

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE 1  
CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY JOINTLY  
WITH COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE

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June 26, 2023  
Start: 10:20 a.m.  
Recess: 11:46 a.m.

HELD AT: COUNCIL CHAMBERS - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Kamillah Hanks, Public Safety  
Committee Chairperson

Selvena N. Brooks-Powers,  
Transportation and Infrastructure  
Committee Chairperson

PUBLIC SAFETY COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Joann Ariola  
Erik D. Bottcher  
Justin L. Brannan  
Tiffany Caban  
Carmen N. De La Rosa  
Robert F. Holden  
Rita C. Joseph

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE 2

TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE COUNCIL MEMBERS:

David M. Carr  
Amanda Farias  
Ari Kagan  
Linda Lee  
Farrah N. Louis  
Mercedes Narcisse  
Carlina Rivera  
Nantasha M. Williams  
Julie Won

OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS ATTENDING:

Vickie Paladino  
Oswald Feliz

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE 3

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

Chief Michael Pilecki, Commanding Officer of the  
Transportation Bureau at the New York Police  
Department

Deputy Chief Tania Kinsella, Executive Officer of  
the Patrol Service Bureau at the New York Police  
Department

Juliane Farruggia, Managing Attorney of the  
Legislative Affairs Unit at the New York Police  
Department

Josh Benson, Deputy Commissioner of Traffic  
Operations at the Department of Transportation

Maureen Kokeas, Director of the Office of Tax  
Enforcement at the Department of Finance

Marricka Scott-McFadden, Deputy Commissioner of  
Intergovernmental and Legislative Affairs at the  
Department of Social Services

Eric McClure. I'm the Executive Director of  
StreetsPAC

Danny Pearlstein, Policy and Communications  
Director at the Riders Alliance

Steve Vaccaro

Alex Stein

Jason Fromowitz

1  
2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: This is a microphone  
3 check for the Committee on Transportation joint with  
4 the Committee on Public Safety. Recorded on June 26,  
5 2023, located in Chambers by Nazly Paytuvi.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning and  
7 welcome to today's New York City Council hearing for  
8 the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure  
9 joint with Public Safety.

10 At this time, we ask that you silence all  
11 cell phones and electronic devices to minimize  
12 disruptions throughout the hearing.

13 If you have testimony you wish to submit  
14 for the record, you may do via email at  
15 [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov). Once again, that is  
16 [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov).

17 At any time throughout the hearing,  
18 please do not approach the dais. We thank you for  
19 your cooperation.

20 Chairs, we are ready to begin.

21 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: [GAVEL] Good morning.  
22 I am Council Member Kamillah Hanks, Chair on the  
23 Committee of Public Safety. Welcome to today's joint  
24 oversight hearing on enforcement of defaced,  
25 fraudulent, and expired license plates.

I am joined by Council Members Williams, Carr, Kagan, De La Rosa, Louis, Ariola, Lee, Farias, Joseph, Paladino, Felix, and Chair Brooks-Powers.

At this hearing, we will also be considering three pieces of legislation in the Public Safety Committee, Introduction 987 sponsored by Council Member Feliz, a bill to create new enforcement authority to prohibit the operation of a motor vehicle with fraudulent or expired license plates, Introduction 988, also sponsored by Council Member Feliz, legislation to create new penalties for the sale or distribution of fraudulent license plates, Introduction 1011 sponsored by Chair Brooks-Powers to provide information on reduced fare programs to individuals arrested or summoned for fare evasion.

I would like to take this time to thank my Colleagues, Council Member Brooks-Powers, Chair on the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and our Staff for their hard work in putting together this hearing.

As a City, we must work proactively to address the widespread use of defaced, fraudulent, and expired license plates. This illegal behavior

1 poses significant risk to our communities, and we are  
2 here today to closely examine NYPD's strategies in  
3 combatting this pressing problem. Fraudulent license  
4 plates allow individuals to evade law enforcement,  
5 tolls, and speed enforcement cameras. This not only  
6 undermines the integrity of our transportation  
7 systems, but it also fosters an environment where  
8 criminal activity and reckless driving can flourish  
9 unchecked.  
10

11 At this hearing, we will examine the  
12 effectiveness of current enforcement strategies,  
13 evaluate resources allocated for combatting this  
14 issue, and identify areas in which improvement is  
15 needed.

16 When defaced, fraudulent, and expired  
17 license plates become rampant in our communities, our  
18 streets become less safe and we forego a vital tax  
19 revenue. I look forward to hearing to hearing today's  
20 testimony from the Administration and how we can  
21 collaborate to improve traffic safety, alleviate  
22 financial strain to our citizens, and, more  
23 importantly, uphold the integrity of our  
24 transportation systems.  
25

1  
2 Thank you all for being here, and now I  
3 will turn it over to Chair Brooks-Powers for her  
4 opening statement. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you,  
6 Chair, and good morning, everyone. Thank you for  
7 joining today's joint hearing of the Committee on  
8 Public Safety and the Committee on Transportation and  
9 Infrastructure.

10 Today's hearing continues a crucial  
11 ongoing conversation about how the City can improve  
12 street safety, eliminate traffic violence, and  
13 realize Vision Zero.

14 Our speed and redlight cameras do not  
15 work when they cannot read a license plate number.  
16 That restricts their ability to do what they are  
17 designed to do, reduce speeding and reckless driving.  
18 Those who deface or distort or otherwise use  
19 fraudulent plates know this and are operating outside  
20 of the law. We cannot continue to let them. Both the  
21 State and City have sought to address this issue  
22 legislatively. In October 2021, the State enacted a  
23 law to increase the maximum penalty of license plate  
24 obstruction to a 300-dollar fine, and in January 2022  
25 the City enacted Local Law 22, which prohibited the

1 sale or distribution of materials that obscure  
2 license plates or distort images on license plates.  
3 That law created a fine schedule of 300 dollars for  
4 the first violation and at least 500 dollars for any  
5 subsequent violation. In recent years, the NYPD has  
6 been issuing more tickets and making more arrests for  
7 fraudulent or defaced license plates, but simple  
8 observation of our roads shows that the problem of  
9 such license plates remains. If we do not do more to  
10 address the problem, we risk undermining the very  
11 effective programs that this City has set up to keep  
12 our streets safe.  
13

14           The first is our redlight camera program  
15 operationalized in 1994 as the first such program in  
16 the nation. The redlight camera program allows the  
17 City to operate cameras at 150 locations throughout  
18 the City.

19           The second is our automatic speed  
20 enforcement camera program, which has been in place  
21 since 2013. As of 2019, the State enabled the City to  
22 place speed enforcement cameras in 750 school speed  
23 zones and codified into DOT's practice of using data  
24 to guide installations at locations where the  
25



greatest impact on preventing injury and death could  
be realized.

The effect of these enforcement programs  
has been clear. Consider the speed camera. Through  
December 2021, speeding at fixed camera locations had  
dropped on average 73 percent. These results led the  
State to authorize an expansion of operating camera  
hours to 24 hours a day, seven days a week. From  
August 1, 2022, to December 20, 2022, according to  
the New York City Comptroller's Office, New York  
City's 24/7 speed camera programs have issued nearly  
3 million violations, and the City has received  
nearly 100 million dollars from fines paid during  
that time. None of those fines, however, were  
assessed on drivers who obscure their license plates  
or have obtained them fraudulently. That fact is  
unfair to drivers who do follow the law, and it is  
dangerous for all road-users who are forced to share  
the road with these drivers who operate with relative  
impunity.

I look forward to questioning the  
Administration today on the enforcement of laws  
prohibiting fraudulent, defaced, and expired license  
plates, gaining more up-to-date statistics on the

1 issue, exploring how we can partner with other states  
2 to establish a more uniform system of enforcement and  
3 working together to ensure a reduction and use of  
4 those so-called ghost plates.  
5

6 In addition to the oversight portion of  
7 today's hearing, I'm excited that we will hear  
8 several bills relevant to this issue.

9 I am proud to be co-prime sponsor on  
10 Introduction 987 and 988, which would increase civil  
11 fines for driving with fake license plates and for  
12 selling or distributing fraudulent plates. I thank  
13 Council Member Feliz for his leadership on this  
14 issue.

15 I am also excited to hear my bill,  
16 Introduction 1011, which would require NYPD officers  
17 patrolling in subway stations to carry fliers with  
18 information about what Fair Fares is, who is  
19 eligible, and how to apply. These officers would be  
20 required to give those fliers only, only to any  
21 individual who receives a summons or is arrested for  
22 fare evasion in the subway. At a time when too many  
23 are criminalized just because they cannot pay the  
24 fair, the Administration should at least be required  
25 to take proactive steps to spread more information

1 about the Fair Fares program. I note that the Council  
2 is fighting hard to ensure this year's budget  
3 includes an expansion of the City's Fair Fares  
4 program to ensure more residents in need can ride at  
5 a reduced rate.  
6

7 I look forward to hearing from the  
8 Administration, advocates, and members of the public  
9 regarding the oversight and legislation at this  
10 hearing.

11 I want to thank my Staff and Committee  
12 Staff as well for their hard work, Samuel Breidbart,  
13 Counsel to the Committee, Mark Chen, Counsel to the  
14 Committee, Kevin Kotowski, Senior Policy Analyst,  
15 John Basile, Senior Policy Analyst, Michael Sherman,  
16 Senior Financial Analyst, Jack Seigenthaler, my  
17 Policy and Budget Director, and Renee Taylor, my  
18 Chief-of-Staff. I also want to thank the Public  
19 Safety Committee Staff on their work as well.

20 With that, we will now hear from Council  
21 Member Feliz on Intros 987 and 988.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: All right. Good  
23 morning, everyone. I'm Council Member Oswald Feliz.  
24 Thank you, Chairs Hanks and Selvena Brooks-Powers,  
25 for this hearing.

2 I'll say what we all know. Paper plates  
3 have created new issues for the City of New York,  
4 issues related to ghost cars, ghost cars that cannot  
5 be easily traced and identified and ghost cars that  
6 are being used to evade our rules and laws without  
7 accountability including our traffic laws such as  
8 speeding rules and redlight camera rules but also  
9 being used to commit major crimes. These ghost cars  
10 and these paper plates are costing us our safety, but  
11 they're also costing us resources. The MTA every  
12 single year loses tens of millions of dollars every  
13 single year through toll evasion due to these fake  
14 plates. This is a huge issue. People are using these  
15 fake plates very openly. People are also selling  
16 these plates very openly. I went on Craig's List  
17 yesterday and saw individuals advertising fake plates  
18 from Georgia and Jersey, 30-, 45-day plates allegedly  
19 with insurance for 150 dollars so this is a huge  
20 issue that people are engaging in very openly. We  
21 need to fully resolve this issue, and this is an  
22 issue that can be best resolved by the federal  
23 government given that it involves rules related to,  
24 for example, printing plates in Georgia and Texas and  
25 New Jersey. However, there is a lot that the City of

1 New York can do to tackle this issue and to  
2 discourage people from selling and using these plates  
3 and hopefully discouraging individuals from engaging  
4 in this conduct.  
5

6 I want to thank our Chairs for this  
7 hearing, and I look forward to talking about the  
8 systems that we have in place to tackle this issue  
9 and talk about ways of improving these systems. Thank  
10 you so much.

11 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you so much,  
12 Council Member Feliz.

13 I also want to thank Chair Brooks-Powers.  
14 I want to recognize that we are joined virtually by  
15 Council Member Caban and Council Member Holden, and  
16 we've also been joined in the Committee Chambers by  
17 Council Member Narcisse.

18 Now, I'll pass it along to the Committee  
19 Counsel to administer the oath and swear in the  
20 witnesses. Thank you.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Madam  
22 Chair. From the Administration today, we have with us  
23 from the NYPD, Chief Pilecki, Commanding Officer of  
24 the Transportation Bureau; Deputy Chief Kinsella,  
25 Executive Officer of the Patrol Service Bureau;

1 Juliane Farruggia, the Managing Attorney of the  
2 Legislative Affairs Unit. From DOT, we have Josh  
3 Benson, Deputy Commissioner of Traffic Operations.  
4 From the Department of Finance, we have Maureen  
5 Kokeas, the Director of the Office of Tax  
6 Enforcement. From DSS, we have Marricka Scott-  
7 McFadden, Deputy Commissioner of Intergovernmental  
8 and Legislative Affairs.  
9

10 If you could all please raise your right  
11 hands?

12 Do you affirm to tell the truth, the  
13 whole truth, and nothing but the truth before this  
14 Committee and respond honestly to Council Member  
15 questions?

16 ADMINISTRATION: (INAUDIBLE)

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Seeing all witnesses  
18 answered in the affirmative, we can begin testimony  
19 in whatever order you prefer.

20 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Good morning, Chair  
21 Hanks, Chair Brooks-Powers, and Members of the  
22 Council. I am Deputy Chief Michael Pilecki, the  
23 Executive Officer of the New York City Police  
24 Department Transportation Bureau. I am joined here  
25 today by Deputy Chief Tania Kinsella, Executive

1 Officer of the Patrol Service Bureau, Juliane  
2 Farruggia, Managing Attorney of the Legislative  
3 Affairs Unit along with our colleagues, Josh Benson,  
4 Deputy Commissioner of Traffic Operations with the  
5 Department of Transportation, Marricka Scott-  
6 McFadden, Deputy Commissioner of Intergovernmental  
7 and Legislative Affairs with the Department of Social  
8 Services, and Maureen Kokeas, Director of the Office  
9 of Tax Enforcement with the Department of Finance. On  
10 behalf of Police Commissioner Keechant Sewell, I am  
11 here to testify before your Committees on the  
12 proliferation of fraudulent and expired license  
13 plates throughout the city and the Department's  
14 efforts to combat their use.  
15

16 One of the many unforeseen consequences  
17 of the pandemic was the sharp increase in the use of  
18 temporary paper license plates, particularly the  
19 plates seemingly issued by other states. The COVID  
20 lockdowns forced DMVs in every state to close for  
21 longer periods than expected. This required repeated  
22 extensions on the expiration dates of registrations  
23 and license plates, which also relaxed enforcement on  
24 paper tags. Whether due to complacency on the part of  
25 drivers, a willingness to take the risk or as a means

1 of giving cars untraceable anonymity during violent  
2 crimes, we continue to see the number of expired  
3 plates far outpacing pre-pandemic levels. Many out of  
4 state DMVs are still allowing the online registration  
5 of motor vehicles with the printing of temporary  
6 paper plates. This has unfortunately enabled a black  
7 market in the printing and sale of temporary license  
8 plates, leading to rampant fraud. Any vehicle bearing  
9 one of these fraudulent plates instantly becomes  
10 undetectable to nearly every aspect of street-level  
11 enforcement, from tolls to speed and red light  
12 cameras and even parking enforcement. They become  
13 ghost cars to the system and evade enforcement on a  
14 widespread scale. For example, these cars often park  
15 illegally in bike and bus lanes, in crosswalks, and  
16 at hydrants, causing hazardous conditions for  
17 pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers alike. These  
18 cars are also involved in hit and runs of both  
19 pedestrians and other motorists, leaving innocent  
20 bystanders injured and without recourse. Summonses  
21 issued to these vehicles are unenforceable, and  
22 scofflaws know that, often leaving towing as the only  
23 effective countermeasure. For that reason, the  
24



Department continues to prioritize vehicles with temporary paper license plates for towing.

Despite the outbreak of fraudulent and covered plates, the Department remains undeterred in its efforts to prevent these scofflaws from continuing to plague our streets. Last year, we issued 258,000 summonses to vehicles with covered or obstructed plates, arrested nearly 4,200 drivers for forged or altered plates, and seized 7,520 cars that had fraudulent paper plates or were parked illegally while displaying a temporary paper plate. So far this year, we have already issued over 130,000 summonses to vehicles with covered or obstructed plates, arrested 1,777 drivers for forged or altered plates, and towed over 1,100 vehicles this year for obstructed or covered plates. We are also continuing our educational outreach to all the auto parts stores throughout the city to ensure compliance with legislation recently passed by Council that prohibits the sale of plate covers.

The use of fraudulent plates goes beyond parking, speeding, and toll evasion. Their use by recidivist criminals poses another threat to public safety. Savvy criminals have learned that ghost cars

1 help make them ghost perpetrators. We have connected  
2 fraudulent and counterfeit paper license plates to  
3 murders and armed robberies as well as any number of  
4 violent crimes. We have even seen the same plate  
5 fleeing the scene of separate crimes but on different  
6 cars. Of the 1,777 arrests made so far this year  
7 where the paper license plate was forged, the top  
8 charge was criminal possession of a weapon in 13 of  
9 the arrests, criminal possession of a controlled  
10 substance in 37 arrests, criminal possession of  
11 stolen property in 14 arrests, DWI in 9 arrests and  
12 grand larceny auto in 7 arrests. Addressing these  
13 issues is a daily focus for the NYPD and the  
14 Administration. That is why last year, Mayor Adams  
15 announced the formation of the Vehicle License Plate  
16 Working Group which joins together members from NYPD,  
17 DOT, MTA, the Port Authority, the Triborough Bridge  
18 and Tunnel Authority, State Police, the Sheriffs, and  
19 the District Attorneys for strategy sessions. The  
20 goal is to apply shared knowledge to attack the  
21 problem from every possible angle using a holistic  
22 approach to each challenge posed by flouting the  
23 license plate and registration laws.  
24

Administration-wide focus on this wide-ranging problem as well our collaboration with law enforcement and motor vehicle departments in other states will continue to enable the Department to quickly and effectively identify these fraudulent plates and get these cars and the criminals who use them off the streets.

I would now like to turn to the bills being heard today. Intro. 987 would prohibit the operation of a motor vehicle bearing fraudulent or expired license plates, including fraudulent or expired temporary plates. The bill creates a civil penalty returnable to the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings for fraudulent plates of 500 dollars for the first offense and 1,000 dollars for any subsequent offenses and a civil penalty for expired plates of 300 dollars for the first offense and 500 dollars for any subsequent offenses, which are higher than the penalties imposed under the state Vehicle and Traffic Law.

Intro. 988 would prohibit the sale or distribution of fraudulent license plates, including fraudulent temporary plates. The bill creates a civil penalty returnable to OATH of not less than 1,000

dollars for the first violation, and not less than  
2,000 dollars for any subsequent offense.

The Administration certainly welcomes  
any additional tools to combat the use of  
fraudulent and expired plates, especially  
temporary plates, and looks forward to working with  
the Council and the sponsors on ways we can assist  
in promoting this important program.

Intro. 1011 would require officers  
assigned to patrol any subway station to carry  
flyers created by the Department of Social  
Services/Human Rights Administration regarding  
reduced fare programs offered by the City, and to  
distribute them to each individual who is arrested  
or summonsed for theft of services, trespass,  
criminal trespass, or fare evasion. The Department  
supports equitable fare programs that encourage  
legal entry into the transit system and looks  
forward to working with the Council and the  
sponsor on the most effective way to achieve the  
bill's goals.

Thank you for the opportunity to  
testify about these important issues, and we look

forward to answering any questions that you may have.

CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you so much. I appreciate your testimony. We're going to jump right into questions.

In 2002, the Council enacted Local Law 22 which relates to the unlawful sale of materials that obscure license plates. How has the City implemented this law and has there been an increase of enforcement by NYPD since this law was enacted?

DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: There has, and there's a few things that we've been doing to address this issue.

I'll first start by saying and laying a little groundwork the Transportation Bureau holds weekly Traffic Safety Forum meetings which are similar to the COMPStat meetings that the Department holds to reduce crime. Each week, the Chief of Transportation and myself host the executives from a particular borough, which would be all the precinct executive officers so, for example, if we were going to hold a meeting with the Bronx Commanders, all the executive officers of the Bronx precincts would come down to headquarters along with the one-star Chief

1 from the borough, the executive officer, who was  
2 responsible for the borough's traffic safety plan. At  
3 those meetings, we discuss each precinct's traffic  
4 safety plan. We discuss the statistics regarding  
5 collisions with injuries, pedestrians, bicyclists,  
6 fatalities, and we ensure that the precincts are  
7 focused on addressing the recent spikes in accidents,  
8 collisions in particular areas effectively.

10 At the beginning of each meeting, and I  
11 would say generally for half of the meeting, and  
12 they're generally two hours, at the beginning of each  
13 meeting we hold an information session where we  
14 discuss things as covered license plates with the  
15 executives. We discuss the fact that although covered  
16 plates are illegal to put on a vehicle anywhere in  
17 New York State or put on a parked vehicle anywhere in  
18 New York State, in New York City they're illegal to  
19 sell. We disseminate that information to our  
20 executives, and we direct them to have their traffic  
21 safety personnel, each precinct has a traffic safety  
22 team, which is generally three, four, or five  
23 officers, and we direct them to have those traffic  
24 safety officers visit stores such as Auto Zone or  
25 other auto parts stores that would sell these types

1 of devices and just inform them that they're illegal  
2 to sell in New York City, to first give them a  
3 warning and then to follow up to make sure that they  
4 have, in fact, removed them from sale and, if they  
5 are still there, to summons them and notify our Legal  
6 Bureau for the issuance of a cease and desist letter.  
7 I can tell you we started pushing this about two  
8 months ago, and already we've had about 25 to 30  
9 visits throughout the City by our traffic safety  
10 personnel so we're encouraged by that. We think we're  
11 going to make some good ground on that.  
12

13           Also, City Hall a while back had been in  
14 conversation with the Transportation Bureau about  
15 this, and we had provided City Hall with a list of  
16 locations that were selling these things online,  
17 Amazon in particular, and City Hall had taken the  
18 lead on that and had been in conversation with Amazon  
19 to get them to stop selling these license plate  
20 covers, not just in New York City but in New York  
21 State because they're illegal anywhere in New York  
22 State so I know that's being done as well.

23           With regard to the enforcement that our  
24 officers and traffic agents are conducting out there,  
25 I can give you some data. With regard to moving

1 violations issued to vehicles with covered or  
2 obstructed plates, so far this year we're up 151  
3 percent in moving violations, 6,321 so far this year  
4 versus 2,513 last year.

5  
6 With regard to summonses issued to  
7 motorcycles with covered or obstructed plates, we  
8 have 992 of those. I was unable to get data on where  
9 we stood so far last year to compare.

10 With regard to parking summonses issued  
11 to vehicles with covered or obstructed plates, we're  
12 up 0.8 percent over last year, 123,741 versus  
13 122,813.

14 With regard to obstructed plate parking  
15 summonses to motorcycles, we have 786 of those.

16 With regard to the towing of vehicles  
17 with covered or obstructed license plates, we're up  
18 192 percent in that area. We have 1,104 tows of that  
19 type versus 351 last year.

20 So the information is getting out to our  
21 police officers and our traffic agents. We think  
22 they're responding well. We think the actions taken  
23 by City Hall are going to be helpful in getting  
24 Amazon and other online retailers to stop selling  
25 these things to people in New York City and the



1 State, and I think the visits to the auto parts  
2 stores is going to be worthy and helpful as well.

3  
4 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you so much.

5 That was exactly what I wanted to know, but I also  
6 want, you testified that you've been looking at this  
7 for the past two months and there have been 25 to 30  
8 visits and now you can quantify, and I really  
9 appreciate that data of how many moving violations,  
10 covered plates, all of the things that you were  
11 talking about that I'm making notes on, but explain  
12 to me and my Colleagues what is the process so when  
13 you say that, what is the difference between a  
14 violation, when do you tow, just describe the process  
15 in which NYPD traffic is going through, identifying,  
16 then issuing a violation, and then what are the other  
17 steps that are taken?

18 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Sure. Our traffic  
19 agents are the ones that issue the parking summonses  
20 for the most part throughout the City. They issue  
21 roughly 8 million parking summonses per year. Our  
22 police officers are the ones who issue the moving  
23 violations summonses.

24 We make it a priority for our traffic  
25 agents out in the field, and we direct them that when

1 they come across a vehicle that has a covered license  
2 plate, it's illegal to park their car on a New York  
3 City street, so regardless of whether that vehicle is  
4 committing any other type of violation, we want them  
5 to summons that vehicle and tow it for that violation  
6 so it doesn't have to necessarily be parked in a no-  
7 standing or a no-stopping. If it's otherwise parked  
8 illegally and it has a plastic cover over that plate,  
9 we want them summonsing and towing the vehicle.  
10

11 They'll tow that vehicle into the tow  
12 pound. When the owner comes to reclaim that vehicle,  
13 we require the owner to remove that plastic from the  
14 plate before we will return the vehicle.

15 The police officers, again, they're the  
16 ones who are out there observing traffic. They see  
17 vehicles with obstructed or covered license plates,  
18 they pull the vehicle over to the side of the road,  
19 they'll issue the appropriate summons to the  
20 motorist.

21 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you. That's  
22 exactly what I would like to know.

23 Does the Department of Consumer and  
24 Worker Protection enforce provisions of Local Law 22  
25 on local businesses? Are there any licensed

1 businesses that might be at risk of losing City  
2 licenses for selling materials that obscure license  
3 plates?  
4

5 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Don't know the  
6 answer to that. I'm sorry.

7 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Okay, let's try to  
8 find an answer to that.

9 Which of the City agencies enforce local  
10 or state laws related to the unlawful operation of a  
11 motor vehicle with fraudulent or expired license  
12 plates?

13 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Fraudulent plates.

14 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Right.

15 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: So a fraudulent  
16 license plate can be enforced by any police agency in  
17 the state. It's possession of a forged instrument.  
18 The issue is that when an officer pulls a vehicle  
19 over to conduct an investigatory cause stop, there's  
20 a few things that we found out from our working  
21 group.

22 One is very interesting. When our  
23 officers conduct an investigatory cause stop and they  
24 want to check a registration plate or a motorist's  
25 license, they check it through the New York State

1 Police Information Network, which we refer to as  
2 NYSPIN. NYSPIN has information on paper temporary  
3 plates from only 10 states within the country. The  
4 other 40 states do not provide New York State with  
5 that information so it makes it a little bit more  
6 difficult for our officers conducting those types of  
7 cause stops.  
8

9 I'll just give you some information on  
10 what we've seen. New Jersey was a problem with us for  
11 a while. One of the issues was that New Jersey is not  
12 one of the states that provided information to  
13 NYSPIN. Our officers would literally have to call up  
14 the New Jersey Commission on Motor Vehicles to get  
15 information on a particular plate. They had a bar  
16 code on their plates that our officers could not  
17 scan. A while back, I would say about a year ago,  
18 Jersey came up with a QR code on their plates so it  
19 makes it a lot easier for our officers now when  
20 they're conducting an investigatory cause stop to  
21 determine the legitimacy of that plate. They  
22 literally can scan it and get all the information  
23 necessary to make sure that it matches the vehicle  
24 properly, etc., so that one thing that you had  
25 mentioned, who can conduct enforcement? Any law

1 enforcement officers can conduct enforcement on  
2 forged plates. I hope that answers your question.

3  
4 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you very much.  
5 You've come prepared. I'm very excited about that.

6 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: What roles does the  
8 Auto Crimes Unit play in enforcement of provisions  
9 related to defaced license plates and have there been  
10 any directives for officers on patrol to expand  
11 related enforcement?

12 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Yes. Auto Crime,  
13 they really are our experts when it comes to the  
14 identification of fraudulent plates. They liaison  
15 with other states, other cities, other agencies, and  
16 are constantly updating our training material with  
17 regard to what's current and what's changed on  
18 certain plates. They are trainers. They conduct  
19 investigations based on information that they obtain,  
20 possibly from informants, or the Council Member had  
21 mentioned before information he obtained online on  
22 temporary plates being sold, they follow up on those  
23 investigations, they effect arrests. One thing can  
24 lead to another. They might start with a paper plate  
25 that might end up taking them to narcotics or stolen

cars, etc., so Auto Crime plays a big role in this  
for us.

CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you. Last  
question before I pass it along to Chair Brooks-  
Powers. What efforts has NYPD or the City done to  
coordinate with other jurisdictions to investigate  
out of state businesses that are suspected of issuing  
fraudulent license plates?

DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: That's something  
that our Legal Bureau can certainly look into,  
coordinating to get them to stop, Craig's List and  
other online retailers that offer these things for  
sale, to serve them with the cease and desist letters  
as well.

CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you so much.  
Chair Brooks-Powers.

CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you and  
thank you for those responses.

I wanted to start by talking about Vision  
Zero and safety. What ways do defaced, fraudulent,  
and/or expired license plates undermine street  
safety, and does the NYPD how many street safety  
incidents involve vehicles with defaced, fraudulent,  
or expired plates?

1  
2 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: So far this year,  
3 there were four fatalities that involved paper  
4 plates. All those plates were determined to be  
5 legitimate paper plates. They were fraudulent or  
6 defaced.

7 Certainly, there is an issue involved  
8 with getting these plates off of the streets because,  
9 as we previously mentioned, when you commit a crime  
10 and you have one of these license plates on your  
11 vehicle and they're not detectable, there's no way  
12 for a detective to follow up. It makes it much more  
13 difficult so, to that extent, it's a hurdle.

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Do you feel  
15 like they're more likely to be involved in hit and  
16 runs. I know it's kind of hard to tell if it's one  
17 that's not necessarily traceable and they leave the  
18 scene per se.

19 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Yeah. I don't have  
20 any data on that. I wish I did. I honestly can't say.  
21 I could dig a little deeper and get back to you on  
22 that.

23 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Are there  
24 Vision Zero related summonses issued for defaced,  
25 fraudulent, and/or expired license plates..

DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Like is there  
one specific for that?

DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Yes. I could tell  
you very quickly so far this year with regards to  
forged license plates, we've effected 1,777 arrests,  
and I broke it out by borough, and it turns out that  
the Bronx had the highest number of arrests with 488  
followed by Brooklyn with 487, Manhattan 375, Queens  
362, and Staten Island 65. When I took a look at the  
year-end in 2022 versus 2021, we were up in arrests  
in by 17 percent, 4,199 in 2022 versus 3,568 in 2021.  
I then looked at where we stood in 2022 versus 2019  
because we often compare where we stand versus 2019,  
pre-pandemic. We're actually up 257 percent in those  
types of arrests versus 2019, which is really good  
stuff, 4,199 in 2022 versus 1,178 in 2019, so we  
continually push this at our traffic safety forums  
that I mentioned. Every week, we're talking to 12  
executives from a particular borough. We discuss  
this. We discuss covered plates, fraudulent plates,  
and we think we're getting a good response from the  
officers?



CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And what is that attributed to from your perspective?

DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: What specifically?

CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: In terms of the increase in the arrests?

DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: I think the fact that we explain to our officers the importance of getting these cars off of the street. Auto Crime has prepared some really excellent training material that makes it easier for the officers to identify these plates out in the street because ordinarily if you didn't have the material that would explain that, for example, a Texas temporary tag would have seven digits that have to begin with a letter. When you pull over a Texas plate and you have one that begins with a number, you know that you have a fraudulent plate and you dig a little deeper so these tidbits they got out to patrol, our officers out there in the field, they're more aware of what's a fraudulent plate versus a legitimate plate. It just makes it a little easier for them.

CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: You mentioned that towing was much more effective so why is there

1 more of the summonses and arrests versus the towing  
2 since you find that to be more effective?  
3

4 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Because the arrests  
5 are effected by police officers stopping moving  
6 vehicles so they take those people into custody, they  
7 charge them with forgery, that vehicle is taken into  
8 custody, the plate as evidence. The vehicles that are  
9 towed are issued parking summonses by our traffic  
10 agents, and the traffic agent would then call a tow  
11 truck to respond to the scene to remove the vehicle.

12 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So they're  
13 towing that car, giving them a parking ticket, but is  
14 the City getting the money back for the charging for  
15 the towing?

16 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: There are a couple  
17 of different things. If it's a covered license plate,  
18 yeah, the City would get the money for the towing  
19 certainly, and we would require..

20 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: From the  
21 person who..

22 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Who comes to redeem  
23 the vehicle. So now we have the other vehicle, say  
24 with a temporary plate, in custody. Let me just see  
25 if I can find a piece of data here because there's an

1 interesting piece of information. With the paper  
2 plate tows, so far this year we have 1,084 vehicles  
3 towed with paper plates, not necessarily fraudulent  
4 but just vehicles with paper plates. Of that number,  
5 356 were unclaimed and went to auction, so we always  
6 find that of the total number of paper plates, and  
7 this is historic, generally more than 25 percent are  
8 unclaimed by their owners and go to auction, and  
9 these are legitimate temporary plates.  
10

11 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Why do you  
12 think that is?

13 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: I don't know.

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: That's  
15 interesting that they would leave their cars. I think  
16 some of my Colleagues are going to have some more  
17 followup questions on that. That is pretty  
18 interesting data.

19 Moving on the New York City redlight and  
20 speed camera programs. We know defaced, fraudulent,  
21 and/or expired license plates are utilized to evade  
22 redlight and speed camera programs. Does DOT track  
23 the number of vehicles with such license plates who  
24 have evaded redlight or speed cameras?

25

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BENSON: Good morning,  
Chair, and thank you for the question.

Yes, we do track the number of vehicles that are evading accountability for our automated enforcement programs, and it's a small portion of the total number of violators, but it's, as you rightly noted and your Colleagues rightly noted, this is a concern that there are some people out there who are using these tactics to evade accountability for their violations.

CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: How many in 2022 versus 2021, and have we seen more evasion in the past few years?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BENSON: It's a good question. Going back to 2019, as the Chief pointed out, that's the place that we like to look back for kind of comparing today's behavior against pre-pandemic. We used to see fewer than 1 percent of violations were untraceable due to temporary plate, no license plate, or unreadable or obscured license plate, and in recent months, this is a statistic that changes month-by-month, but it's been in the 5 percent range I would say so it is elevated from where it was before the pandemic. There's a number of

1 things going on. As you and your Colleagues have  
2 pointed out, there are people with fraudulent plates,  
3 with covered plates, with temporary plates. A portion  
4 of this is people with motorcycles and mopeds that  
5 are not bearing any license plate so that's another  
6 piece of that 5 percent.  
7

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: How much  
9 revenue does the City estimate is lost from evading  
10 enforcement of such cameras based on the numbers you  
11 have?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BENSON: Right. It's a  
13 difficult number to calculate because the violations  
14 that are rejected for not being traceable could in  
15 theory be rejected for another reason. If the plate  
16 was traceable, just to take a step back of how our  
17 programs work, so each automated enforcement program,  
18 despite the name automated, we have human reviewers,  
19 staff who review each violation before it's issued so  
20 there are many violations that are rejected for  
21 reasons having nothing to do with the license plate.  
22 For example, a motorist enters a bus lane and blocks  
23 a bus that's approaching. However, an ambulance was  
24 passing in the general travel lane. Our technician  
25 can see that on the video. They see that the motorist

1 was, even though they did in fact violate the bus  
2 lane, they were captured on camera, that violation  
3 would be dismissed because they are properly moving  
4 out of the way of an emergency vehicle so there are  
5 cases like that so it's hard to say that the number  
6 of violations that are untraceable actually would  
7 equate to exactly the number that were lost if the  
8 review process had gone through its full cycle. I  
9 would say that would probably be a little bit lower  
10 than the 5 percent if you really went through the  
11 full review process on each of these.

13 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I'd also like  
14 to share that we've been joined by Council Member  
15 Rivera.

16 If a license plate is expired, is there a  
17 way of still identifying the violator and issuing  
18 them a ticket?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BENSON: For the  
20 automated programs, yes. If the license plate was  
21 properly registered but then expired we can still  
22 trace it back to the registered owner and that  
23 doesn't present a problem.

24 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: But how does  
25 DOT handle it once the automated system triggers it?

1 Do you work with DMV or NYPD, like how does that  
2 work?  
3

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BENSON: Right. That's  
5 an excellent question. There are a few ways we can do  
6 the lookups to get the information about the  
7 registered vehicle owner. If it's a New York State  
8 license plate and a New York State owner, there's a  
9 system we use called PREED that allows us to send the  
10 license plate number to the New York State DMV and we  
11 get the results back. That's the simplest case. Then  
12 there are dozens of other states that participate in  
13 a law enforcement data-sharing program called NLETS.  
14 That's another avenue to get data back. Then there  
15 are third-party commercial providers that do DMV  
16 look-ups on our behalf for a small fee per look-up  
17 such as LexisNexis is the biggest one that you've  
18 probably heard of. You think of it as like a legal  
19 research tool, but they offer this service as well so  
20 it's through either one of those look-up services,  
21 directly from the New York State DMV, or through the  
22 law enforcement data-sharing system called NLETS.

23 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: What do you do  
24 with that information once you have it?  
25

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BENSON: Once we  
3 retrieve the vehicle owner information, we populate a  
4 violation notice with the name and address of the  
5 vehicle owner, the photograph of the vehicle and  
6 violation, the specific data about their violation,  
7 how many miles per hour they were traveling, the  
8 location. That's presented to our reviewer team. They  
9 review all of the data, check it for accuracy, check,  
10 like I said, for extenuating circumstances or other  
11 things that could've inadvertently caused them to  
12 commit a violation, and then they affirm the  
13 violation. We print and mail the violations, and  
14 that's...

15 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: But how are  
16 you handling the fact that it's an expired license  
17 plate?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BENSON: That it's  
19 expired? We issue the violation regardless of whether  
20 the...

21 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So the  
22 violation is on the speeding portion...

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BENSON: Yes, correct.

24 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: But in terms  
25 of the expiration of the license plate, what do you



1 do with that information? Is it not handed over to  
2 the NYPD to then do something about it or does the  
3 person get to still continue to drive with the  
4 expired license plate?  
5

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BENSON: We just issue  
7 the speed, bus lane, or redlight violation. We don't  
8 have any authority to address the expiration issue?

9 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: No, but that  
10 just shows that there may be a gap there is what it  
11 says to me because you're giving them that ticket,  
12 they may pay it, they may not, I mean they didn't  
13 renew their license plate, maybe they forgot, right,  
14 but even a notification to say this plate is expired,  
15 please handle, or maybe having an interagency  
16 partnership in terms of that would be warranted to be  
17 able to address that piece.

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BENSON: That's a good  
19 observation, Chairperson, and we can certainly follow  
20 up on the expired plates. Typically, the expiration  
21 notices are going out from the DMV so, as the DOT,  
22 it's not normally our role but in terms of the  
23 followup with law enforcement..

24 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: No, totally  
25 get that, but just when we think about getting those

1 types of vehicles off of the roadway, wanting to have  
2 some type of mechanism to do so.

3  
4 Does the City support full autonomy over  
5 its redlight and speed camera programs?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BENSON: Chairperson,  
7 that's an excellent question. I think our  
8 Commissioner has been in Albany each session pushing  
9 for more and more authority to expand our enforcement  
10 programs, and we've been very successful in those  
11 requests for expansion and built our program from,  
12 you mentioned in your opening remarks we launched the  
13 redlight camera program in 1994 with just a handful  
14 of cameras and now we have over 2,000 speed  
15 enforcement cameras in school zones, we have close to  
16 400 bus lane enforcement cameras on fixed routes, we  
17 have hundreds of bus lane cameras that the MTA  
18 operates partnership that are on their buses so we  
19 have had tremendous success growing these programs by  
20 leaps and bounds and, yes, we want to continue  
21 pushing for more authority to operate, reduce the  
22 geographic restrictions that we have and there are  
23 other flavors of enforcement that we think could be  
24 valuable to pursue as well.

CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for that. I'm hoping that the Commissioner is looking at infrastructure as well, like when having the conversations about the autonomy, recognizing how they go hand in hand and cannot happen separate from one another.

Switching over to NYPD enforcement, how many tickets and arrests were issued or made for defaced, fraudulent, and/or expired license plates in 2022 compared to the previous years? I think you had mentioned it a little earlier, but I just wanted to..

DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: You pulled together a few categories there. What I will give you is for fraudulent or defaced plates, that was 1,777 so far this year. If we go back to prior years, when we compare 2022 to 2021, we were up 17 percent, 4,199 versus 3,568. When we compare 2022 to 2019, we were up 257 percent, 4,199 versus 1,178 in 2019.

CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I'm going to yield my questions to allow my Colleagues to ask some questions as well.

CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you so much.  
Next, we'll have Council Member Feliz with questions.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Thank you, Chairs,  
3 again for this hearing. I also want to thank all the  
4 different departments and agencies that work to  
5 remove ghost cars from our streets, including the  
6 NYPD, the Sheriff, the Sanitation Department, and all  
7 others.

8 We need to tackle the use of these fake  
9 plates. We also need to tackle the sale of these  
10 plates. Very clear that people are selling them very  
11 openly, on Craig's List, eBay, even on Facebook  
12 Marketplace, even on Instagram so just wondering what  
13 is the NYPD doing to combat and prevent the sale of  
14 these fake plates?

15 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: As I mentioned  
16 before, Council Member, our Auto Crime Division is  
17 responsible for these types of investigations. They  
18 get information on the sale of these types of plates  
19 online as you mentioned, they actually go online and  
20 do inspections. They get information from debriefing  
21 where they arrest someone and they question them  
22 regarding criminal activity. They're the ones that  
23 actually do the investigations. I don't have any data  
24 right now regarding how many arrests they have made  
25 in those cases, but I can tell you the investigations

1 are intercity investigations, interstate  
2 investigations in some cases, so, yeah, they take the  
3 lead on that for us, and we're aware of the fact that  
4 they are available online for sale.  
5

6 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Do we know how many  
7 investigations have been initiated?

8 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: I don't have that  
9 data, but we can get that for you.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Okay. Do you know  
11 how often they check on these websites to see if  
12 people are selling these fake plates?

13 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: No, I don't. We'll  
14 have to get that. I'm sure they do it frequently  
15 because it's part of their job, it's part of the  
16 reason they exist.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Okay. Approximately  
18 how many cars with fake plates would you guess there  
19 are in our city, based on the percentages, let's say  
20 one out of every 20 vehicles?

21 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: That would be gross  
22 speculation on my part. I mean I really couldn't even  
23 enter a guess. I can give you the data on arrests,  
24 summonses, but I really couldn't say.  
25

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Okay. I've also  
3 heard based on my conversations with different  
4 individuals that the NYPD and the Sheriff have had  
5 issues with the towing given that there's not enough  
6 space to actually tow every single ghost car in our  
7 city. Is that the case? Also, how many cars do we  
8 have space for towing currently? How many lots?

9 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: A couple of years  
10 ago, we lost the Manhattan tow pound which was our  
11 largest tow pound in the city. It was on PS76, 38th  
12 Street and 12th Avenue. We have three pounds now,  
13 Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx so we are reduced by  
14 several hundred spots the number of vehicles that we  
15 can tow and store.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Why was it lost?

17 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: I'm sorry.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Why was it lost?  
19 Was the use changed or something?

20 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: I think that it had  
21 to do with Governor Cuomo wanting the space back.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Okay, so we have  
23 three lots for the towing of cars?

24 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Correct.  
25

COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Approximately how many cars can each lot hold?

DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: I would say upwards of 200.

COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Each?

DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Maybe more than that. Again, I can get back to you with the exact data. I didn't bring that with me, but certainly I can get back to you on that.

COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: All right, so I guess we could safely say that we only have space for about 600 ghost cars for towing, more or less, 600 to 1,000 if we want to be very...

DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Cars in general.

COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Okay. How many complaints have been filed due to cars with either fake plates or no plates at all?

DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Sorry, I don't have that data.

COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: How many cars with fake plates has NYPD towed in the last year or two? Sorry, I know you mentioned a lot of numbers earlier today, just want to make sure.

DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Again, with the forged plates, there were 1,777 that were taken into custody.

COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: In the last year or two years?

DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: So far this year taken into custody in conjunction with arrests. Again, 2022 versus 2021, there were 4,199. You have to assume that every one of those was taken into custody as well.

With regard to the towing of paper plates, we have so far this year, excuse me one second please, 1,084. With regard to that number, our traffic agents have been trained in identifying forged paper plates so although 1,084 vehicles with paper plates were towed into the pound, only 18 were determined to be forgeries.

COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Okay. Obviously, we've had a drastic increase in the sale and the use of paper plates. Where are these plates mostly coming from, what states? I know New Jersey is top.

DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Yeah, I would say New Jersey is the biggest. We see Texas plates online as well so I'd say those were the two biggest.



1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Okay. Earlier today  
3 you mentioned we only have the information of about  
4 10 states.

5 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Paper plate  
6 information into NYSPIN from 10 states, correct.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Okay. Have we had  
8 conversations with the other states about potentially  
9 sharing their information and how have the  
10 conversations been?

11 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Yeah, we've had  
12 conversations with our partners in the New York State  
13 Police about the state police reaching out to other  
14 states to get information including into NYSPIN, and  
15 we would have to follow up on that to see where they  
16 stand, but that's certainly a discussion we had and  
17 the importance of it was stressed.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Okay. Two final  
19 questions. I know my Colleagues have questions.

20 What are the 10 states that have provided  
21 their paper plate information?

22 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Alabama, Florida,  
23 Georgia, Louisiana, Michigan, New York obviously,  
24 Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Okay. Final  
3 question. I think we could safely say that there are  
4 two types of fake plates. You have the super duper  
5 fake plates that you just print out of Google and  
6 then you have the ones that you obtain through let's  
7 say a fraudulent dealership. Can you talk to us about  
8 the plates that are obtained through the fraudulent  
9 dealerships, the fictitious dealerships, do they come  
10 with insurance, registration, etc.?

11 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: There is a location  
12 in New Jersey that we're aware of where there are,  
13 and our Auto Crime Division is aware of it and they  
14 are in communication with their Jersey counterparts.  
15 There's a location in Jersey where there are maybe  
16 100 LLCs registered that are dealers, and the bar in  
17 New Jersey to be a legitimate car dealer is set very,  
18 very low. For example, you have to have an office  
19 with a chair or two, you have to have two parking  
20 spots available, and, if you have those things, you  
21 qualify as a legitimate car dealer. If somebody goes  
22 to that car dealer, and they have access to the  
23 Jersey database to print out legitimate temporary  
24 permits, so if someone gets a permit from that  
25 legitimate dealership, the plates pretty much are

1 legitimate plates unless there's some type of fraud  
2 going on, but ordinarily they are legitimate plates  
3 and we've had this discussion with our Auto Crime  
4 Division.  
5

6 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: What comes with  
7 those plates? Do they come with insurance, temporary  
8 insurance, temporary registration?

9 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Certainly to  
10 operate in New York State you would have to have your  
11 car insured.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: So the plates being  
13 obtained from New Jersey, they do come with  
14 insurance, I guess temporary insurance...

15 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: To operate within  
16 New York State, they would have to be insured. If  
17 they're a New York State resident, they have 30 days  
18 to register their car in New York State.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Right, but I guess  
20 the question is are the plates that are being  
21 obtained, do they come with insurance and temporary  
22 registration?

23 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: I don't know. I  
24 would imagine they do, but I can't tell you for sure  
25 that they would have to show proof of insurance to

1 the dealership before they would give them a plate. I  
2 don't know. I do know in New York State though to  
3 drive you have to insurance. Sorry, I can't answer  
4 that for you.  
5

6 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Cool. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you so much,  
8 Council Member.

9 I would like to recognize Council Member  
10 Won and Council Member Bottcher, and next we'll hear  
11 from Council Member Farias.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER FARIAS: Hi. Good morning,  
13 folks. I just have some questions off of the  
14 testimony and answers you've given and if we can just  
15 run through them quickly.

16 Initially, I wanted to know where are we  
17 finding most of our fake plates, and I'm sorry if you  
18 said this throughout your questions. Are they like  
19 parked in the streets, through traffic violations,  
20 through accident, like how are we coming to terms...

21 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: I would have to say  
22 that based on the number that we found to be  
23 fraudulent based on towing paper plates, so the data  
24 shows that we towed 1,084 paper plates so far this  
25 year. When those plates were taken into our tow

1 pounds and our traffic agents who have been trained  
2 in identifying fraudulent paper plates, they've only  
3 found 18 cases where there were forgeries versus  
4 1,777 arrests that were made by police officers who  
5 pulled over cars that had forged or altered plates on  
6 a vehicle so I'd have to say moving violations is the  
7 way we're getting them.  
8

9 COUNCIL MEMBER FARIAS: Okay, so moving  
10 violations primarily, but we are also training  
11 traffic agents to identify them which is great.

12 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Yes.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER FARIAS: You also stated  
14 that what's been helpful is that we've been notified  
15 of the plate differences and what to look out for in  
16 terms of within the PD of people going out. Do you  
17 think if the public had that information it would  
18 increase maybe the street notifications, like parked  
19 cars that we'd be able to identify, and do you think  
20 that would be helpful before we end up with a traffic  
21 violation pull-over of a fraudulent license plate  
22 versus maybe in the neighborhoods being able to  
23 identify where they are?

24 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Possibly, but if  
25 you did that, you would be letting the people know

1 who produce these fake permits what they're doing  
2 wrong so they could then correct them and have them  
3 appear to be legitimate.  
4

5 COUNCIL MEMBER FARIAS: Okay. Interesting  
6 perspective. I just have two more followups on other  
7 things. This is in relation to the cars that end up  
8 going for auction, this is when we were talking about  
9 the cars going up for auction, the thing that came to  
10 mind that I said to the Chair out loud was are those  
11 cars not registered, their VIN numbers not registered  
12 so we can't identify who owned those cars and they're  
13 in violation?

14 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: They appear to be  
15 legitimate paper temporary registrations, they're not  
16 fraudulent, we only have 18 of those. My thought is  
17 that, and it's historic. I could give you data going  
18 back a few years. It's always around 25 percent of  
19 paper plate tows remain unclaimed so it's a historic  
20 number. What I'm going to do is when I get back to  
21 the base, I'm going to ask the tow pound to kind of  
22 break that out a little bit to see how old the  
23 vehicles are, are they more than 10 years old, 15  
24 years old, what type of condition are they in. I  
25 would think they're probably in not such great

1 condition and people just figure, you know what, I'd  
2 rather just let it go than pay to have it reclaimed,  
3 but I'll find out for sure.

4  
5 COUNCIL MEMBER FARIAS: Great. Thank you.  
6 I just had a thought around what's our relationship  
7 like with the DMV, especially with the gap in  
8 communication that we're having with expired  
9 registrations, and you kind of touched on that  
10 already, but do you think there's any way to maybe  
11 have us either figure out a way to get some of that  
12 revenue in in terms of for the State with expired  
13 registrations versus us just hoping that at some  
14 point people will pay them?

15 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: I could give you a  
16 quick piece of information. We've issued 204,000  
17 parking violations to vehicles with expired  
18 registration, which is up 2 percent from last year,  
19 so pretty much that's all going to be recovered  
20 (INAUDIBLE) cars. Moving violations, we're up 64  
21 percent in moving violations issued to vehicles that  
22 aren't properly registered or with expired  
23 registration, and all that's going to be recovered. I  
24 think, as Josh and I discussed before, it's the case  
25 where a car that's not registered goes through a

1 speed camera or a redlight camera, and there's really  
2 no mechanism in place to pick that violation up.

3  
4 COUNCIL MEMBER FARIAS: Okay. Thank you,  
5 folks, and thank you, Chairs, for the additional  
6 time.

7 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you, Council  
8 Member.

9 Next, we'll hear from Council Member  
10 Carr.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: Thank you, Chairs.  
12 Chief, Deputy Commissioner, good to see you.

13 I'm going to be asking these questions on  
14 behalf of my Colleague, Council Member Nantasha  
15 Williams, who had to depart. In your response to your  
16 questions from Chair Brooks-Powers you mentioned that  
17 traffic agents can initiate a tow when they discover  
18 a vehicle with fraudulent paper plates. Are they able  
19 to do that in real-time upon their first discovery of  
20 a vehicle like that even if there's no other  
21 violations known?

22 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Yes.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: In terms of that,  
24 how many are towed without the presence of a driver  
25 on a regular basis?



DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: I would say the majority, the vast, vast majority of vehicles are towed without a driver.

COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: Okay.

DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Generally, the policy is when someone is sitting in their car, we instruct the traffic agents to give the person the opportunity to move for the most part so, generally, a high percentage are unoccupied.

COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: All right. We talked a little bit about before in your answer to Council Member Feliz about the capacity that the Department has to hold these vehicles. Is the availability of a tow ever an issue? I assume there's a lot of demands on the Department's tow capacity. Is there discussion about expanding that capacity maybe through additional contracting with an outside vendor? Do you need more tows internal to the Department? What's your position on that?

DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: I think what we need is larger tow pounds. We lost the Manhattan tow pound a few years ago, which hurt us, but if we had more space to tow vehicles, a quick example and just a quick aside is that we know that large commercial

1 vehicles parked overnight are a problem citywide,  
2 right, and we had explained at our traffic safety  
3 forum the difference in summonses that could be  
4 issued to the larger commercial vehicles which is a  
5 Code 6, which carries with it a 250-dollar fine for  
6 the first offense and a 500-dollar fine for the  
7 second offense within six months by the same owner so  
8 we can issue that summons to large 18-wheelers. The  
9 law lists four types of larger commercial vehicles,  
10 and we can issue, and we've issued a lot of those  
11 summonses and we have a big increase in those  
12 summonses. The bottom line is the ability to tow  
13 them. In Queens South this year, we've done a couple  
14 of really great initiatives where we've towed like 80  
15 of those vehicles over a couple of week period, but  
16 we were able to do that because the police borough  
17 commander was able to identify a location that could  
18 be secured that we could utilize for a several week  
19 period, and it was a very successful initiative so  
20 the one thing we need is tow pounds and space.

21  
22 COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: Okay. I appreciate  
23 that, and I think there's maybe some synergy for us  
24 to discuss because Staten Island has that same  
25 challenge that Southeast Queens has as you discussed,

1 and we do have some space out in our borough so maybe  
2 we can discuss that.  
3

4 My last question on my Colleague's behalf  
5 is do you have a breakdown of all of the tows or the  
6 incidents where there was a fraudulent or expired  
7 plate and the breakdown between the fraudulent end  
8 and then expired temporary.

9 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: See if I have that.  
10 I have fraudulent. As I had mentioned, we had towed  
11 1,084 vehicles with paper plates so far this year,  
12 paper plates. Only 18 were determined to be forgeries  
13 of that number. I hope that helps.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: Thank you.  
15 Appreciate. Thank you, Chairs.

16 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you, Council  
18 Member.

19 Next, we'll hear from Council Member  
20 Holden.

21 Before that, I'd like to recognize  
22 Council Member Brannan has joined us as well.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Thank you, Chairs.  
24 Thank you, Chief, for all the information and all the  
25 hard work by the NYPD on this.

I just have a question on the language of the bill. When it's mentioned a fraudulent license plate, does that also include a doctored or obscured license plate, let's say there are very creative ways where people block their license plate, and I've seen people use a leaf, tape, paint, you name it. Would this bill address that, the bill 987?

MANAGING ATTORNEY FARRUGGIA: We believe that the bill would address doctored license plates.

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: You do? Because that's a very important, you believe, but there has to be, that's a very important issue because I see more doctored license plates, obscured license plates than anything. I mean I see it around precincts. I see it, from my office, I can see one out of maybe 15 cars that go by have an obscured plate with some kind of doctored plate.

MANAGING ATTORNEY FARRUGGIA: This would be someone intentionally obscuring their plate...

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Right. (INAUDIBLE)

MANAGING ATTORNEY FARRUGGIA: Not necessarily covered with leaves, but we can work with the Council to come up with definitions or language to make this more clear in the bill.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Again, if I paint  
3 over it, if I scratch it, you name it it's being  
4 done, tape, so that's what has to be in the bill.  
5 That's why I'm not on this bill because I'm not sure  
6 if that's the case here. The language should be for  
7 any obscured, I would obscured, I would add doctored,  
8 I would add all the language that if you hide it  
9 somehow or even if it's illegible that that becomes,  
10 obviously like a camera can't pick it up or a toll  
11 can't pick it up. That's an obscured plate.

12 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Councilman, that's  
13 a good point because we do see that. I've seen it out  
14 there myself, and the language 402 with the VTL does  
15 make that illegal the way it's worded so you can't  
16 have any numbers or letters covered. I think it says  
17 clearly readable or clearly discernible so it is  
18 illegal. Our officers do take action in those cases,  
19 and it's a great point.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: I think also at  
21 one of the hearings we had the penalty right now for  
22 that is 65 dollars.

23 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Yes, that's  
24 correct.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: So it does pay to  
3 do that in the City of New York right now with the  
4 current penalties because how much are tolls, tolls  
5 can be 65 dollars. You could use that in one day and  
6 make it back so even if you do get caught, it's 65  
7 dollars. That's why the current bill, if it covers  
8 that and it obviously would be a 500-dollar fine,  
9 that at least starts to address it. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you. Thank you  
11 so much for all of you testifying. A special shoutout  
12 for Inspector Kinsella from Staten Island. It's good  
13 to see you.

14 Thank you, Chair Brooks-Powers, and all  
15 of my Colleagues that have been here.

16 We're going to move to public testimony.  
17 Thank you so much.

18 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Thank you.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, we'll be turning  
20 to public testimony.

21 For in-person panelists, please come up  
22 to the dais once your name has been called.

23 For virtual panelists, we'll be calling  
24 individuals one-by-one to testify.

We'll be limiting public testimony today to two minutes each. Please begin once the Sergeant has started the timer. For virtual panelists, once your name is called a Member of our Staff will unmute you and the Sergeant-at-Arms will set the timer and give you the go-ahead to begin. Please wait for the Sergeant to announce that you may begin before delivering your testimony.

I'd like to call up to the dais Eric McClure and Danny Pearlstein.

Eric, you can start whenever you're ready.

ERIC MCCLURE: Thank you. Good morning. My name is Eric McClure. I'm the Executive Director of StreetsPAC. I want to thank the Co-Chairs, Chair Hanks and Chair Brooks-Powers, for hosting this hearing today.

Ghost cars, vehicles with fake, obscured, or illegally covered license plates are a serious and widespread and seemingly worsening problem in New York City. Untraceable and unreadable plates allow drivers to flaunt speed and redlight cameras and electronic tolls, an issue that will only compound when congestion pricing goes into effect. As Jesse

1 Coburn has reported in a wide-ranging investigative  
2 series for Streetsblog, the proliferation of license  
3 plate cheating costs the MTA, the Port Authority, and  
4 New York City more than a combined 100 million  
5 dollars in lost toll and ticket revenue in 2022, and  
6 that's not the worst of it. Drivers of ghost cars  
7 have also left behind a trail of death and  
8 destruction. Isaiah Benloss, a former student of  
9 Council Member Rita Joseph's, was struck in 2020 by  
10 the driver a car with temporary New Jersey plates and  
11 later died. The driver was never caught. Davina  
12 Afokoba, a 10-year-old constituent of Chair Brooks-  
13 Powers, was killed by a driver of a car with  
14 temporary Texas plates early last year. That driver  
15 received only a summons.

17           Sadly, Isaiah and Davina were only the  
18 tip of the iceberg. According to NYPD, more than two  
19 dozen New Yorkers were killed by drivers of cars with  
20 temporary plates over the past two years, and 40  
21 percent of those plates were fake. Cars with  
22 counterfeit or unreadable plates have been used in  
23 the commission of crimes including murders. While,  
24 according to Coburn's reporting, the NYPD towed 3,300  
25



1 vehicles with paper plates last year, they're barely  
2 putting a dent in the problem.  
3

4 For all the preceding reasons, we  
5 strongly support Council Member Feliz's Intro. 987  
6 which would make it unlawful to operate a motor  
7 vehicle in New York City with fraudulent license  
8 plate, fake temporary plate, or expired license  
9 plate. The legislation also sets a reasonable  
10 graduated fine schedule which includes a curing  
11 period for replacing expired plates. The proposed law  
12 would not put anyone in jail, but the penalty should  
13 be substantial enough to curtail a fair amount of the  
14 illegal activity assuming the law is adequately  
15 enforced.

16 We also support Council Member Feliz's  
17 related bill, Intro. 988, which would prohibit the  
18 sale or distribution of fraudulent plates including  
19 fake temporary plates by updating Section 10-182 of  
20 the City's Administrative Code which already  
21 prohibits the sale of license plate covers and  
22 sprays. The bill would also impose substantial fines,  
23 1,000 dollars for the first offense and 2,000 dollars  
24 for subsequent offenses, which could mount quickly  
25

1 for someone engaged in the illegal business of  
2 selling fake plates.  
3

4           Taken together, we believe these bills  
5 will help put a dent in the spread of fraudulent  
6 license plates which will both make the city streets  
7 safer and help reduce toll losses. We urge that both  
8 bills be passed by the Committee on Transportation  
9 and Infrastructure and Committee on Public Safety and  
10 the full Council as soon as possible.

11           We also would strongly urge the creation  
12 of a task force that would include the NYPD, the New  
13 York City Sheriff, New York State DMV, and regional  
14 and federal transportation law enforcement  
15 authorities to address the scourge of ghost cars.  
16 Jesse Coburn's reporting reveals that the problem is  
17 widespread and crosses many state lines, and solving  
18 it will require a coordinated and holistic effort.

19           Lastly, we support Intro. 1011, Chair  
20 Brooks-Powers' bill that would require police to  
21 distribute information about reduced fare programs to  
22 persons arrested or summonsed for fare evasion. While  
23 not everyone who jumps a turnstile is doing so purely  
24 for economic reasons, the City's Fair Fares program  
25 is greatly undersubscribed, and access to half-price

1 fare may help to encourage people to pay to ride  
2 public transit. It's certainly worth try. We'd even  
3 support an effort to give drivers whose ghost cars  
4 are impounded information about E-ZPass. Thank you.  
5

6 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you so much.

7 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you, and  
8 I really appreciate the feedback in terms of the task  
9 force because that's where I was going when it became  
10 evident that there are some gaps between the State  
11 and the City agencies so thank you for that.

12 DANNY PEARLSTEIN: Good morning, Chairs  
13 and Council Members. My name is Danny Pearlstein. I'm  
14 the Policy and Communications Director at the Riders  
15 Alliance. Thank you so much for having me.

16 On the Fair Fares information bill,  
17 obviously we're strongly supportive. We believe that  
18 this is an important pathway to getting the word out  
19 about Fair Fares. At the same time, we believe it  
20 pairs incredibly well with an expansion of the  
21 program that we believe will allow it to reach its  
22 full potential, and we're so grateful to the Council  
23 and to Speaker Adams for supporting that expansion,  
24 and we hope to see it in the budget concluded this  
25 week.

At the same time, we are supportive of Council Member Feliz's bills as described by my Colleague, Eric McClure, and has illustrated the need by the website Streetsblog, both Jesse Coburn's series and, of course, the editor, Gersh Kuntzman's Criminal Mischief series of going around town and correcting ghost plates and obstructed plates.

At the same time, we feel strongly that this is about equity. It's about safety. It's also about equity. Drivers using ghost plates are abusing a privilege to operate and maintain a car in public space, and they're yet another obstacle to the fast and reliable service that bus riders so sorely need. Bus riders in general need a bold approach to priority on the busiest streets, and busways, of course, are the strongest remedy that the City has in its toolkit, and busways have been implemented successfully in the last four years in areas of Manhattan, Northern and Southern Manhattan, in Eastern Queens, and, of course, now in Downtown Brooklyn, and we're looking forward to Flatbush Avenue, but nowhere is a busway more clearly indicated than on Fordham Road in the Bronx where 85,000 riders every single day use what is in essence

the cross-Bronx expressway of bus route, the Bx12-SBS  
and the four other routes that run on Fordham Road.

We believe that, again the strongest remedy is the  
one that's indicated here. Obviously, there have been  
calls for balance, but balance can't come in the form  
of an obsolete street design that's 15 years old,  
that hasn't been implemented in the other boroughs in  
a decade and a half, and really would shortchange the  
85,000 daily riders from Upper Manhattan and the  
Bronx that rely on Fordham Road to get across town.

Thank you so much.

CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

ERIC MCCLURE: Chair Brooks-Powers, if I  
just may add one thing. I did want to underscore what  
Council Member Holden said about the obscured and  
defaced plates. It's a really important issue. A 65-  
dollar fine clearly is not deterring anyone from  
doing that, and, if Council Member Feliz is open to  
it, amending the bill to include language regarding  
obstructed or defaced plates I think would be very  
beneficial.

CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for  
that feedback.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: We'll definitely  
3 look into that. I think that's already in the bill,  
4 but the big question is what are the penalties. Is it  
5 just 20 dollars for completely covering the plate or  
6 is it something that would actually deter people so  
7 we'll definitely review the language and modify it if  
8 needed to include that. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you so much for  
10 your testimony. Leave it open for anyone else who  
11 wants to... One online?

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We'll turn to Steve  
13 Vaccaro who's joining us virtually.

14 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time will begin.

15 STEVE VACCARO: Thanks very much and thank  
16 you, Chairs Brooks-Powers and Hanks, for the  
17 opportunity to present evidence today concerning the  
18 problem of fraudulent and defaced license plates that  
19 the two bills, Intro. 987 and 988, are intended to  
20 address.

21 I'm an attorney representing vulnerable  
22 road users, pedestrians and cyclists, against the  
23 motorists who strike them, and I'm here to sound an  
24 alarm. There has been a dramatic pullback in traffic  
25 law enforcement against dangerous driving. Drivers

1 know it, and they increasingly are turning to  
2 fraudulent or defaced plates to evade  
3 responsibilities for tolls, for parking violations,  
4 and for the harm they cause when they strike New  
5 Yorkers. A recent landmark investigative report by  
6 Jesse Coburn specifically focused on so-called ghost  
7 tags, temporary paper license plates or tags issued  
8 by car dealers not in connection with the sale of a  
9 vehicle. They cannot be traced to any vehicle, these  
10 ghost tags. Coburn learned that hundreds of  
11 fraudulent temporary tags are issued by dozens of  
12 registered auto dealers who list as their business  
13 address a vacant lot in Bridgeton, New Jersey. In  
14 fact, no cars are sold out of that lot, and New  
15 Jersey is extremely lax in enforcing the rules  
16 against those dealers selling tags apart from any  
17 vehicle. One of my clients, Raymond Wallace of  
18 Brooklyn, was struck on May 8, 2023, while operating  
19 a motorized scooter with a driver who had ghost  
20 plates on issued by a dealership called Direct Auto  
21 Wholesale located at the vacant lot in in Bridgeton,  
22 New Jersey. Mr. Wallace went under the car, and he  
23 was dragged half a block before the driver stopped.  
24 Luckily, he lived, but he suffered a fracture to his  
25

1 humerus, lost income, and many other consequences.

2 Police were there. They happened to be right there at  
3 the scene. They stopped the driver. When they checked  
4 his information, they found out he didn't have a  
5 license. His license had been revoked for DWI and  
6 other violations, but he was driving a car given to  
7 him by someone in New Jersey..  
8

9 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

10 STEVE VACCARO: Car, and who bought these  
11 fake ghost tags from Direct Auto Wholesale in  
12 Bridgeton, New Jersey.

13 New York streets are being flooded with  
14 these fraudulent tags that are issued by these ghost  
15 dealerships for 100 dollars, and I will include in  
16 the written version of my remarks the citation to the  
17 police accident report, to the filed complaint  
18 against the driver and the auto dealership that we're  
19 bringing for negligent entrustment of these temporary  
20 tags and of this vehicle to this driver as well as  
21 the citation to the article by Mr. Coburn, but this  
22 is a problem that is growing by leaps and bounds and  
23 dramatically needs to be addressed by Intro. 987 and  
24 988, and I would urge that the law by its terms have  
25 extraterritorial effect to reach the furthest



possible reach it can into auto dealerships in New Jersey. There's a basis for this in the case law that I read in New York that if you are sending a vehicle with these temporary tags into the other state...

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Sir, if you could wrap up your testimony, please. Thank you.

If there is anybody present in Chambers who wishes to testify who hasn't signed a slip, please see the Sergeant-at-Arms in the back. We have one witness remaining. I call to the dais Alex Stein.

ALEX STEIN: Is the mic on? Last time I didn't have it on. You guys are crazy. I'll never turn it on. I got Selvena got the camera out.

I'm Primetime 99. I sued y'all and you guys ought to settle it because you guys don't believe in free speech, and I'm a pimp on a blimp.

I want to say I love New York. This Pride month has been so great. I've had so much anal sex. Like last night at that parade, I learned this new song. You ready? Jizz on my face, jizz on my face, I need that jizz post-haste, stick that dick deep in my shit, I want it in my poopy zone, I want to be a poopy clone, I love poo and gay sex, Pride month is the very best, that's why I stick it deep in your

1 butt, yes that blood's not from a cut, it's from the  
2 insertion because I stick it deep, because I am an  
3 anal super freak, I love free speech, it's so great,  
4 when I walk down the street and see some gay sex oh  
5 play in front of my face, I love gay sex and the  
6 taste of jizz, stick it in my mouth, jizz, jizz, I  
7 love it so much, I love Pride, it's the best month, I  
8 love Pride, I love it so much.

10 So I learned that song last night at  
11 Pride. My girl, AOC, was there. AOC, I miss you,  
12 baby, I'm sorry, please unblock me. I want to talk to  
13 you on Twitter.

14 Also, Oswald, I had some anal last night  
15 you would be jealous of, and I know you guys are all  
16 homosexuals because everybody in this city is a  
17 homosexual, and I love it. I just, when the guys,  
18 they whip out their things and then they slap it on  
19 my face, it brings me back to the locker room, the  
20 locker room with Lia Thomas, my favorite pro athlete.  
21 Lia Thomas, I'm swimming for you, I'm swimming for  
22 the marginalized, I'm swimming for the ones that  
23 can't swim for themselves. I'm Primetime 99, I'm a  
24 pimp on a blimp, and I love gay sex, and I love it  
25 with a dildo, I love it with a person, I love it with

1 a transgender, I love transgenders, I love  
2 transgenders, I love transgenders. I love them. Thank  
3 you. It's Primetime Stein on Instagram.  
4

5 Oh, and this city is run like shit.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We have one final  
7 witness, Jason Fromowitz. If you want, you want to  
8 slide down.

9 JASON FROMOWITZ: My name is Jason  
10 Fromowitz. I wanted to provide my perspective on the  
11 issues that we're talking about today as a resident  
12 of Manhattan.

13 First of all, I wanted to thank the  
14 Committees for addressing this issue of vehicles with  
15 improper license plates. From my perspective, it's a  
16 pervasive issue across the City, and I've just seen  
17 it continue to grow over the last several months.

18 I wanted to express my support for bills  
19 987 and 988, but I also wanted to encourage the  
20 Council and these Committees to address vehicles with  
21 completely missing plates, which I don't believe is  
22 addressed by this bill, as well as specifically  
23 calling for action for vehicles with defaced plates,  
24 I know was also raised but I saw as lacking in the  
25 current proposed bills.

1  
2           Additionally, I was hoping to enc the  
3 Committee to look into and address the lack of  
4 enforcement given the existing illegality of much of  
5 what was discussed today and how there appears to be  
6 an issue with enforcement rather than lack of  
7 existing laws and penalties. That's all I had. Thank  
8 you.

9           COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. I just want  
10 to acknowledge for the record witnesses who signed up  
11 to testify, Kaylie Olanick (phonetic) and Dontarius  
12 Ingbom (phonetic).

13           Back to you.

14           CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you so much.  
15 This hearing is adjourned. [GAVEL]

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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 June 30, 2023