saying
9 roughly half are and what I shared is that we have
10 6,000, around 6,000 individual medallion owners
11 that's the number, 6,000.

12 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: But is,
13 is that by law that half of them must be individual
14 medallion owners?

15 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: No sir. It's
16 just the construct. Half of the medallion owners are
17 owned by fleet and half of them are owned by
18 individuals. That's that ...

19 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Exactly.

20 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: ... that's the
21 evolution of the industry.

22 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Okay.
23 Commissioner and half of 13,587 is not 6,000. Is
24 more like 6,250?

2 ALOYSEE HEREDIA RODRIGUEZ: So more
3 precisely sir, half, more precisely we have
4 approximately 6,000 medallion, individual medallion
5 owners so I want to clarify on the record for you
6 that roughly 6,000 medallions are owned by
7 individuals.

8 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Let's use
9 including one, let's, go with what you said, there
10 area 13,587, half of them are individual medallion
11 owners. How do you come out to the conclusion that
12 only 3,250 will be the average number that will need
13 help from the financial relief program?

14 ALOYSEE HEREDIA RODRIGUEZ: I see what
15 you're asking now so I'm going to, I, I will try to
16 explain this again and, and just to clarify I think
17 you, you may be familiar in your tenure which is far
18 longer, exceeds me, um, that by law it used to be a
19 60/40 mix but that was no longer the case. Now,
20 let's, let's try this again. We have 13,587
21 medallions, roughly 6,000 of those are owned by
22 individuals. We know that we have several thousand
23 medallion owners, individual medallion owners who
24 don't have any debt. So, based on.

2 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Do, do we
3 have that number? Do, does TLC have the number of
4 how many doesn't have any debt?

5 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Roughly,
6 roughly 2,000 or so do not have any debt and we are
7 gathering that information as we move through the
8 medallion relief program. The most, the very
9 critical thing to, to understand here, um, and that
10 needs to be articulated is that debt around
11 medallions were all done as private transactions and
12 for a very long time until now we have not had a
13 mechanism for tracking individual private
14 transactions and understanding exactly what each
15 individual medallion owner has done with their
16 medallions. Thank, thankfully through the City
17 Council we have established an Office of Financial
18 Stability whereby medallion owners now have to submit
19 financial documents to the TLC and in time we will
20 have all the data point that you are asking whether
21 we have or not. We have a lot more data now than we
22 did before. We have a lot more data since March 9th
23 than we have ever had before.

24 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: I, I have
25 question.

2 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: And we will,
3 and we will get that information for you.

4 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: I have no
5 question that we being able to collect more data
6 because of our playing a role passing many, many law
7 mandating TLC to work around those data collections.
8 So, I know that we've been working together between
9 the Council and City Hall to move the agency to be
10 what it is. Still a lot more work has to be done.

11 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Agreed.

12 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: And, and,
13 and, and, and, and I say that it's like, this is not
14 about, you know, about what anyone regardless of the
15 role that you can have, that I have, that anyone have
16 at City Hall from the \$1 million dollar director. We
17 can be thinking about it affecting so much of this
18 industry can be to only help with \$65 million, it
19 averages 3,250 individuals. We would not come up
20 with a solution right now because that's a different
21 approach and City Hall has never engaged the Council
22 before this plan was released except for a few hours
23 before it went out. So, I go back to my Council
24 knowing that if we want to be closer we have to sit

2 on the table. The next Council Member that has a
3 question, Jessica please.

4 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

5 COUNSEL: Thank you Chair. The next Council Member to
6 be called, to be called on will be Council Member
7 Brooks-Powers followed by Council Member Levin,
8 followed by Council Member Miller. Council Member
9 Brooks-Powers, you may begin when the Sergeant calls
10 time.

11 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

12 SELVENA BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you and
13 thank you Commissioner for your testimony today.
14 Just a couple of questions, just in the interest of
15 time I'll ask all my questions and wait for your
16 response. And so, um, I know that we were talking
17 also about the, the average debt for the owner-
18 drivers which I think is largely believed to be
19 \$500,000 and in the plan I'm just curious to
20 understand how was a livable wage factored in to
21 that plan? How was it rather accounted for? Also I
22 would like to know, um, the City Comptroller has
23 stated about the proposal by the New York Taxi
24 Worker's Alliance is physically sound. I'm
25 interested in understanding why TLC continue to say

2 that it's not feasible. Also would like to know how
3 lenders have reacted to the MRP and just in terms in
4 the type of outreach that's being done to the, the,
5 TLC the, the owner driver's, how is TLC like really
6 doing a grassroots operation to make sure that they
7 understand that there is a resource center and the
8 type of services that are being offered. We know
9 that a large, um, population in terms of the livery
10 drivers are, um, individuals of color who are
11 immigrants, um, they are head of households in many
12 instances, homeowners here in communities like that
13 one that I represent and so, um, just wanting to know
14 that the agency is thinking outside of the box and
15 really working in overdrive to making sure that they
16 are addressing language barriers and connecting the,
17 the impacted owners to these resources that are being
18 offered through your agency, so thank you. Those are
19 my questions Commissioner. I think you are on mute.

20 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Yeah first I
21 was. Sorry I was typing your questions because I
22 want to make sure that I don't miss any of them. I
23 appreciate your, your very thoughtful questions. Um,
24 I'll knock out the less complicated answers, um, out
25 of the way now. All the lenders that we are aware of

2 that have, um, that are medallion owners have loans
3 with are at the table. I have not heard from a
4 single lender that they are not interested or willing
5 to participate in our program and that is, you know,
6 very, very critical to the success. Um, and of the
7 90 restructures that we've done over the last couple
8 of weeks we have a good mix of a dozen of lenders
9 that, um, have, that are medallion owners have loans
10 with. So again, I'm not aware of any lenders who
11 are, who are not participating in the, in the MRP.
12 Um, everybody is, is very committed to moving away
13 from this debit issue for a variety of reasons.
14 Obviously for the medallion owners, um, to be in a
15 healthier financial situation it is critical but the
16 industry needs for this debt issue to be resolved so
17 that we can attract new capital, focus on revamping
18 the yellows and, and move forward without the, um,
19 without the next risk profile that the industry or
20 the sector has right now. Um, in terms of, of the
21 conditions for, for livable wages and earnings, the
22 conditions are far superior now than they have been
23 in the past 20, 20 months. Um, the fare box is the
24 big indicator of what is possible. Um, and as I said
25 right now we are seeing on average 7,000 to 10,000

2 dollars plus tips, um, being generated by the fare
3 box, our medallion owners who are driving are getting
4 30 to 40 trips a shift just for perspective, 18
5 months ago, that was 11, um, rides per shift. There
6 was a huge disproportion in the industry that was
7 caused by the influx of vehicles. We have the cap,
8 thank goodness in place and we have seen an attrition
9 of vehicles and all of those things combined and with
10 the huge reduction in debt that we will achieve
11 through the MRP we are in a much better place for,
12 for our owners to be able to make not just a livable
13 wage but get on the path to being able to save money,
14 um, and, and not be burdened ...

15 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

16 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: ... by
17 unmanageable debt.

18 SELVENA BROOKS-POWERS: Chair I just
19 ask if we could have a few more moments just to get
20 the rest of the response and ...

21 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Yeah,
22 one, yes commission you can, you can finish it yes.

23 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Thank you, um,
24 with respect to outreach, we have continued and will
25 continue to employ, um, a variety of communication

2 methods for medallion owners. We email. We have
3 emailed all of our medallion owners about the
4 resource center and the MRP. We have held webinars
5 specifically for medallion owners, we've done them on
6 a borough level, an individual level. We have
7 calling trees where we have reached out to medallion
8 owners who we haven't heard from. Um, we want to
9 make sure that we capture the entire universe and,
10 and any suggestions that anyone may have with how we
11 can do better outreach, we are open to that and will
12 to try things, um, there is some, um, Council Members
13 who will be partnering with to come to their
14 districts to get the word out. Um, um, but we've
15 done, I think pretty well. We've reached 1,000
16 people and they're there, um, and coming to the
17 resource center and as I said we will not rest until
18 we reach everyone who needs assistance.

19 SELVENA BROOKS-POWERS: I'm sorry
20 Chair, just one follow up question if I can? Chair?

21 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Yes you
22 may, you may ask the question.

23 SELVENA BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you, um
24 and Commissioner I know you mentioned in, uh, with
25 the fare box and the increase. Do you think that's

2 due to right now the reduction of cars on the road in
3 terms of the competition of the driver's right now?

4 And that after the pandemic has kind of moved and run
5 its course and things continue to open up that that
6 could change? And if so, like what would that impact
7 be?

8 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: I think that,
9 that, um, right now we have what we're seeing is a
10 sufficient amount of supply for the demand and as the
11 city continues to reopen and the passenger, um,
12 ridership or the transportation needs continue to
13 grow for the city and we've seen consistent growth
14 since the quarantine last year that the numbers will
15 continue to, to, to go up. So we don't, we, we are
16 not anticipating, um, a downshift. If anything,
17 we're expecting to get back to the million rides a
18 day that we, that we had before, um, the pandemic and
19 again the conditions for market, for more market
20 share for the yellow taxis is, is, um, better than it
21 has been since the onset of, of the apps. Um, and so
22 there is more market share for yellow taxis so we
23 don't anticipate a loss of market share, we're
24 anticipating an increase in market share.

2 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank you
3 Commissioner. Thank you colleague.

4 SELVENA BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

5 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

6 COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member. We will next hear
7 from Council Member Levin followed by Council Member
8 Miller. Council Member Levin, please begin when the
9 Sergeant calls time.

10 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

11 STEPHEN LEVIN: Thank you very much and
12 thank you Commissioner for your testimony today and
13 Chair for conducting these hearing. Commissioner I
14 want to ask, um, specifically the, um, the letter
15 from our congressional partners um, to, I think Mayor
16 de Blasio, uh, regarding these matters the other day,
17 specified the idea of the City providing some sort of
18 guarantee on the loans or kind of a back stock. So
19 the idea being that, um, if the City were to say that
20 through the lenders that they would, um, guarantee
21 the loan at whatever value, \$150,000 for example. If
22 in the case that a, uh, at a borrower default, um,
23 that that guarantee has some value, um, in the
24 equation with between the, in, within the loan terms.
25 The, to work in the borrowers favor, to make for more

2 favorable loan terms or drive down that negotiated
3 principal that is, um, that is, is happening anyway.
4 So for example if, somebody's loan, uh, goes
5 currently under the, under the MRP is going to
6 \$400,000 to \$285,000 and a guarantee this kind of
7 back stop would, could help bring that further down
8 to say \$225,000 or something along those lines. Why
9 not do that? Because this was my recommendation that
10 you know I spent a lot of time on this issue in the
11 task force that we did at the council, working with,
12 you know, pretty much every, uh, you know in my
13 working group and we had pretty much every
14 perspective on this question represented in that
15 working group during that many hours, so this was one
16 of our recommendations. Why not do that?

17 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: You know that,
18 that, that's an assumption that, that has not been,
19 uh, that has not been tested. And the medallion
20 relief program is modeled after a tried and tested
21 process that we have seen has worked. Um prior to
22 the MRP being launched we had several, about 100 or
23 more medallion owners renegotiate their, their loans
24 independently, um, and they were able to achieve a,
25 you know a \$200 million write off in that, in that

2 tranche. We know that, um, providing the down
3 payment for restructure achieves all of the things
4 that we have all been speaking about achieving, lower
5 principal amounts owed per the medallion owner, lower
6 monthly payments, close to or under \$1000 and lower
7 interest rates and fuller amortization schedules.
8 Um, and, and, and, um, you know, we, we're happy to
9 continue the, the conversation but we also, you know
10 we would, we would appreciate as well if
11 consideration could be given to the, to the MRP. I
12 don't know that the Task Force considered the, the
13 program that is underway right now, um that is tried
14 and tested and that is what is available to the
15 medallion owners, right now, today we are providing
16 funds and I really think that we should be talking
17 about the existing program and how to reach the 1,000
18 people that we need to get to before the end of the
19 year. We know it works. It's worked for the people
20 that came before the program was fully, um,
21 established. We know that it's working for the 90
22 people who have gotten \$14 million in debt
23 forgiveness and we know that we can achieve up to
24 \$500 million in debt forgiveness through this
25 program.

2 STEPHEN LEVIN: Uh-huh. No I hear that
3 and I'm just, I'm just trying to think through if, if
4 there's a, and I, I appreciate the kind of, the
5 constraints that under which the program is working.
6 The TLC can't unilaterally ...

7 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

8 STEPHEN LEVIN: ... um, offer a, uh, you
9 know a, a guarantee behind the loans, um, I think
10 that, uh, and then, and then, and frankly you are
11 working within rules promulgated on this program that
12 don't include such a guarantee and so, and you are
13 issuing loan or you are issuing, um, you know the
14 down payments to renegotiate the loans now. So, the,
15 so, I, I appreciate all those limitations, I
16 acknowledge that and then when we did our, our task
17 force it was prior to the MRP, um, so it was, this
18 was, we were talking through any options that we
19 though available. Um, such of which are similar in
20 analogous to what the MRP is doing. We was, we had
21 thought of including a CDFI and, and, um, the MRP is
22 using a CDFI so, if, I, I've just, it just struck me
23 that if it's, if that's the request that is being put
24 forward and, uh, and is being put forward by our
25 colleagues in Congress, um, as well, um, you know, I,

2 I'm kind of, one of the reason why I was an appealing
3 idea in the first place and this is an idea that I've
4 been thinking about for a number of years now. It,
5 it kind of has the ability to, it's, it's a set aside
6 and City has to be prepared for the liability of, of,
7 of every single loan defaulting, right, so if you are
8 going to guarantee every loan to a certain price then
9 you have to, you know, you have to be at least
10 theoretically prepared to pay out on all those
11 guarantees. That said, that said if you are driving
12 down the principals on these loans, combined with an
13 increase in the value that we are seeing now of the
14 medallions, I don't know about an increase to \$1
15 million, um, we all know that, but they go, they are
16 stabilized for all the reasons that you've spoken of
17 and all the work that you are doing in TLC to
18 stabilize those, those medallion values. Um, you
19 know as those medallion values are stabilized and the
20 loan principals that are on the existing loans are
21 driven down further or the terms get better or the
22 interest rates go down, based on you actually can
23 beat that, those benefits can be increased and
24 further leveraged by a guarantee, it, it, the, the
25 risk of default goes down, um, because the, because

2 they're, they're now have this asset, the borrower
3 has the asset and is paying a lower principal on it
4 and so it's, while the asset is actually, you know
5 stabilized, so, um, it just, I think that it's, it's
6 worth kind of considering though I don't, I don't
7 really have the answer as to how that framework or
8 this tool would fit into the existing program and I
9 don't know the answer to that because the existing
10 program is subject to its current rules. As you've
11 said you're looking to basically compete, complete
12 the program by the end of the year. So, so that is a
13 very tight timeframe. Um, it's just, as a, as I met
14 with you earlier last, earlier this week I've spoken
15 to officers of members of Congress. Spoken to Taxi
16 Worker's Alliance it's, a, I think worth considering
17 if and how, uh, this could be leveraged. While it is
18 a, a liability, a very large liability, the risk
19 itself of, of having to pay out that liability is
20 very low and I think like that's a pretty reasonable,
21 I'm not an actuary so I don't know how to gauge that,
22 um, but it seems to me logical that that risk is low
23 of default because people want to hold on to their
24 assets. Their asset that is now stabilized. I'll
25 turn it back over to the chair.

2 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Okay.

3 Thank you. Thank you. Council Member and I know
4 that as you are now writing more, you know, based on
5 conversation that we have as you and I were the co-
6 chair of the Yellow Taxi Task Force and I see her
7 before and we are re-elaborating that beside this
8 hearing today we need to sit down at City Hall with a
9 Commissioner, with an OMB Director with a
10 stakeholder, to look on how this program is working
11 but also to be open to the proposal on coming out
12 from the Rider's Allia-, from the Taxi's Alliance
13 calling for City Hall to add the addition of \$93
14 million for the next 30 years, so I feel that it's
15 important to hear, to have this hearing, to have this
16 conversation but I think that we need to also keep
17 moving forward, keep planning and the best way to do
18 it as I mentioned before, I also had City Hall that
19 we need to have time to sit down at a roundtable at
20 City Hall with a Commissioner, with OMB, with a Taxi
21 Alliance and other stakeholder with an open mind to
22 see what is working with this program and also to be
23 open to see what other things we can do. There's a,
24 this crisis as I said before is too big, too long.

2 This is a good initiative but we believe that we can
3 do more so, thank you Council Member.

4 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

5 COUNSEL: Thank you Commissioner.

6 STEPHEN LEVIN: Chair, I do want to just
7 acknowledge the all the work that, um, that the
8 Commissioner and her staff, have, have done in
9 creating this plan. I don't want that to go
10 unremarked upon. This is, this effort has been, uh,
11 very massive and is, uh, is very much working in the
12 right, in the right direction.

13 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Sure.

14 STEPHEN LEVIN: I just want to make sure
15 that I acknowledge that.

16 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: And, and
17 I agree with you.

18 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: And that
20 has been my point from the beginning that I know how
21 this hearing said this program is not working and we
22 have to start on 0. For me, this is about, this is a
23 good beginning but we should be open to, for the
24 other ideas and how to make it better.

2 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

3 COUNSEL: Thank you Chair. Thank you Council Member

4 Levin. We will now call on Council Member Miller.

5 Council Member Miller you may begin with the Sergeant

6 calls time.

7 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

8 I. DANEEK MILLER: Good afternoon,

9 good afternoon Mr. Chair, good afternoon

10 Commissioner. Um, so, just a point of clarity on a

11 couple of issues with the Chair and my colleagues

12 have had really good questions around this issue.

13 Could you confirm that the average debt, uh, as

14 mentioned by my colleague is \$500,000, is that

15 accurate, for the individuals?

16 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: That's, that's

17 a number that's been stated, um, a lot. That is now

18 what we are seeing right now from the applicants that

19 have come in that we are helping. We are seeing the

20 latest average around \$350k with a median of \$415,

21 but the latest average is, is well under \$500 at

22 \$350k. Again we haven't closed deals for the full

23 list of people that have come through so that, that

24 an shift, um, but right now, from that first group

25

2 it's, thankfully it's far lower, um, than \$500,000.
3 That's, that's good and welcome news.

4 I. DANEEK MILLER: And could you,
5 could you without really spending a good bit of
6 limited, could you give me a number of, of that is
7 just within the industry, is there, could you just
8 give me an average number of lenders that are
9 interested in this.

10 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: It's about a
11 dozen, it's about 12 dozen, the, it's, it's a small
12 world.

13 I. DANEEK MILLER: Okay. Right, so,
14 so it's a small world so really securing this
15 relationship or having a relationship with, with
16 these lenders to work with the to make the
17 adjustments to, to, uh, mortgages, uh and negotiate
18 new rates. Is it more manageable than a larger unit
19 is? I had this experience in dealing with the
20 Council's distressed mortgage buyback program for the
21 many, many HUD and section 8 distressed mortgages.
22 And, and so I don't know if you were familiar with
23 that, um, but the City actually along with not for
24 profit holds those mortgages and negotiated more
25 favorable terms themselves. So I would say that what

2 the suggestion is, not unlike, in terms of
3 guaranteeing and holding the mortgages. A lot
4 different because the debt doesn't seem to be as
5 high. With that being said, to return today, what
6 is, and you said that the, uh, the average number of
7 trips are going up so we are trying to kind of and we
8 are talking about living wages, what is necessary in
9 order for the drivers and owner-operators to achieve
10 living wages. Um, have you calculated the amount of
11 trips? You said it's up to about 40 trips per day.
12 What, how many trips would be necessary to meet the
13 goal of the average debt even by US standards?

14 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: So the -- the
15 revenue that is, that we're seeing being generated
16 now is on par with the heydays of the industry where
17 when there were no concerns, um, around debt and,
18 and, uh, and revenue, um, and what we need to work is
19 to ensure that that continues through our cap,
20 though, through better regulation, um of the
21 industry, what we need to really be focused on in
22 addition to lowering the debt is to ensure that there
23 is appropriate market share for the medallion owners.
24 And not just the medallion owners who -- who are
25 holding debt, we have you know 13,587 medallions and

2 we want to make sure that the entire industry is
3 viable. That is has a securer future in New York
4 City and that they have an opportunity not just to
5 have market share but to recapture the market share
6 that they are entitled to and that they once had in
7 New York City and that is the goal that we all need
8 to work toward collectively and we cannot do that and
9 ensure that until we resolve the debt issue.

10 I. DANEEK MILLER: Okay. So, so
11 certainly because we want to make sure that we've
12 seen drivers, workers and so many folks and, and in
13 industries around the City, uh, really almost the
14 alternate canary in the coal mine carriers a lot of
15 hours that folks are actually put behind the wheel
16 and this is especially important that a ...

17 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

18 I. DANEEK MILLER: ... a is set to
19 certain standards. So you know, certainly we want to
20 ensure that whatever we're doing ensures people
21 aren't required to work 12 hours a day 7 days a week
22 in order to have this -- the payday and have, have a
23 quality of life as well. So, to get us there,
24 certainly we, we would like to see what those numbers
25 are, as, as well as and finally we, we, know that

2 there was a congressional letter of support that,
3 that was sent. Was that letter based on financial
4 support? Additional stimulus? Stimulus that had
5 already been ear marked or identified? The
6 transportation or specifically for this particular
7 industry because certainly there is some course
8 associated with this. There has obviously been an
9 800 pound elephant in the room that no one has even
10 talked about whether or not this is viable if in fact
11 it is not or whatever the city's contention is with
12 the additional support from the federal government
13 kind of us help us.

14 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: I'm, I'm
15 reviewing the, the letter and it does not state um,
16 um, where the funding should come from.

17 I. DANEEK MILLER: That, that ...

18 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: That
19 being said is it the contention that the City has
20 exhausted all its financial means in the \$65 million.

21 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: That is not a
22 question that I, have um, the expertise or ability to
23 answer; however, I, I can say that based on the
24 conversation that we've been having and all the
25 analysis that the economists have done for the City

2 that the \$65 million should cover restructurings and
3 settlements for all the medallion owners, the
4 individual medallion owners that have need.

5 I. DANEEK MILER: Thank you
6 Commissioner. Thank you Mr. Chair.

7 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank you
8 and Jessica I don't see another Council Member?

9 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE
10 COUNSEL: No Chair. I will turn it back to you
11 if you have any additional questions for the
12 Commissioner?

13 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ:
14 Commissioner, let's just keep working together.
15 You know a, a lot of work to be done. Again, I say
16 as the beginning but definitely need to follow up
17 with a more, with another meeting. So I'm hoping we
18 can coordinate it with you and City Hall to see that
19 meeting happen and be able to go after you know with
20 details about your plan. We want every, any plan
21 that can help the Taxi and Medallion owner to be
22 successful and that's our responsibility. So, thank
23 you for your service and now we're going to be going
24 to the public. Uh, the first panel that will be
25 composed by the leadership of Bhairavi Desai and

2 Richard Chow and other and Jessica will call them.
3 We will give them 15 minutes so that they can speak
4 mainly on behalf of that taxis and the great group of
5 men and women that's been holding the protest and
6 rally in front of City Hall. Raising their voices
7 speaking on their behalf and the behalf of their
8 family in the City but after we give them the 15
9 minutes and I hope that the Commissioner can stay
10 around at least for that portion so that she can
11 directly from them and after that we're going to be
12 calling other taxi individuals since we are giving
13 the 15 minutes to the leadership of Bhairavi Desai
14 and Richard Chow we're going to be giving one minute
15 to the second part of the public and we hope that we
16 are going to be very tight, be sure that everyone
17 stays with the one minute. So now I turn it back to
18 our lawyer, Jessica.

19 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

20 COUNCIL: Thank you very much Chair. As the
21 Chair just mentioned, we will begin with a panel
22 comprised of Bhairavi Desai from the New York Taxi
23 Worker's Alliance and Richard Chow and they will
24 begin 15 minute to -- for their testimony. Ms. Desai

2 and Mr. Chow you may begin when the Sergeant calls
3 time.

4 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

5 BHAIRAVI DESAI: Yes. My name is
6 Bhairavi Desai, I'm the Executive Director of the New
7 York Taxi Worker's Alliance. Thank you so much
8 Chairman Rodriguez and members of the Transportation
9 Committee for holding this hearing. I am struggle
10 with where to begin. I'm a little bit shocked by
11 some of the information that I just heard from the
12 Chairwoman. First of all, this is the first time
13 that the TLC has admitted that they only have money
14 to help 2,250 individuals in need. Now they said
15 that they use smart math to determine that that's the
16 total number of people that need help. At the same
17 time the Chairwoman have said, has said that they are
18 basically gathering data as they go along so they
19 really don't know and we're talking about an issue
20 where thousands of people are struggling with
21 lifetime debt and poverty, people facing bankruptcy,
22 the risk of losing their homes, having their wages
23 garnished. This is a serious issue, we've had
24 driver's suicide over this issue. We have seen so
25 many families that have had early death with driver's

2 that have passed away from heart attacks and strokes
3 from the tension of this crisis and to hear the TLC
4 say to a community of 6,000 families that they
5 basically have only budgeted money to help 2250 of
6 them is beyond shocking for me. And by the way when
7 we raised this point six months ago we kept hearing
8 that no we're going to be able to. You know everyone
9 is going to get help which again you heard that today
10 and I don't know what that means you know when you
11 say everyone's going to get help but oh yeah, the
12 numbers only add up to helping 2250. So basically
13 what you're saying is you actually only 2,250 out of
14 a universe of 6,000, a broader universe of 13,000 are
15 in a crisis? A crisis that this deep? Of this
16 level? That is so shockingly out of touch for me to
17 hear. The second thing and to Council Members who
18 have raised the question about a living wage. Let's
19 dissect the TLCs numbers together. The TLC
20 Chairwoman has said and this is not the heyday of
21 taxis by the way to assert that they're grossing
22 \$7,000 a month. That would mean for the year, you
23 know, at \$84,000 a year gross would basically mean
24 \$300 gross per shift, okay, so \$300 per shift gross
25 after you annual expenses of you know liability, you

2 know vehicle payments, the taxes, surcharges,
3 gasoline, credit card processing, all of that you're
4 going to be left with less than \$11 an hour working
5 60 hours a week throughout the entire year if you're
6 mortgage is \$1200 a month. If your mortgage is \$1600
7 a month which is what the TLC is saying would be the
8 average mortgage you are going to be left with
9 earning \$9 an hour. If your mortgage now is up to
10 \$2000 a month because while the TLC has said
11 mortgages will be on average \$1600 their own rules
12 allow the lenders to go up to even \$2000 in order to
13 be eligible for the lender to get the \$20,000 cash
14 down payment and we know the TLC it's knows that
15 these numbers are unsustainable for driver's. That's
16 why in their program the second half of the program
17 is a subsidy, a \$9000 subsidy which sure sounds so,
18 you know, sounds so gracious for six months or up to
19 a year they're going to allow you \$9000 that you can
20 spent to subsidize your mortgage but for a working
21 person, for a driver what that means is they're
22 saying, they're going to leave you with the mortgage
23 that you're going to need help to pay and they're
24 going to give you that help for six to six months to
25 a year and then after that sayonara you're on your

2 own. That's a bridge to bankruptcy and the biggest
3 lender in the industry as the TLC well knows has said
4 that they are going to lower the debt to \$275,000
5 across the board for anybody who's above \$300,000.
6 You get a \$20,000 cash down payment from the TLC
7 grant program. You're debt will be lowered to
8 \$275,000 that will still be lifetime debt in a market
9 where the value is around \$100,000. You know, and,
10 and we've also heard that if the \$20,000 doesn't work
11 enough for you to restructure your debt then they're
12 going to find other means. Let me tell you what
13 those other means are from the conversations our
14 members have had with the TLCs driver's resource
15 program the other means are basically bankruptcy and
16 the whole purpose of this program is to help people
17 avoid bankruptcy. We are not looking to lower debt
18 so when you get into bankruptcy you have a lower
19 liability that, does that qualitatively change
20 people's lives? We are trying to avoid bankruptcy,
21 avoid foreclosure, avoid a need for subsidy because
22 when you work 60 hours a week you should have a
23 dignified living where you don't need a subsidy for
24 your medallion payment or for your groceries and rent
25 but this program right now is going to leave a large

2 number of driver's dependent on that kind of a
3 subsidy. I am also really shocked to hear the TLC
4 Chairwoman say that um, that the concept of the
5 guarantee is not tested but that their concept of the
6 \$20,000 cash down payment was "tested." So let's
7 talk about what that test was, you can go back to the
8 newspaper from September 2020 when Marble Gate, the
9 largest holder of loans in the industry talked about
10 having driver's give a \$25,000 cash down payment
11 using that to restructure loans to you guessed it to
12 \$275,000 at an average of \$1600 a month so the reason
13 this is shocking to me is I would really like to know
14 did the TCL come up with that structure for Marble
15 Gate a year ago and we're just now hearing about it
16 did the, does the TLC consider Marble Gate a private
17 entities restructuring practice to be a test for a
18 public program. I think, you know, we, we want to
19 know that answer but you know the most important
20 question here to us is if this entire city were so
21 thankful to the congressional delegation, to the
22 Medallion Task Force. If this City is dedicated and
23 actually committed to finding a final resolution then
24 we need one that can stand the test of will driver's
25 be able to avoid bankruptcy and avoid poverty pay.

2 That is the test. A mortgage of \$1200, \$1600, \$2000
3 is going to leave workers under the minimum wage and
4 it's the same agency that has a rule that we fought
5 for that established a minimum weight standard for
6 Uber and Lyft drivers is now going to allow for owner
7 drivers to be at a standard below minimum wage. This
8 is a contradiction, a hypocrisy that is just immoral
9 and you know possibly unlawful by the way. Our
10 program, our proposal it is not such a novel, radical
11 idea as you know Councilman Levin and Councilman
12 Rodriguez have said. The Medallion Task Force talked
13 about this and what we're saying, you know the
14 comptroller has vetted it, found it to be physically
15 sound, the entire congressional delegation as well as
16 the Majority Leader, do you, does anyone out there
17 think these are offices that would have vetted a
18 proposal before endorsing it? We, we're not exactly
19 a powerhouse like political army here. This was not
20 done as some sort of a favor, this was done after
21 serious individuals vetting a proposal, looking at
22 the numbers, looking at the letters that say that you
23 know that the drivers are going to get an offer of
24 \$275,000. Now I understand that the TLC seems to
25 think that that is okay. They think that \$1600, even

2 \$2000 a month that will leave drivers under the
3 minimum wage is somehow okay. But you a Council
4 Members do you think that's okay? Do you really want
5 to delegate this workforce, a workforce that is in
6 this crisis of lifetime debt and poverty because of
7 the direct actions of the City of New York? Do you
8 want to leave them in that kind of a predicament and
9 please don't tell us to wait. The last time we were
10 told to wait and see was in 2015 when the vehicle cap
11 was not passed and we had Uber, Lyft, Yellow, Green,
12 Livery, Black car drivers united on those steps
13 fighting for the vehicle cap. When this body did not
14 look for it, three years later we were back on the
15 steps not fighting or the cap but having vigils for
16 drivers who had taken their own life. Don't tell us
17 to wait. Drivers have waited long enough. We can
18 fix this. The city of \$96 billion dollar annual
19 budget was given \$6 billion in COVID aide, \$2 billion
20 above the deficit while that might not be in the
21 congressional letter you can see that in Senator
22 Schumer's testimony during a rally that we had on
23 Zoom. You could hear it with his own voice the
24 City's got the money, all we're talking about is
25 getting drivers more leverage at the table.

2 Interestingly when the Chairwoman talked about our
3 proposal for the \$145,000 she referred to it as
4 "price fixing and treating it as a speculative asset.
5 When she referred, when she was asked to comment on
6 the congressional delegation talking about 145,
7 \$145,000 she said well they're just seeking a firm
8 commitment, so are we. We are seeking a firm
9 commitment to allow our members to get their life
10 back so people don't have to worry that they're going
11 to be an entire lifetime of debt. That what they
12 were supposed to leave behind for their children
13 instead of an asset will be an impoverishing debt.
14 Our proposal is sound. The City has the money and
15 based on everything you heard today you should
16 understand fully well that it is absolutely necessary
17 in order to the drivers to the number on their
18 monthly payment as well as their overall loan that
19 will allow people to survive, avoid bankruptcy,
20 foreclosure, liens on their homes, on their bank
21 accounts and with that working 60 hours backbreaking
22 weeks in order to survive. Mind you only half the
23 cabs are even back on the streets right now, 30,000
24 black cars are not even back on the streets yet.
25 This is not the heyday. This is not the heyday and

2 you don't regulate. Talk about speculation, you
3 don't come up with a policy for workers based on what
4 you think is a heyday. You don't do that. You look
5 at what you think you know, do you protect workers
6 against the worst of their conditions. That's what
7 the concept of minimum wage is in our labor
8 framework. You don't come up with a debt relief
9 program with a monthly payment that is based on a
10 speculative notion of what you believe is their
11 heyday. Please Council Members, get this right. We
12 can fix it. We've got the support. We've got the
13 plan. The City's got the money. We've got the need.
14 The TLC does not have the solution. We're not out
15 her on day 20, 24 hours because this is political
16 theatre, because this is fun. These are mothers and
17 fathers. Some of these folks are grandparents.
18 They're out here for a sense of dignity and pride
19 that we refuse to be cheated out of a solution from a
20 crisis that the City of New York is responsible for
21 and we're not going to be fed a bunch of lies when
22 they tried to abandon us and claim it as a victory in
23 our name. That's why we're out here. We want a
24 solution. We want our lives back add the guarantee
25 to make it a comprehensive program so people can get

2 their lives back. That's what we're asking for.

3 Richard.

4 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank you
5 Bhairavi and before anything and of course, know I'm
6 going to be working with it with Richard. We are
7 going to end that we allocate at this time. After we
8 hear for you to that have been important leaders in
9 this movement that also we get a time to hear the
10 other brothers and sisters who also will be
11 testifying.

12 RICHARD CHOW: Can you hear me? Can you
13 hear me? Hello?

14 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: We do, we
15 do yes.

16 RICHARD CHOW: Yes. Yes. Good, after -,
17 good afternoon Mr. Chairman and everyone, my name is
18 Richard Chow. I'm driving a cab for 16 year. I'm an
19 owner driver. I'm in NYTA member. I'm 63 years old.
20 CV and TSC are inflated medallion value created by a
21 customer medallion value. Nine driver committed
22 suicide including my brother Kenny Chow committed
23 suicide in the year. He paid \$700,000 to buy the
24 medallion because he now he's struggling,
25 devastating, passion, he lost everything. He lost

2 the investment. He lost the retirement. He lost the
3 exclusive right that's why he committed suicide. So
4 on March 17, TLC Commissioner in 2021, the TLC
5 Commissioner met and had a conversation on the
6 telephone. She promised me to bring down my loan
7 50%. She lied. After \$30,000 refinanced my loan
8 \$275,000. So, offered me \$275,000, \$1600 a month
9 payment. My principal is \$389,000. This is about
10 50% reduced my loan \$194,500. So even \$1600 my
11 loans, I cannot pay. I cannot afford it. I cannot
12 trust the TLC Commissioner keep lying and totally on
13 purpose. And now if they \$2000 from us. She lying.
14 She lied. Stop lying please. City did not help us.
15 Proposed thousands of owner drivers going to
16 bankruptcy. I have two kids. I have to pay a lot of
17 payment to taxi insurance, gas bill, toll bill, going
18 to Staten Island, insurance, TLC and DMV ticket,
19 among the household bills is piling up. I cannot
20 breathe. I need air to breathe. You know, so we
21 need, we need to have as soon as possible.
22 Forgiveness as soon as possible. We, I don't know
23 to.

24 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

2 RICHARD CHOW: Yes. Please give me just
3 one or two minutes. My debt will be continued. We
4 will continue with foreclosure and bankruptcy and we
5 cannot survive. The Taxi and Limousine Commission
6 plans to lock my hand on the wheel for life
7 imprisonment until I die. I don't want to leave my cab
8 to my kids, the next generation. Please, we want a
9 real debt forgiveness. We want the city guarantee.
10 We want our life back. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank
12 you.

13 RICHARD CHOW: You are welcome.

14 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank you
15 Bhairavi and, and Richard and of course you know our
16 prayer to your brothers and those great New Yorkers
17 like your brother that we have lost and their family
18 and, and every day when you know for the last couple
19 of years as we've been, you know, working with all of
20 you together industries, City Hall and now this down
21 on Broadway here for City Hall. I know and we look
22 at your face that the pain that you have you know is
23 that one that represent those that lost their love
24 one that we would never be able to bring them back
25 but at least we keep fighting to be sure that nobody

2 else goes through that situation. So, let's just
3 continue together like you know. I think very
4 important, very clear, we should too. This is about
5 sitting on the table. We need to be offering. We
6 have to, we, there is a plan again that in a meeting
7 that I go that can happen very soon with OMB, TLC
8 Commissioner, the leadership of this group and
9 stakeholder from the private sector, we should be
10 able to sit on the table and be open especially to
11 discuss not only to see what hap-, what is good on
12 this plan but also to talk about how an additional
13 \$93 million to be spent over the next 30 years can
14 also bring stability and security to those working
15 class people that work so hard with a dream that you
16 can move on not only to take yourself to be a middle
17 class but also to educate our children and many of
18 the children that doctor. They are big men already.
19 They are engineer. They are lawyer. They work in
20 the private sector so thank you. Now, we are going
21 to be again. This is one of the most important part,
22 you know from the Leadership of the Taxi Alliance but
23 now we're going to be calling. Jessica is going to
24 be calling the other Taxi because of the numbers. We
25 are going to ask you to please summarize in one

2 minute whatever it is that you think that you can add
3 to what Bhairavi and Richard already have said. We
4 are going to be strict with the time. If you think
5 that you have something in writing that is more than
6 the one minute you can summarize. You can send the
7 written testimony but now we are calling Jessica to
8 please, you know, start calling the members of the
9 public and the clock will be in one minute. Thank
10 you.

11 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

12 COUNSEL: Thank you Chair. As the Chair mentioned,
13 we will now turn to the rest of the public testimony.
14 I would like to remind everyone that unlike our
15 typical counsel hearings we will be calling
16 individuals one by one and as the Chair said each
17 panelist will be given one minute to testify. If
18 your testimony is longer and you would like to submit
19 written testimony please do so by sending it to
20 testimony@council.nyc.gov. For the public testimony
21 we will first be calling on Assembly Member Mamdani
22 followed by Zubin Solemay of NYTWA followed by Alli
23 Langley of NYTWA. Assembly Member Mamdani you may
24 begin when the Sergeant calls time.

25 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

2 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: For the
3 Assembly Member, for the Assembly Member we can put
4 the clock on three minutes.

5 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE
6 COUNSEL: Thank you Chair.

7 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

8 ZOHRAN MAMDANI: Thank you so much Chair
9 and thank you Counsel. I really appreciate the
10 opportunity here to testify in front of this hearing
11 and in front of the many other Council Members who
12 are on this Committee. I want to make clear that I
13 stand wholeheartedly with the New York Taxi Workers
14 Alliance call for a City backed guarantee. And I had
15 a number of remarks that I had prepared to deliver
16 today but I think it's important to go over some of
17 what has already been said earlier today to counter
18 some of the narratives that have been put forward.
19 You know, I in listening to this testimony, I heard
20 the Commissioner of the TLC say that \$90 to \$93
21 million over 30 years is an unfair burden on tax
22 payers and using that number as a citation of what
23 this city back guarantee would cost. It's the city
24 that brought taxi drivers to this point. It is the
25 city that owes a debt to taxi drivers. This amount

2 of money is but a drop in the bucket in terms of what
3 these drivers are owed, in terms of what they were
4 promised and what they have actually been given at
5 this point and in terms of the larger budget that New
6 York City has \$90 to \$93 million over 30 years is
7 nothing and it is something that can truly be found
8 within the liability budget, \$3 million a year is
9 what is being asked for. And the difference that \$3
10 million would make is the ability for drivers to make
11 more than a minimum wage and I find it extremely
12 offensive to call this plan as a burden to tax payers
13 when in fact all I hear from my constituents who are
14 taxpayers is that they want these drivers to survive.
15 They want them to finally be able to live a life
16 where they are not afraid that they will have their
17 medallions seized, they will have their home seized,
18 they will have any asset in their name seized by the
19 predatory lenders that the city stepped up to take
20 advantage of these drivers. Additionally, I want to
21 say that we cannot achieve the goals the true relief
22 is consisting of without this guarantee and any
23 statements made that we can do that is frankly a lie.
24 I would not be pushing the city back guarantee. I
25 would not be standing with the entire congressional

2 delegation of New York City. A delegation that
3 disagrees on far more than they agree on if we did
4 not believe that the guarantee is what was critical
5 to bring this relief. The guarantee is what can
6 bring monthly payments below \$1000 a month. The
7 guarantee is what can ensure that if there is some
8 kind of a default from a driver that it is not their
9 homes and their entire lives that are at stake. A
10 guarantee is what can actually give a 94% immigrant
11 workforce a chance at living out retirement in the
12 way that they were promised by this very city. We
13 are not doing a favor to these taxi drivers by
14 passing this plan, we are simply doing what is owed.

15 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

16 ZOHRAN MAMDANI: I want to add one
17 additional think so I can move on which is that I
18 find it very, very strange to say the least that the
19 TLC has been trumpeting the achievements of their
20 plan prior to the ratification of that very plan by
21 voting of their own body. How is it that we are told
22 this plan has doled out x amount of million dollars
23 in debt forgiveness and x amount of driver's have
24 been helped when the plan was only approved this
25 week? What kind of a process is this where the

2 results are being put forward before the plan has
3 even been put in place? So, I really do think that
4 it's important to note that and important to press on
5 that, that we are not in opposition to the \$20,000
6 that can be given to these lenders. What we are in
7 opposition to is there must be more than that. There
8 must be a guarantee. We must change the terms of
9 this plan. Everyone is in favor of this. It is
10 simply a question of political will, of TLC and Mayor
11 of the City must change this plan. Thank you very
12 much for the time.

13 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

14 COUNSEL: Thank you very much Assembly Member. Um,
15 if the Sergeant has put a minute clock on, we will
16 next hear from Zubin Solemany followed by Alli
17 Langley followed by Peter Mazer. Zubin Solemany you
18 may begin when the Sergeant calls time.

19 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

20 ZUBIN SOLEMANY: Uh, good afternoon.

21 This is Zubin Solemany. I'm a Senior Staff Attorney
22 at the New York Taxi Workers Alliance and I just want
23 to talk about the fact that the reason it's incumbent
24 upon the City to come up with something better aside
25 from the reasons that Assembly Member Mamdani and

2 Bhairavi just said is that the current proposal is
3 simply fundamentally legally flawed. The rules that
4 passed on Wednesday are not illegal or rational
5 exercise with agency power. The Chair noted that the
6 TLC didn't consult with the Council before coming up
7 with these rules and it doesn't seem clear that they
8 consulted with anybody or any data before coming up
9 with these rules. If the stated goal of the rule is
10 to make medallion loans sustainable which is what the
11 rules say it is, sustainable means that people don't
12 go into foreclosure and they don't go bankrupt. It
13 doesn't mean they go bankrupt a year from now paying
14 less payments along the way it means they don't go
15 bankrupt. This rule doesn't do that. There was no
16 data presented to show as Council Member Miller said
17 that folks would be able to afford a living wage.
18 The Chair did not answer that question today and
19 saying that folks would be relieved and happy.

20 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

21 ZUBIN SOLEMANY: That is not the
22 standard. I can wrap up in 10 seconds quickly. So,
23 without that purpose being served, the rules isn't
24 rational. Data was ignored and no bare bone simple
25 analysis was even presented to show that it would

2 meet that standard. We're finding out today that the
3 TLC is getting the data and now they're realizing
4 what people will be afforded to pay, now they're
5 realizing what people are making. You have to do
6 that before you pass rules. This is completely
7 backwards. In addition, the process was entirely
8 regular just in the fact that the Commissioners
9 didn't even receive written comment until the day
10 final rule the vote was posted online. Commissioner
11 said that they had no choice but to act upon the
12 proposal that was presented by the Mayor. If
13 regulatory rule making is simply and up or down
14 rubber stamp on what the Mayor is handing down to
15 Commission, that is not an actual delivery of process
16 and is an insult to the invitation for the public and
17 the affected parties to participate in this process.
18 The Council needs to force the Commission to come up
19 with a real play that will provide real meaningful
20 debt relief that would actually serve the stated
21 purposes of the rule. Thank you for the extra time
22 chair.

23 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

24 COUNSEL: Thank you. We will now hear from Alli
25 Langley followed by Peter Mazer followed by Cira

2 Angeles. Allie Langley you may begin when the
3 Sergeant calls time.

4 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

5 ALLIE LANGLEY: Hi. My name is Allie
6 Langley, I'm a staff attorney at the Taxi Worker's
7 Alliance. As we talk about the TLCs plan, it's easy
8 to get lost in the uncontextualized numbers, in
9 conversations about market shares, and industry
10 trends but this isn't an academic problem. It's not
11 an abstraction. The cost of this crisis is a human
12 one and the solution must be centered around the
13 people who are most impacted by this. The people who
14 will be speaking to you today were rallying outside
15 your windows. They are the people who will suffer
16 under the TLCs insufficient plan. They will bear the
17 violence of unending poverty. They're the people who
18 won't be able to make rent, who won't be able to put
19 food on the table, who will be evicted from their
20 homes. They're the people whose bodies will bear the
21 beatings of 12-hours a day behind the wheel, 6 days a
22 week all in service of a monthly mortgage that they
23 can't possibly pay. What does a reduction in loan
24 principal mean if you still can't make your monthly
25 payments? What does a reduction in loan principal

2 matter if you still are going to lose your home and
3 saving in foreclosures because your loan principal is
4 still double and triple the value?

5 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

6 ALLI LANGLEY: One second to conclude it.
7 Too often Council Members we are faced with problems
8 that we can't solve, but today is not one of those
9 days. There is a clear and simple solution, add a
10 city backed guarantee to the TLCs program. Thank
11 you.

12 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

13 COUNSEL: Thank you very much. We will now hear from
14 Peter Mazer followed by Cira Angeles followed by Rose
15 Imp. Peter Mazer, you may begin when the Sergeant
16 calls time.

17 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

18 PETER MAZER: Good afternoon. My name is
19 Peter Mazer, I'm General Counsel to the Metropolitan
20 Taxicab Board of Trade. We represent owners and
21 operations and medallion taxi cabs and I will address
22 the city's proposal. Much of which you have heard
23 and I will also be supplementing this with this
24 written testimony. The rule permitting owners of
25 Fiber Fuel and Medallions is arbitrary, there's no

2 basis for it. A debt is a debt whether you own five
3 medallion, six medallion or some other number of
4 medallions. The City hasn't pointed out that most
5 lenders are not participating believing that this is
6 not in their best interest. Borrowers are asked to
7 stretch out payments for 30 or 40 years in order to
8 make the loan restructuring work. Many unfavorable
9 turns such as personal guarantees continue to be
10 contained in these restructured loans.
11 Significantly, a plan offers nothing to medallion
12 owners who don't have a lot of debt but are unable to
13 get financing to purchase cars or other capital
14 improvement. For true debt relief to work it is
15 necessary for all lenders to have an incentive to
16 renegotiate and a backstop in a form of a guarantee
17 but a government entity may be the best way.

18 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

19 PETER MAZER: If I can just sum up.
20 Maybe the best way to encourage lenders to reduce
21 loan balances. Legislation has been introduced at
22 various levels which would provide loan guarantees to
23 lenders, reduce loan balances to manageable amounts
24 and make these benefits available to all owners and
25 expand their availability to finance vehicle

2 purchases and other medallion related needs and that
3 would be the best approach while also be
4 supplementing this with a written testimony and I
5 thank you for giving me the time to speak today.

6 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

7 COUNSEL: Thank you very much for testifying. We
8 will now hear from Cira Angeles followed by Rose Imp
9 followed by Lionel Morales. Cira Angeles you may
10 begin when the Sergeant calls time.

11 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

12 CIRA ANGELES: All right. Good morning
13 to dear members of the Transportation Committee and
14 TLC Commissioner Aloysee Heredia Jarmouszuk. On
15 behalf of the base owners and customers we serve and
16 our drivers we respectfully submit the following
17 comments. We are on a state of emergency. Our
18 Livery sector is currently dying before our eyes and
19 I hear a lot about the yellows but our industry is in
20 the same place. We enjoy back in 2014 over 27,000
21 vehicles. Today we are at 8,000 vehicles, seven
22 years later, our industry is dying and I don't see
23 any help coming from the City nor the City Council
24 has proposed any assistance. Today, we are looking
25 for our communities that we cannot continue to serve

2 because the truth is the yellows do not service our
3 neighborhoods. Our livery sector has been pleading
4 for years.

5 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

6 CIRA ANGELES: May I sum up?

7 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

8 COUNSEL: Yes, please sum up briefly.

9 CIRA ANGELES: In 2018 this count was ---

10 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: You may
11 use an additional two minutes so that you can finish
12 your testimony.

13 CIRA ANGELES: I appreciate it Chairman.

14 Our communities aren't the ones suffering when the
15 small bases are unable to provide a ride from lack of
16 our cars and we are forced to deal with such prices
17 elsewhere and our community cannot afford those
18 trips. Our livery sector has been put in a place
19 that BC&C Companies have seen have seen exponential
20 growth. Unfortunately our livery sector has been
21 dragged along the ride. Our struggling bases are
22 constantly having to tell our customers that we do
23 not have vehicles for them during peak moments. Up
24 to 50% of our polls are going negative every single
25 day due to the lack of vehicles. If any sector

2 should be allowed to add vehicles to service our
3 community, I would think that the yellows do not
4 serve, we have asked in the past to the commission to
5 allow us to restricted permits that will allow us to
6 stay in business. This also will allow the drivers
7 who have lost their licenses and cannot work, cannot
8 sustain their families they are dying and pleading
9 for this and also we have heard from the Commission
10 that is very sympathetic to this issues, we still
11 need City Council action. We still need those
12 drivers, the freedom to work in our livery bases and
13 the communities that they're accustom to serve, the
14 people of color and the immigrants who are stranded
15 every single day. Our bases need to choose how to
16 service these communities and should not be punished
17 or our passengers in our community should not be
18 charged for months of search pricings that they
19 cannot afford. Our small bases are in crisis. We
20 are however optimistic under the leadership of this
21 Oversight Committee and also..

22 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

23 CIRA ANGELES: Commission Aloysee, her
24 approach of seeing the sectors as separate entities
25 issue has been very refreshing. Also, the program

2 she installed for drivers is a life saver. We also
3 thank Chair Ydanis Rodriguez for creating the task
4 force alongside with Chair Aloysee in order to
5 analyze the sector, the needs and provide a
6 revitalized option for our industry, for the black
7 cars, for our car services. We look to the City and
8 the TLC again to provide leadership in the state of
9 emergency. We cannot respond to the demand of the
10 current situation in our community. Thank you. And
11 we'll submit the testimony in writing.

12 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank you
13 Cira. I, I had a specific question. How many
14 drivers, livery taxi drivers do we have today? Did
15 we have before this crisis in two particular basis
16 let's see Seaman to use as an example Seaman and
17 Riverside Car Service. For me where were those two
18 bases where they have a higher number and what are
19 those basis today when it comes to livery taxi
20 affiliate in those bases?

21 CIRA ANGELES: These two basis have
22 employed basically having 300 to 400 vehicles at a
23 given time back where the TLC were not adding all
24 this amounts of vehicles and they were servicing our
25 communities but today we bases our, let's say

2 Riverside only has approximately 150 vehicles left at
3 my check, the lost almost 200 to 300 vehicles and
4 also Seaman has approximately 79 vehicles. So this
5 is the kind of situation that we are in. The calls
6 keep coming in because they like our service but we
7 unfortunately have to turn these people down.

8 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank you,
9 thank you and for me I want to be clear that, you
10 know, as I was talking today at a press conference we
11 are brothers from the especially the yellow taxi and
12 the Taxi Alliance. You know, I spoke very clear that
13 you know for me this is like a crisis I suffer. It's
14 affecting the yellow taxi, medallions and also it's
15 affecting, you know, the mom and pop, is more livery
16 bases. For many, they could be in working together.
17 And as I say, I used to be a 110 or cab car service,
18 Baily Car Service through driving a livery that I put
19 myself through City College and became a teacher
20 after graduating. So, and that's, I know that my
21 story is a story of many of our brothers and sisters
22 who are here, so I know that, you know,
23 unfortunately, the Commissioner and will fail because
24 we have the number to pass in 2014 on both sides but
25 we didn't do it. I remember that day in the morning,

2 I call a press conference that we have the number,
3 let's vote and we start the vote and now we're paying
4 the consequences to both industry. To the family
5 traditional black car service, to the livery basis
6 and to the yellow taxi. So, we cannot ...

7 CIRA ANGELES: Chairman.

8 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: I'm sorry.
9 We cannot go backward now but, you know, by not
10 putting the cap in 2014 and looking at the livery
11 basis, their friends as we also as part of the
12 solution. We do believe that we should create our
13 livery base type of license, that we should also give
14 them, allow them to increase the number for those who
15 only will be adding new one only limited to the
16 livery basis. So I know that the solution to this
17 crisis besides, you know, the yellow taxi for me is
18 personal so to also fight for the traditional black
19 car as also for the livery bases because the big ones
20 they will survive. Uber will be here. Lyft will be
21 here. There's a market for everyone but the prices
22 of successful should not be destroying the little
23 one.

24 CIRA ANGELES: I believe that the cap was
25 a one size fits all and we have shown that we have

2 not grown exponentially that way. We have grown
3 alongside demands and given the fact that the cap was
4 put in place and over 30,000 licenses are off the
5 street. I think we have enough to prove that
6 congestion is not going to be a problem and we will
7 work directly with the transportation committee and
8 the TLC to address those concerns.

9 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank you
10 and I appreciate also that as, as TLC was a partner
11 you know during the discussion together with the
12 leadership of the Taxi Alliance Academic Sector,
13 private sectors in the Counsel and they're working
14 around the yellow taxi medallion task for, I also
15 have seen how the Commissioner have been consistently
16 pressing in the livery and black car taxi task force
17 that we have right now even though at some point
18 myself and having there my staff do legislation is
19 always there so I also appreciate. We just want to
20 move from the recommendation to the action. So again
21 as we will hold that to our meeting very soon with
22 City Hall to talk about what other things could be
23 done besides this initiative that already is
24 implemented by City Hall. We also like and will

2 continue working around the livery and black car
3 medallions. So thank you Cira.

4 CIRA ANGELES: Thank you Chairman.

5 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

6 COUNSEL: We will now hear from Rose Imp of CUNY,
7 followed by Lionel Morales, the New York City Black
8 Car Fund followed by Avik Kabessa of Carmel and the
9 Livery Roundtable. Rose Imp, you may begin when the
10 Sergeant calls time.

11 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

12 ROSE IMPERATO: Thank you Chair. Thank
13 you Council Members. My name is Rose Imperato and I
14 am a concerned citizen here in New York City along
15 with, I can't even imagine the number, the thousands
16 and tens of thousands of concerned citizens as we
17 have learned horrifying details and educated
18 ourselves about this issue over the last six, seven
19 years that this has been happening and as a
20 consequence of that, I have actually gone down to the
21 24/7 protest that's going on right now several days
22 over the last 20 days and have offered help and my
23 voice as a concerned citizen and I had somebody come
24 up to me yesterday and say I, I support you but
25 you're not going to be able to save these drivers,

2 you're not going to get them out of poverty. The
3 City Council isn't going to be able to help them.
4 And I said why did you say that? And he said because
5 the banks have already gotten their money and banks
6 are way more powerful and I'm here to day I believe
7 in my City Council. I believe that you care. I know
8 most of you. I've seen you in action and you care.

9 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

10 ROSE IMPERATO: I'll wrap up Sergeant. I
11 feel like, uh, you won't be talked about in the news
12 if the banks win again. That's old news. Everybody
13 expects it like this guy who said this to me
14 yesterday but you will make the news if you are the
15 heroes here. If you step up and say okay. This is a
16 difficult thing to do we're going to get it done.
17 We're going to make sure that these driver's live.
18 That they survive, that they get out of poverty.
19 That his horrifying scenario and New Yorkers
20 Magazine. I don't know if people read this magazine.
21 Can you see what's right here? It's a yellow.
22 Okay, this cab they did a cover to say, magic
23 formula, all of these things equal New York. All
24 these things equal New York. I know Chairman you've

2 spoken to my students about leadership and diversity
3 and many of these cab drivers they have access.

4 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Sorry.
5 Thank you and sorry miss.

6 ROSE IMPERATO: Yes. I'll just ta two
7 seconds.

8 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank
9 you.

10 ROSE IMPERATO: These cab drivers have
11 accents don't let immigrant cab drivers with accents
12 be squelched and that their voice are not worth
13 hearing and I believe in you. You can make history.
14 You can make news. Please City Council do the thing.
15 Thank you very much.

16 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE
17 COUNSEL: Thank you and apologies for
18 mispronouncing your name. We will now hear from
19 Lionel Morales followed by Avik Kabessa followed by
20 Qudratallah Saberry. Lionel Morales you may begin
21 when the Sergeant calls time.

22 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

23 LIONEL MORALES: Good afternoon Chair
24 Rodriguez and members of the Transportation
25 Committee. My name is Lionel Morales and I'm the

2 communication and external affairs specialist for the
3 black car fund. Chair Rodriguez is very familiar
4 with the fund but for those who aren't, the fund was
5 create by New York State Statute in 1999 with the
6 purpose of providing worker's compensation workers to
7 black car drivers throughout New York. Over the
8 years, the fund has grown to over 500 member base and
9 we cover an estimated 100,000 drivers throughout New
10 York. We are also proud to have added many
11 additional free health and wellness related benefits
12 including 24/7 telemedicine coverage, vision
13 coverage, dental insurance, prescription, urgent care
14 and diagnostic imaging discounts, mental health and
15 wellness program that's administered by the Drivers
16 guild and an additional \$50,000 death benefit above
17 what is mandated by state law if a driver dies while
18 on the job. We have created an invaluable safety net
19 for drivers but unfortunately all the benefits in the
20 world can't change the fact that the traditional
21 black car industry has been decimated by the COVID-19
22 pandemic. For example, take a look at the congestion
23 search for hard revenue brought to the city by
24 industry compared to 2019 and early 2020 they search
25 is now being generated by the ...

2 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

3 LIONEL MORALES: Used to be 5%. I can
4 probably finish in like 30 seconds thank you. This
5 figure doesn't tell the whole story. Ahead of the
6 pandemic, traditional black car bases were down as
7 much as 95% in business which high volume were down
8 80%. Since then, traditional black car bases have
9 only recovered between -- are still down 40% to 45%.

10 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank
11 you. Thanks a lot.

12 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE
13 COUNSEL: Thank you. You can submit the rest of
14 the testimony that you've written. Thank you so
15 much. We will next hear from Avik Kabessa followed
16 by Qudratullah Saberry followed by Md Z Islam. Avik
17 Kabessa you may begin when the Sergeant calls time.

18 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: And we
19 will give Avik three minutes, Avik but one not second
20 more. You have three minutes.

21 AVIK KABESSA: Thank you very much
22 Chairman.

23 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

24 AVIK KABESSA: Good afternoon. My name
25 is Avik Kabessa I'm a member of the Livery Roundtable

2 and the estate of Car Mail. And we really don't mind
3 using our tax dollars to help the taxis but what I'm
4 here to emphasize is that we also delivery and the
5 for hire traditional need help. Unfortunately what I
6 heard today is the TLC Commissioner three times
7 praising the decline of the for hire vehicle as means
8 of increasing the value of the yellows. This is not
9 the way, this is not the rule of the TLC to prefer
10 one group over the other, so I'm going to urge the
11 City Council to intervene and make sure that the
12 right goal of helping executive of this oversight
13 hearing sees relief, taxi medallion relief and
14 supporting the black car and livery service be the
15 outcome of this call. And our solutions are very,
16 very simple. I think that the Chair you mentioned
17 it. We did not cause the congestion. We did not
18 cause the overflow of vehicles. We should not be
19 penalized for it and Cira from the Livery Base Owners
20 Association mentioned we, the taxis do not serve the
21 areas we do. All we are asking the City Council is
22 to force the TLC or to assist the TLC or to encourage
23 the TLC or do whatever needs to be done with the TLC.
24 We offered that solution almost two years ago and a
25 year ago. We would like a restricted livery or

2 traditional for hire permit to be added on a moderate
3 level that cannot be dispatched by the high volume
4 service. Therefore the high volume service cannot
5 sort of find a backdoor to more vehicles so we can
6 service our need. We reject 50% of our customers, we
7 say sorry no car and they have to go and pay 300
8 times what we charge with Uber and Lyft. So, we urge
9 the Commission, the City Council, the part of this
10 passage of the relief of the taxi which we will
11 gladly participate that they were being conditions of
12 allowing a restrictive permit for the traditional
13 bases, livery, so that they cannot be dispatched by
14 high volume and the second thing. Because of this
15 cap many people which was their first entry to this
16 industry rented a car and for years they are paying
17 for a rental car. They know they want to make it
18 their livelihood. They want to make it their
19 business but they are forced to keep on renting and
20 paying exuberant money to renters because they cannot
21 obtain their own permit. So, we would ask the City
22 Council to please 1) issue the restricted license to
23 help us, it's a moderate; 2) allow those who rent
24 vehicles over a year to decide to buy to get a

2 permit. Thank you very, very much for the time,
3 Chair, Chairman.

4 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank
5 you.

6 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

7 COUNSEL: Thank you. Thank you for your
8 testimony. We will now hear from Qudratulla Saberry
9 followed by Md Z. Islam followed by Gerson Fernandes.
10 Qudratulla Saberry, you may start when the Sergeant
11 calls time.

12 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

13 QUDRATULLA SABERRY: Good afternoon.

14 Thank you for letting me participate in today's
15 session. My name is Saberry and I'm a driver for 34
16 years. I've been driving for 34 years and I don't
17 have any retirement. I lost because the value of the
18 medallion came down and we know that the reason that
19 medallion came down is the decision of the City. It
20 also showed that you know anybody who did it did it
21 but at this point time I'm 70 years old. I cannot
22 drive more than maybe 7 to 8 hours and how can I pay
23 that \$1600 a month for the bank. The MRP is not
24 working for us because it lets the bank raise our
25 payment, monthly payment up to \$2000.

2 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

3 QUDRATULLAH SABERRY: Yeah, I can survive
4 only for \$800 a month at this age and cannot be more
5 than that. If it's more than that I will have to go
6 for bankruptcy and that, the City plan that it takes
7 me back to the part of bankruptcy again. I have to
8 go for bankruptcy. That's it.

9 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

10 COUNSEL: Thank you.

11 QUDRATULLAH SABERRY: Thank you very
12 much.

13 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

14 COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony. We will
15 now hear from Md Z. Islam followed by Gerson
16 Fernandes followed by Suves Bairagi. Md Z. Islam,
17 you may begin when the Sergeant calls time.

18 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

19 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

20 COUNSEL: We, we are unable to hear you can you
21 please make sure that your speakers are on?

22 MD Z. ISLAM: Can you hear me?

23 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

24 COUNSEL: Yes. We can hear you now. Sergeant if
25 you could restart the clock, please. Thank you.

2 MD Z. ISLAM: Thanks for giving me the
3 time. I'm an owner driver and a member of Taxi
4 Worker Alliance. I believe that this country has an
5 opportunity. This country is in hope but now this
6 country is the nightmare for me. I trusted the City.
7 I trusted the TLC but they failed. They failed me
8 but they inflicted the price. I bought the
9 medallion. The medallion price goes down. We
10 already lost our nine brothers including three owner
11 drivers. How many bodies do we need? Now it's time
12 to clean up your own hand. You should come a step up
13 and take action to save our own lives. If this is
14 the time you should do something. Now that is done,
15 it is not working for us. We need to actually
16 believe the medallion should be as part of market
17 value and the payment should be below \$800 then we
18 can survive. We can ...

19 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

20 MD Z. ISLAM: ... we can send our kids
21 to school. Thank you.

22 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

23 COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your testimony.

24 We will now hear from Gerson Fernandes followed by

25

2 Suves Bairagi followed by Augustine Tang. Gerson
3 Fernandes you may begin when the Sergeant calls time.

4 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

5 GERSON FERNANDES: My name is Gerson
6 Fernandes. I'm a yellow medallion owner. I'm
7 driving a yellow cab from 2000. I'm 67 years old.
8 I've with the New York City Taxi Alliance. Our
9 leader is Ms. Desi. I bought a medallion because at
10 that time it was a good way of earning money, taking
11 care of my family and paying the bills. There were
12 30,587 yellow taxis. In 2014, the City and TLC
13 allowed Uber, Lyft and other companies to infiltrate
14 the taxi business. That's when the taxi business was
15 in a mess or all. In two or three years, the Uber,
16 Lyft, etc. had about 110,000 cars on the road,
17 driving was a mess and there was no business for any
18 of us. I don't mind Uber, Lyft joining the
19 competition but the City and TLC need to regulate.
20 Because of this our medallion size went down and very
21 little business for the yellow taxi.

22 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

23 GERSON FERNANDES: It was difficult for
24 me to pay my bills. Please help me. Without debt

2 forgiveness you can talk to our leader, Ms. Desi and
3 she will enlighten you on how with this procedure.

4 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

5 COUNSEL: Please finish up.

6 GERSON FERNANDES: Just a little bit. I
7 love driving my yellow taxi and enjoy my job. Thank
8 you very much for the time to speak.

9 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

10 COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

11 GERSON FERNANDES: Thank thank.

12 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

13 COUNSEL: We will now hear from Suves Bairagi.

14 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank
15 you. And I'm sorry for that.

16 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

17 COUNSEL: I'm sorry Chair.

18 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: It's all
19 right. Saying that I appreciate knowing (INAUDIBLE).

20 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

21 COUNSEL: Chair I'm sorry, we're unable to hear
22 you.

23 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Being
24 able to all share (INAUDIBLE).

2 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

3 COUNSEL: Chair, I believe we're having some
4 technical difficulties with your mic.

5 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ:

6 (INAUDIBLE) New Yorkers. So, you know, working
7 together we should be able to put a resolution to
8 this crisis but our solidarity to you (INAUDIBLE).

9 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

10 COUNSEL: Thank you Chair. We will now hear from
11 Suves Bairagi followed by Augustine Tang followed by
12 Harjit Singh. Suves Bairagi, you may begin when the
13 Sergeant calls time.

14 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

15 SUVES BAIRAGI: Good afternoon everybody.
16 Hello? Hi. Are you hearing?

17 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Yes, we
18 can hear you.

19 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

20 COUNSEL: We can hear you, please continue.

21 SUVES BAIRAGI: Good afternoon everyone.

22 I'm a Suves Bairagi I'm a professional taxi driver.

23 I have been in this City 23 years as a taxi driver.

24 We are here to introduce on top of our, on behalf of

25 City Mail House. I think everybody knows why we are

2 here. Our demand to want especially I want to know
3 where is my money? \$100,000 I give to the City 2014.
4 My family want to know. This society want to know.
5 I paid \$6,000 every month for this medallion from
6 2014 to 2017 and still I have debt.

7 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

8 SUVES BAIRAGI: More than \$700,000 on my
9 shoulder. Please I, extra time please. I am very,
10 very sick now. I have, I had surgery last May 9,
11 2021. I bought this medallion at \$851,000. After I
12 bought this medallion.

13 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

14 COUNSEL: If you could please, if you could
15 please sum up.

16 SUVES BAIRAGI: Please additional time,
17 please?

18 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Okay.

19 One more minute.

20 SUVES BAIRAGI: I am very, very sick now.
21 I have very last 9/2021. I bought this medallion
22 \$851,000. After I bought this medallion, within one
23 month thousand Uber, Lyft came on the street.
24 Medallion price goes down. It is completely
25 manipulated our city. Everybody knows except the

2 male, only the males know why because we are
3 immigrant. I want to mayor, you remember, today, you
4 mailed, only immigrant borders. We respect. You
5 have to respect us. We, we want to expecting like
6 this, no respect, no justice, no peace. I want to
7 follow up all of my friends who suicide for debt. I,
8 I am not.

9 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank you
10 sir. Thank you.

11 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

12 COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your testimony.
13 We will now hear from Augustine Tang followed by
14 Harjit Singh, followed by Mohammed Tipu Sultan and I
15 just want to remind everyone that if your testimony
16 is longer than the one minute allotted please submit
17 written testimony to testimony@council.nyc.gov and it
18 will all be considered. Augustine Tang you may begin
19 when the Sergeant calls time.

20 SGT. LUGO: Starting time. 2:40:59

21 AUGUSTINE TANG: Hi. My name is
22 Augustine Tang I'm 37 years old and I've been a taxi
23 driver for six years. I inherited a medallion from
24 my father and also a \$530,000 loan. For what this
25 City's plan will give me is it would make, my, my

2 lender is Marble Gate and it will make my monthly
3 payment \$1600 and it would drop it down to \$275,000.
4 I for one, I know that I won't be able to manage this
5 monthly mortgage because of how much high expenses
6 that comes with taxi cab, along with the fees,
7 congestion surcharge. On average, let's just say I
8 remember TLC commissioner was saying that on average
9 people are grossing \$7,500. I'm assuming that's
10 gross because there is no way people are making
11 \$7,500 with the amount of traffic that has been in
12 the City as of late and it's just going to be getting
13 worse and it's \$2000 of that is going straight to
14 congestion surcharges and also the taxi improvement
15 charge and you are talking about ...

16 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

17 AUGUSTINE TANG: You are talking about
18 \$1600 with that and additionally with \$700 car
19 payment, \$300 liability insurance it's going to be
20 very difficult to make ends meet.

21 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

22 COUNSEL: Please, please sum up.

23 AUGUSTINE TANG: Yeah, so basically I
24 really urge the City Council to really understand how
25 much that goes into the medallion and the DOT New

2 York Taxi Alliance as planned. For us, for many of
3 us we are all really struggling really and on average
4 a lot of these medallion owners own \$25,000 in credit
5 card fees because of what the city.

6 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

7 COUNSEL: Thank you. Thank you so much. We
8 appreciate your testimony. We will now hear from
9 Harjit Singh followed by Mohammed Tipu Sultan
10 followed by Jose Herrera. Harjit Singh you may begin
11 when the Sergeant calls time.

12 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

13 HARJIT SINGH: Six years ago my father
14 and a couple of hundred South Asian (inaudible) came
15 and called on the City for our livelihood and the
16 medallions crushing. Those years of inaction from
17 the City and TLC caused my family \$3000 a month,
18 \$36,000 a year and over the course of five years cost
19 \$180,000 and we still owe \$500,000 today. So for
20 those that say take the current form of the program
21 and wait I say no we can't. For every month we wait,
22 we are figuratively burning money by payments on
23 under water, unmodified loans. The City's proposal
24 modifies the loan as high as \$330,000. Taxi Worker's
25 Alliance ...

2 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

3 HARJIT SINGH: ... reduces us to \$145,000.

4 The value is only \$100,000. If you don't believe me,

5 check the TLC website to where the current

6 foreclosure is for September of 2021. The rest I'll

7 submit in writing.

8 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

9 COUNSEL: Thank you very much yes. If you could

10 please submit it to your written testimony. Thank

11 you for your testimony. We will now hear from

12 Mohammed Tipu Sultan followed by Jose Herrera

13 followed by Vinod K. Malhotra. Mohammed Tipu Sultan,

14 you may begin when the Sergeant calls time.

15 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

16 MOHAMMED TIPU SULTAN: Can you hear me?

17 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Yes.

18 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

19 COUNSEL: We can hear you. Just begin.

20 MOHAMMED TIPU SULTAN: Hello. Hi. Good

21 afternoon and thank you Tipu and he gave me his sign.

22 I'm driving my cab 31 years and my age is 61. My

23 payment at \$3942.43 and I plus other expenses and I

24 keep my medallion and I driving a cab. I'm very

25 much, good service all over the world in my taxi and

2 I tried to get the most from the public and the
3 public they like and I tried to get.

4 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

5 MOHAMMED TIPU SULTAN: And you know,
6 please help me and I speak little English and I try
7 to get the word to you. You know and my payment is
8 too much and I can't afford that. I want a new car
9 and \$1000 plus and I can pay that, but you know.

10 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

11 COUNSEL: Thank you very much. Thank you very
12 much for your testimony. We will now hear from Jose
13 Herrera followed by Vinod Malhotra followed by Chime
14 Gyatso. Jose Herrera you may begin when the Sergeant
15 calls time.

16 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

17 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Jose
18 Herrera are you, are you there?

19 JOSE HERRERA: Yes. Hello.

20 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

21 COUNSEL: Please begin we can hear you now.

22 JOSE HERRERA: Okay. I drive a taxi 35
23 years and they right is forced to pay a mortgage
24 because there a lot of competition. I'm sorry. And
25 there are too many taxis compared to the tourists.

2 Forget it, this business is destroyed right now.

3 That's all I had to say right now. That's it.

4 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

5 COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your testimony.

6 We will now hear from Vinod Malhotra followed by

7 Chime Gyatso followed by ...

8 VINOD MALHOTRA: Hello.

9 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

10 COUNSEL: Please hold a minute followed by Tilak

11 RJ. Vinod Malhotra you may begin when the Sergeant

12 calls time.

13 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

14 VINOD MALHOTRA: Hello. Good morning.

15 Hear me?

16 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

17 COUNSEL: Yes. We can hear you.

18 VINOD MALHOTRA: All right good morning

19 all CMs thanks for holding the hearing. This is

20 really very, very important and a necessity for life

21 savings medallion owner or not who really are at no

22 fault due to COVID. Sir, we don't want bankruptcy.

23 The medallions are bigger things. We love this

24 iconic taxi permit. I don't know if you love you

25 must come up real (INAUDIBLE) by the NY (INAUDIBLE).

2 Sir, as you know I've been to so many hearings. It's
3 a long time when I saw there's not any output, look
4 to protect our medallion after feeling like most
5 hearings like say to me I decided to go for
6 bankruptcy so do bankruptcy the lost hours, \$100,000
7 to be spent on loan payment. This \$100,000 is equal
8 to \$1 million for us ...

9 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

10 VINOD MALHOTRA: We work very, very,
11 hard. Sir, I have three kids, they are going to
12 college so I not see any real, how can I observe,
13 survive them or who's going to pay that expense. So,
14 the rest of my friends that don't let them go to
15 bankruptcy so thank you very much for your time.

16 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

17 COUNSEL: Thank your testimony. We will now here
18 from Chime Gyatso followed by Tilak RJ followed by
19 Wain Chin. Chime Gyatso you may begin when the
20 Sergeant calls time.

21 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

22 CHIME GYATSO: Hello. Yes. Everyone.
23 Good afternoon. My name is Chime Gyatso. I'm
24 driving a taxi in 2000. I bought a medallion like
25 2009. Since then I was enjoying the American dream

2 and since after 2014 like you know TLC give a
3 (INAUDIBLE) class so then after our vision has
4 totally gone done so you know like according to the
5 TLC plan that doesn't work for us. \$1600 we cannot
6 pay. So according to the TWYA plan please with that
7 plan we can work and then you know like the mirror at
8 the TLC throw us in the Hudson River. Please you've
9 got to save us from the Hudson River. Save us from
10 the Hudson River. So you know nine drivers already
11 suicide. Now I think this is my turn, my turn, I'm
12 like this because of this medallion epic time with my
13 ...

14 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

15 CHIME GYATSO: Please help us. Please
16 help us. Help us please.

17 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

18 COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your testimony.
19 We will now hear from Tilak RJ followed by Wain Chin
20 followed by Balkar Singh. Tilak RJ you may begin
21 when the Sergeant calls time.

22 SGT. LUGO: Time expired. Time starting.

23 TILAK RJ: Thank you. Good evening
24 Council Member to having me. My name is RJ Tilak.
25 My medallion number is 6F20. I am a 73 year old

2 driving taxi for 34 years. I am a member of Taxi
3 Worker's Alliance. Having learned today, paying
4 \$2772.00 that means \$33267 a year. Now I have a loan
5 with my department but since the pandemic I stay home
6 with my taxi with insurance every day for \$3465
7 yearly for two years now. I can't go to work for
8 some health issue. I am waiting for debt
9 forgiveness.

10 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

11 TILAK RJ: For \$125,750 then I can
12 survive. Give me two offers, first payment \$754 for
13 three months then \$20,000 from TLC and my loan will
14 be down to \$275,000 and \$1650 and ...

15 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

16 COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your testimony.
17 If you could please submit the rest in writing, we'd
18 appreciate it. Thank you. We will now hear from
19 Wain Chin followed by Balkar Singh followed by
20 Pabitra Saha. Wain Chin you may begin when the
21 Sergeant calls time.

22 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

23 WAIN CHIN: Hi my name is Wain Chin. I
24 am a medallion owner. (INAUDIBLE). The TLC plan
25 doesn't go far enough. We need a back up to the plan

2 so that all can survive. And because of these plan I
3 still pay the, I will still be paying \$2000 a month
4 plus my expense, operating expense, gas, cost me over
5 \$4000 a month in my operating expense. So, is the
6 Chairwoman saying we making \$7000 a month. I have
7 \$2000 left, how am I going to my rent and food. So,
8 it doesn't make sense. The numbers doesn't add up,
9 you know, we need payment no more than \$800 a month
10 so we can survive. So bring it, bring the principal
11 down and they payment down, that's all we're asking.
12 Let us survive.

13 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

14 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

15 COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your testimony.
16 We will now hear from Balkar Singh followed by
17 Dorothy Leconte. Balkar Singh you may begin when the
18 Sergeant calls time.

19 BALKAR SINGH: My name is Balkar Singh.
20 I'm driving like 32 year and my payment at this time
21 is \$2735 and I don't like the TLC plan and I want to
22 keep my medallion and the city plan is no good. I
23 want to pay only \$800 plus other expenses and I have
24 children and family. Please, City Council, please
25 save our life. You can save us. City and TLC. TLC

2 wants to destroy everything. Please save the taxi
3 industry you the good, he the bad. God bless you.
4 Please save our lives, nobody listens. TLC
5 Chairwoman never comes here. Mayor never comes here.
6 Nobody wants to come here. Please Mr. Rodriguez, Mr.
7 Chairman, God bless you and all your City Council
8 Committee. Please save our lives. We are
9 immigrants. I live here like 35 years. I drive 32
10 year. Please save our lives. We are immigrants. We
11 are all color men and woman. Please save our life.

12 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

13 BALKAR SINGH: Thank you sir. Thank you
14 very much.

15 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

16 COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your testimony.
17 We will now here from Pabitra Saha followed by
18 Dorothy Leconte followed by Randal Wilhite. Pabitra
19 Saha you may begin when the Sergeant calls time.

20 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

21 PABITRA SAHA: Yes. Good afternoon
22 everybody. All of the respected person, Chairperson,
23 TLC commissioner and Senator members, Council
24 Members, all of them. So I cannot explain my whole
25 story more than Ms. Desi has explained everything and

2 I like to support her and this is the always, always
3 can say and the rest of business end of yours and all
4 of the official people, please try to see us and what
5 you can do, let us know. Previously, there was so
6 many, I mean, so many kinds of when meetings were
7 going on and we are all in front of the City Hall 24
8 hours, 7 days a week so please help us.

9 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

10 PABITRA SAHA: Thank you.

11 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

12 COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your testimony.

13 We will now hear from Dorothy Leconte followed by
14 Randal Wilhite followed by Mohammad Islam. Dorothy
15 Leconte you may begin when the Sergeant calls time.

16 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

17 DOROTHY LECONTE: My name is Dorothy
18 Leconte. I'm in this fight from the beginning. I
19 understand the Commissioner means. She thinks she
20 means all good things for us but it's not because at
21 my age 65 starting a yellow cab, driving a cab since
22 1987 that makes 35 years. I was expecting to retire.
23 I did not expect to go back a business that I have
24 right now to turn it as a sweat shop. It's not a
25 business for me it's a job. If I want to buy a job I

2 will not buy a yellow cab right now. So I can afford
3 \$1748 a month but they only think about the
4 medallion. What about our private life? We have
5 other expenses on our household life. What it is?
6 There's nothing for us.

7 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

8 DOROTHY LECONTE: The medallion. So
9 please I adapt the back half of the city and I hope
10 the City Council will help us out with this. Thank
11 you.

12 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

13 COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your testimony.
14 We will now hear from Randal Wilhite followed by
15 Mohammed Islam followed by the second Mohammed Islam.
16 Randal Wilhite you may begin when the Sergeant calls
17 time.

18 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

19 RANDAL WILHITE: Good afternoon. My name
20 is Randal Wilhite and I'm a staff attorney at the New
21 York Legal Assistance Group. I am testifying today
22 in my personal capacity and not on behalf of my life.
23 Since TLC announced its Medallion Relief Program in
24 March 2021 NYLAG Attorneys and I personally have
25 spent countless hours speaking with the industry's

2 different lenders about their willingness to
3 participate in a relief program. I am testifying
4 today because I am deeply concerned about a pattern
5 of misrepresentations that the TLC has been making
6 about the success of this program. I only have time
7 to provide one example today but I look forward to
8 following up with written testimony. In its
9 statement of basis and purpose of the proposed rules
10 for the relief program published in mid-August the
11 TLC stated the TLC owner driver resource center has
12 worked with over 700 medallion owners and a dozen
13 different lenders on renegotiating loans. Lenders
14 have participated in the process and have offered
15 restructuring and forgiveness terms that would meet
16 the required parameters of the proposed rules.

17 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

18 RANDAL WILHITE: This is a completely
19 fabrication. When this statement was published at
20 most two lenders had made any specific commitments to
21 provide amounts of loan forgiveness through
22 restructurings that would allow borrowers to qualify
23 for grants under the program. Instead multiple
24 lenders have expressed or indicated that they are not
25 interesting in participating in the program at least

2 with respect to any significant number of borrowers.
3 Another lender, one of the largest in the industry
4 has been so disinterested.

5 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

6 COUNSEL: If you could please summarize and then
7 submit the rest in writing.

8 RANDAL WILHITE: Thank you I urge you in
9 the strongest possible terms to investigate the
10 administration of this program, look beyond the
11 misleading press leases and beyond the testimony of
12 the Commission. This program has never made sense.
13 Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank
15 you.

16 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

17 COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your testimony.
18 We will now hear from Mohammed Islam followed by
19 Mohammed Islam followed by Tariq Munir. Mohammed
20 Islam you may begin when the Sergeant calls time.

21 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

22 MOHAMMED ISLAM: Yeah, my name is
23 Mohammed Islam. I'm a taxi driver. I am angry with
24 Taxi Worker Alliance from City Hall. I am highly
25 recused to your savers to use the type of taboo

2 following this fund. Why do I say this? Only one
3 month missed payment they took my medallion. I am
4 suffering for a month, five members in my family.
5 Please do not work for lender. Work for immigrant
6 hard working taxi driver. I do not want suicide or
7 bankruptcy. I want lovely taxi driver for TLC.
8 Please, you have power, you have power, please do
9 something for us. Debt forgiveness. Please do
10 something. We want a life. We had a dream. Thank
11 you very much. Thank you for helping us. All of
12 members, I am very excited in front of you guys.
13 Please help us. Have a good day.

14 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

15 COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your testimony.
16 We will now hear from Mohammed Islam #2 followed by
17 Tariq Munir followed by Ibrahim Diallo. There is
18 another Mohammed Islam. Please begin when the
19 Sergeant calls time.

20 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

21 MOHAMMED ISLAM #2: Hi. This is Mohammed
22 Islam I have been trying my yellow cab for 22 years.
23 My current loan is \$536,000 Monrugate. Offering my
24 \$275,000 to restructure under the TLC plan. I have
25 the TLC and City inflect medallion place. My loan

2 MYTWF offers that proposal is \$145,000 that is \$800.

3 I want to City Bank stopped. I cannot afford that

4 TLC plan. So I wonder debt forgiveness. I want

5 justice. I want ...

6 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

7 MOHAMMED ISLAM #2: ... my life back.

8 Thank you so much. Help us. Thank you. Bye.

9 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

10 COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your testimony.

11 We will now hear from Tariq Munir followed by Ibrahim

12 Diallo followed by Nina Kodashi (SP?). Tariq Munir

13 you may begin when the Sergeant calls time.

14 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

15 TARIQ MUNIR: Hi. Good afternoon this is

16 Tariq Munir. The TLC gives a plan. That's not an

17 affordable plan. IT's for us. I worked 10 hours but

18 cannot make money for a living. Taxi Worker's

19 Alliance are the representative that we give suggest

20 a plan and that she's working on it. That is a very

21 good plan to make the balance down like \$145,000 and

22 monthly payment will be like \$800. This proposal is

23 very good but taxi drivers, taxi owners, this

24 proposal is like for me and other driver's. In this

25 way I can save myself from bankruptcy. Please help

2 owners so they can judge it the rest of their life.

3 Thank you very much.

4 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

5 COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your testimony.

6 We will hear from Ibrahim Diallo followed by Nina

7 Godoshi followed by Erhan Tuncel. Ibrahim Diallo,

8 you may begin when the Sergeant calls time.

9 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

10 IBRAHIM DIALLO: Hi. My name is Ibrahim

11 Diallo. I am a staff attorney at the New York Taxi

12 Worker's Alliance. You've heard a lot of stories

13 today from drivers from experts from their advocates.

14 I wanted to just focus on the objective measurement

15 of whether this plan is working and I think anyone

16 who looks at it will come to a conclusion that the

17 TLC is just putting a Band-Aid on this crisis. The

18 Chair herself recognized that the most important

19 measurement of resolving this problem is whether the

20 drivers can afford the monthly payments. Last time

21 she was here in front of you all she said and I'm

22 quoting here "My goal is to work with the council and

23 drivers to find a solution to reduce driver monthly

24 payment less than \$1000 a month." That's what she

25 told this Council before. Now the TLC has come up

2 with a plan where they are saying it's going to cost
3 anywhere between \$1500 to \$2000 a month. That is 50%
4 to 100% more than what the Chair herself said the
5 goals should be.

6 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

7 IBRAHIM DIALLO: If I could wrap up
8 quickly.

9 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

10 COUNSEL: Yes.

11 IBRAHIM DIALLO: So now the TLC is
12 recognizing that the problem with this plan and they
13 are saying again make another commitment that they
14 are going to subsidize loans. How long will this --
15 the subsidy be for a year. Will every driver get
16 this? Is the TLC are they making another empty
17 promise to work for us and has lived through a
18 series of broken promises. There was a better
19 solution that does not cost as much. You should
20 adapt a plan or call on the TLC and the mayor to
21 adopt another plan. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank
23 you.

24 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

25 COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your testimony.

2 We will now hear from Nina Godoshi followed by Erhan
3 Tuncel followed by Nizam Ahmed. Nina Godoshi, you
4 may begin when the Sergeant calls time.

5 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

6 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

7 COUNSEL: Nina Godoshi are you there? If someone
8 could please unmute Nina Godoshi. Okay. We will
9 come back to Nina Godoshi. It seems there might be
10 some technical difficulties there. So let's move on.
11 We will now hear from Erhan Tuncel. Erhan Tuncel you
12 may begin when the Sergeant calls time.

13 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

14 ERHAN TUNCEL: Hi, my name is Erhan
15 Tuncel. I'm a yellow medallion taxi owner driver of
16 22 years. I gave my best years to the taxi industry
17 and I did so with the expectation of being taken care
18 of in my golden years. That's what the City of New
19 York made us believe. I will turn 62 next March.
20 I'm one of those almost senior owner drivers whose
21 light at the end of the tunnel has been put out by
22 the complacency of our regulators. We need a real
23 solution and that solution lies in the proposal by
24 the taxi worker's with a city guarantee. A proposal
25 which puts the owner drivers back on the road making

2 a living wage. I'd like to end my testimony with a
3 quote by Benjamin E. Mayes. The tragedy of life is
4 not found in failure but complacency. Not in you
5 doing too much but doing too little. Not in you
6 living above your means but below your capacity. The
7 means have been provided by the federal government.
8 Now we need this great center of ours to live up to
9 its full capacity and the end, and end this horrible
10 nightmare.

11 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

12 ERHAN TUNCEL: I'd like to point out time
13 is of essence. \

14 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

15 COUNSEL: Thank you very much. Let's try and see
16 if Nina Godoshi, are you available? Are you able to
17 testify?

18 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

19 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

20 COUNSEL: Okay. We will try you again at the end
21 of the public testimony. We will now turn to Nizan
22 Ahmed followed by Val George followed by Joan Bottex.
23 Nizam Ahmed, you may begin when the Sergeant calls
24 time.

25 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

2 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

3 COUNSEL: Okay. My apologies. It does not look
4 like Nizam Ahmed is with us or his on the panel, so
5 let's go to Val George. Val George you may begin
6 when the Sergeant calls time.

7 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

8 VAL GEORGE: Hi everybody. Where to
9 start? I don't know. We'd be shameful if we, all of
10 us make an effort to save the yellow taxi which
11 everybody knows that it's one of the landmark of the
12 New York City. Would you live without the Statue of
13 Liberty or the Empire State Building or Times Square?
14 We need to do that. It's a historical moment and the
15 history and the City will be thankful to us. Please
16 adopt the New York Taxi Worker's Alliance plans.
17 Also, professionals, the CEO the financial officer of
18 the New York City, the comptroller said this plan is
19 absolutely viable and realistic. Please look at it.
20 If you have a question calls the meeting.

21 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

22 VAL GEORGE: Thank you. That's all I
23 need to say. Thanks very much.

24 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

25 COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your testimony.

2 Okay. I see that Nina Godosh is on the screen so.
3 Nina Godoshi, you may begin when the Sergeant calls
4 time and you are unmuted. Please make sure to unmute
5 your mic.

6 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

7 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

8 COUNSEL: You are, Nina Godoshi you are still
9 muted. You should receive a message that asks you to
10 unmute your phone. Are you able to unmute? Okay.
11 You are still unmuted. Someone should be asking you
12 if you would like to unmute your phone if you could
13 do that? Okay. It appears that we are still having
14 some technical difficulties. I apologize for that.
15 Okay. Nina we will come back to you because we do
16 want to hear your testimony. So, we will try and
17 sort out those technical difficulties. Let's turn
18 now to Joan Bottex followed by Momad Hossain followed
19 by Mofuzol Islam. Joan Bottex, you may begin when
20 the Sergeant calls time.

21 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

22 JOAN BOTTEX: My name is Joan Bottex and
23 I'm speaking to you on behalf of my husband, Eton
24 Bottex who drove taxi for 45 years. The yellow cab
25 was his income to support his family but due to

2 medical issue coupled with aging I had to lease his
3 medallion. The initial lease income was \$3200 month.
4 I think as the industry crashed his income declined
5 to \$1500 and to \$950 pre-pandemic. Loan payments of
6 \$3500 pre-pandemic and a loan balance of \$550,000.
7 On 10/06/2021, the leasing company White and Blue
8 sent a letter stating monthly payment will be \$200
9 due to the medallion crisis. Since March of 2020, we
10 have had no income from White and Blue. Please
11 accept our New York Taxi Alliance proposal so that
12 drivers can have the quality of life they deserve.
13 As of this moment, my husband has nothing. There are
14 drivers who have the same situation. Please
15 understand our struggle and ...

16 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

17 JOAN BOTTEX: Thank you for listening.

18 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

19 COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your testimony.

20 You will now hear from Mamad Hussain followed by
21 Mofuzol. Mamad Hussain, you may begin as soon as the
22 Sergeant calls time.

23 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

24 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

25 COUNSEL: My apologies, is it Shokowat Hussain.

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2 Shokowat Hussain, you may begin when the Sergeant
3 calls time.

4 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

5 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

6 COUNSEL: Shokowat Hussain if you could unmute
7 your mic when you receive the request to unmute and
8 then we will be able to hear you. Okay. Okay we
9 will try you again in a little bit. Let's go now to
10 Mofozol Islam followed by Sammy Khan. Mofozol Islam
11 you may begin when the Sergeant calls time.

12 SGT. KOTOWSKI: Time starts now.

13 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

14 COUNSEL: Okay let's move on to Sammy Khan.
15 Sammy Khan you may begin when the Sergeant calls time
16 and please when you are asked to unmute your mic
17 please accept that.

18 SGT. KOTOWSKI: Time starts now.

19 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

20 COUNSEL: Sammy Khan if you are there, please
21 unmute your mic. Okay. We will proceed with Sheshir
22 Roy followed by Soton Khan. Sheshir Roy please begin
23 when the Sergeant starts time.

24 SGT. KOTOWSKI: Time starts now.

25

2 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

3 COUNSEL: Okay. We will move then on Soton Khan.
4 If Soton Khan is still on the panel, please unmute
5 your mic when the Sergeant calls time.

6 SGT. KOTOWSKI: Time starts now.

7 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

8 COUNSEL: Okay. Let's see if we can go back to
9 Nina Godoshi and I apologize for any technical
10 difficulties we may be having. Nina Godoshi are you
11 able to unmute your mic now? If you're unable to
12 unmute your mic we do want to hear everyone's
13 testimony so please submit it. Again, you can submit
14 it via email to testimony@council.nyc.gov and you can
15 do that up to 72 hours after the hearing. Okay. If
16 I have inadvertently missed anyone that is registered
17 to testify today or who was on the panel and I have
18 yet to call your name, please use the Zoom Raise Hand
19 Function and you will be called on in the order that
20 you have raised your hand. Okay I see that Jaslin
21 Kaur has raised, has a raised hand. Jaslin Kaur
22 please begin your testimony when the Sergeant calls
23 time.

24 SGT. KOTOWSKI: Time starts now.

25

2 JASLIN KAUR: Good afternoon. Thank you
3 so much. My name is Jaslin Kaur. I'm the daughter
4 of a 62 year old taxi medallion owner driver in
5 Queens and I'm about to share what I have shared many
6 times over. In 2014, when the medallion markets
7 crashed, I was made to drop out of university so my
8 family went in to \$60,000 down on student loan debt,
9 \$50,000 down on medallion debt, many thousands in
10 credit card debt and three years back on property
11 taxes. To put it plainly many more drivers than the
12 nine who took their own lives in the past years will
13 not survive this debt crisis, 94% of drivers are
14 immigrants many who work more than 12 hours a day and
15 what the City has done from speculation on fragile
16 markets, allowing Uber and Lyft into the city is
17 disgraceful, horrific and orchestrated. The City
18 backed guarantee plan for the New York Taxi Worker's
19 Alliance is key and without it drivers are at the
20 mercy of their lenders. TLC has even yet to garner
21 buy in from enough lenders to make their plan viable.

22 SGT. KOTOWSKI: Time expired.

23 JASLIN KAUR: I will wrap up. The
24 average debt of \$500,000 under their plan would still
25 \$300,000 amount for many drivers. So, I want to know

2 where is the dignity in having just a little bit less
3 debt than you did seven years ago and who else do you
4 need in addition to Senator Schumer the incoming and
5 outgoing controllers, 12 member of the New York
6 Congressional delegation to tell you that the New
7 York Taxi Worker's Alliance Plan is out.

8 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

9 COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your testimony.
10 We have a hand raised from Galina Kaminker. Galina
11 Kaminker, you may start your testimony when the
12 Sergeant calls time.

13 SGT. KOTOWSKI: Time starts now.

14 GALINA KAMINKER: Hi. My name is Galina
15 Kaminker and I'm a medallion owner and I'm a member
16 of a few medallion owners in my family but today I
17 want to speak up in regard to my mother. I
18 understand everybody is talking about driver owners.
19 My mother is not a driver, she is a 90 year old woman
20 who was left from my father who was a driver owner
21 and who tried to build a backup for her retirement.
22 He is gone, my father. My mother is 90 years old
23 left with six medallions all together. She is not
24 entitled to any rescue program or relief program
25 because she has more than 5 but he's in debt, big

2 debt. Right now her social security which is \$700 a
3 month. She is not getting any money from management
4 because of the pandemic crisis and everything. She
5 is actually going, the bank is going after her, they
6 are putting a judgment on her. My question is what
7 do people who are 90 years or even 70 years have no
8 income. Cannot pay their debt have to live that long
9 because she's important because she has no money to
10 pay. What I'm asking you is I'm sure she's entitled
11 to restitution. The City owes it to us.

12 SGT. KOTOWSKI: Time expired.

13 GALINA KAMINKER: They took the money
14 from us. They used it to close the loop holes that
15 we would find but now she needs to be rescued and you
16 know the restitution is restitution. TLC will not
17 help her and I have to pay her expenses every month
18 because otherwise she will be on the street with
19 \$700. Tell me if you are capable of living in New
20 York City. She used to pay, the taxis was her
21 retirement plan.

22 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

23 COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your testimony.
24 Thank you very much for your testimony. It appears
25 that we have one additional hand raised. Tilak RJ if

2 you have not testified already please start your time
3 when the Sergeant calls time.

4 SGT. KOTOWSKI: Time starts now.

5 TILAK RJ: Can you hear me?

6 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

7 COUNSEL: We can hear you.

8 TILAK RJ: Hi good afternoon Council
9 Members, I speak on behalf of my brother. My brother
10 has a medallion since 1994. His loan is over than
11 \$500,000. After the 20 TLC has loaned it will be
12 \$275,000 and \$1600 every month. How we will survive?
13 We cannot live like this the rest of our life. The
14 City should support of a union plan. Thank you.

15 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

16 COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your testimony
17 and thank you to all that testified today. I will
18 now turn it back over to Chair Rodriguez for closing
19 remarks. Chair Rodriguez.

20 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank you
21 Jessica for the great job that you did conducting you
22 know, this portion of the hearing. Thank you to the
23 Commissioner for also staying with us and listening
24 to everyone. I got to give credit for her to not
25 only a livery representative but to be with us. I

2 appreciate it. We will continue this conversation.

3 Thank you to the Taxi Alliance. Together we have the

4 responsibility to bring the industry back. Let's do

5 it in the name of those individuals that

6 unfortunately were lost. Let's do it for our

7 families and let's do it for the future of New York

8 City. Thank you and with that the hearing is

9 adjourned. Sergeants okay to close. Okay I will be

10 ending the webinar.

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date November 20, 2021