

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

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HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

B E F O R E: YDANIS A. RODRIGUEZ
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Jimmy Van Bramer
Rory Lancman
I. Daneek Miller
Carlos Menchaca
Antonio Reynoso
James Vacca
Margaret Chin
David Greenfield
Mark Weprin

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

Meera Joshi
Commissioner
NYC Taxi and Limousine Commission

Susan Petito
Assistant Deputy Commissioner
NYPD Legal Bureau

Noah Budnick
Deputy Director
Transportation Alternatives

Carolyn Castro
Executive Director
Livery Roundtable

Michael Arvanites
Director of External Affairs
Black Car Assistance Corporation

Maribel Egipciaco
Make Queens Safer

David Pollack
Director
Melrose Taxi Action Center

Erhan Tuncel
Managing Director
League of Mutual Taxi Owners

Mamnunul Haq
New York Taxi Workers Alliance

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

Bhairvai Desai
New York Taxi Workers Alliance

Michael O'Laughlin
Cab Riders United

2 (Gavel)

3 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Good morning and
4 welcome to today's hearing of the City Council
5 Transportation Committee. My name is Ydanis
6 Rodriguez and I am the Chair of the Committee. Thank
7 you everyone for joining us here today. First let me
8 recognize my colleagues who are here with us, Council
9 Member Jimmy Van Bramer, who will join us in a few
10 seconds. Council Member Menchaca and Council Member
11 Lancman.

12 Before we begin I would like to take a
13 moment to welcome our new Committee Counsel Kelly
14 Taylor and my new communication director, Lou
15 Casacosta (phonetic). I also want to thank our
16 former counsel, now the Assistant Deputy Director for
17 Human Service, Lyle (phonetic) Frank. Thank you for
18 your great service that you have provided to the
19 council especially to the transportation in our city

20 This committee has made street safety our
21 highest priority and today that mission continues
22 building upon the extraordinary seriousness of street
23 safety related bills and resolutions we have already
24 considered and passed. Today we will consider two
25 more bills which are designed to advance the

2 important goal as we as a body has placed to take on,
3 protecting all users of our city streets.

4 Intro 371 sponsored by Majority Leader
5 Jimmy Van Bramer and I, will impose civil penalties
6 up to \$5,000 on hit and run drivers on top of any
7 other penalties imposed by state law. Hit and runs
8 are a particularly troubling brand of crime that
9 plagues our city streets. Not only do drivers who
10 hit and run show a disregard for life but they also
11 inhibit the ability of law enforcement to conduct a
12 thorough investigation and prevent injured
13 individuals from receiving prompt medical care with
14 many cases result in death.

15 As a society and as a city, we must make
16 it as clear as possible that such irresponsible
17 behavior would not be tolerated and that's what Intro
18 371 aims to do.

19 Today we have been joined by family
20 members of victims of hit and runs and to them I say.
21 No monetary compensation can ever replace the
22 precious life you have lost. But you are not alone.
23 Your city council cares and we will not rest until
24 Vision Zero is achieved. This bill is an example of
25 the council acting creatively in finding areas where

2 we can legislate on the city to advance street safety
3 without relying on action from Albany. I'm proud to
4 co-sponsor this bill with Council Member Van Bramer
5 and I look forward to hearing testimony on it today.

6 Intro 82 introduced by Council Member
7 Lancman would require the Taxi and Limousine
8 Commission to install signs in every taxi and for-
9 hire vehicle reminding passengers of the penalty they
10 could face if they assault the driver. It is our
11 responsibility to do our part to help deter the
12 brutal attacks we have seen on taxi and for-hire
13 vehicle drivers. Consideration of this bill today
14 comes at a tragically appropriate moment in our city.
15 In just the past month, two livery car drivers were
16 brutally murdered while on the job in the Bronx.
17 These awful incidents are stark reminders of the
18 dangers that taxi and livery drivers face every day
19 as they travel our seats to earn a living and serve
20 the riding public.

21 The solitary nature of their jobs and the
22 constant interaction with the public makes taxi and
23 livery drivers particularly vulnerable. As a city,
24 we are rightly holding the professional and trained
25 drivers a TLC regulated industry to a higher standard

2 when it comes to passenger and pedestrian safety on
3 the Vision Zero. It is therefore all the more
4 incumbent upon us to do everything we possibly can to
5 ensure that these same drivers are protected and feel
6 safe themselves every time they get behind the wheel.
7 And that's precisely the end of Intro 82.

8 With that I would like to ask my
9 colleague Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer to also
10 share his opening statement.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
12 much Chair Rodriguez for your leadership of this
13 committee, your commitment to Vision Zero and for
14 working with me on this very important piece of
15 legislation.

16 We in the city council along with the
17 administration, are committed to confronting the
18 plight of traffic related collisions, injuries and
19 deaths in our city. And establishing safe streets
20 for all. Everyday far too many people are injured or
21 killed on our streets and many, many more fear for
22 their safety, the safety of their children as they
23 try to navigate our sometimes chaotic streets by
24 foot, bicycle, car and bus. I want to call the names
25 of three people. Because in the last 18 months

2 alone, three individuals were hit by cars in my
3 district. And instead of those drivers stopping,
4 calling emergency services, checking to see if the
5 person that they had just struck was alive and could
6 be saved, those drivers sped away and left Luis Bravo
7 who was 19, to die on Broadway in Woodside. A driver
8 struck Kumar Rangunath, 64 years old on Northern
9 Boulevard in Dutch Kills and instead of trying to see
10 if he could be saved, that driver left Kumar Rangunath
11 to die on Northern Boulevard. And just last year
12 Karen Farris (phonetic) a 20 year old woman was
13 struck in Queens Plaza North and instead of stopping
14 to see if she was alive, if she could be saved, that
15 driver sped away.

16 Three separate deaths in my district in
17 the last 18 months where three drivers left. What we
18 want to do is make sure that drivers know that they
19 have an obligation, a moral responsibility to stop
20 and not flee. To see if those people who were just
21 struck could be saved. By leaving the scene of those
22 accidents, we may never fully know if those three
23 individuals could have been saved. Because the
24 people who struck them didn't give them that
25 opportunity. That's an outrage.

2 As we move towards the goal of achieving
3 Vision Zero. One of the issues we're urgently
4 addressing is that issue of those who flee. And when
5 someone leaves without reporting the incident,
6 they're not just breaking the law to evade
7 prosecution for possible wrongdoing, they're shirking
8 their moral responsibility by disregarding the
9 wellbeing of others. When an injury occurs as a
10 result of a collision, the failure to report the
11 accident delays and even precludes the response of
12 emergency personnel and that could be the difference
13 between life and death.

14 Currently, the penalties set forth in
15 Section 600 of the State's Vehicle Traffic Law are
16 minor compared to the severity of the consequences
17 for the victim. Particularly when the offender is
18 driving under the influence. Knowing that they could
19 face harsher penalties for staying at the scene of
20 the accident, drivers have a perverse incentive to
21 flee the scene. A number of bills in the state
22 senate and assembly have attempted to address this
23 disparity. But none have moved forward just yet. We
24 must act where Albany has not yet. And establish
25 civil penalties for those who commit this thoughtless

2 and irresponsible act. This civil penalties
3 established by Intro 371 introduced by myself, Chair
4 Rodriguez and 13 other of our colleagues are as
5 follows.

6 Failure to comply with the law carries a
7 minimum fine of \$250.00. A \$500 to \$1,000 fine when
8 the driver knows or is caused to know that physical
9 injury has occurred. A fine of up to \$5,000 when
10 such an injury is a serious physical injury and
11 \$2,000 to \$5,000 when such an injury results in any
12 person's death.

13 Now I want to be clear that no life can
14 be quantified and these numbers are not meant to
15 reflect the value of the live of Luis Bravo, Kumar
16 Ragunath and Karen Farrus. But it is an attempt to
17 establish a disincentive for those leaving the scene
18 of an accident and to remind those that they have an
19 obligation, a moral obligation to try to save the
20 lives who they may have hit with their automobile.

21 I want to thank and recognize the New
22 York City Police Department who is supportive of
23 Intro 371 and they're submitted testimony to that
24 effect. I want to thank all those advocates. I want
25 to thank the families of these victims. Luis Bravo's

2 family has been to many demonstrations in Queens
3 where we have really had a lot of tragedies and
4 they've been there every step of the way with us. So
5 with that I want to thank again, Chair Rodriguez for
6 his incredible leadership on this issue and I look
7 forward to the testimony.

8 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. Now
9 let's hear from Council Member Lancman.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Thank you Mr.
11 Chairman for affording this legislation hearing this
12 morning. And I just want to highlight the fact that
13 our taxi drivers, our livery drivers, all our TLC
14 licensed drivers play a very, very important role in
15 our transit system here in New York City. And as we
16 know and I know we'll hear testimony later today,
17 driving a taxi or livery is a very, very dangerous
18 job. And the tragedies that you, Mr. Chairman,
19 highlighted in your opening remarks are ones that we
20 are confronted with on a regular basis here in New
21 York. And what this legislation would do, would
22 recognize the important role that these men and women
23 play in our economy, in our transportation and put
24 them on par in some way with the protections that we
25 have afforded to train conductors, bus operators, and

2 others in making sure that the riding public is aware
3 that assaulting these individuals comes with very,
4 very substantial consequences. And we hope that by
5 doing so, we will deter the kind of conduct that we
6 see in New York City on too regular a basis.

7 So I certainly look forward to the
8 testimony of the TLC and I know we have some of our
9 taxi drivers here today as well. And I do appreciate
10 not just the hearing but putting it in the context of
11 trying to make our streets, or transit systems safer
12 for everybody who participates in it.

13 Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Before we hear
15 from the first panel, I would like to recognize
16 Council Member Chin, Vacca and Miller. And now we
17 will call the first panel represented by the Chairman
18 of the TLC, Commissioner Meera Joshi who has been a
19 great partner with all those initiatives that we've
20 been introducing and sponsoring from the council.
21 Thank you for your leadership and now we will have
22 again the Chair Meera Joshi and Susan Petito from the
23 NYPD and Matthew Smith from the NYPD, too.

24 And before we hear from them our
25 transportation counsel will do the swearing in.

2 KELLY TAYLOR: This is Kelly Taylor,
3 counsel to the committee. Can you please raise your
4 right hands? Do you affirm to tell the truth, the
5 whole truth and nothing but the truth in your
6 testimony today and to respond honestly to all
7 council member questions?

8 UNIDENTIFIED: I do. I do.

9 KELLY TAYLOR: Thank you.

10 COMMISSIONER JOSHI: Good morning and
11 thank you for this opportunity to speak on important
12 legislation. And thank you Chairman Rodriguez and
13 the Transportation Committee for all of your
14 assistance and help in our Vision Zero initiatives.
15 I'm Meera Joshi, Commissioner and Chair for the NYC
16 Taxi and Limousine Commission. And I am glad to be
17 here today to speak on proposed item Intro 82. A
18 local law which would warn the public of the
19 penalties for assaulting a taxi or livery driver.
20 And I'd like to thank Council Member Lancman for
21 introducing this important legislation.

22 The TLC licenses over 100,000 taxi and
23 for-hire vehicle drivers who travel on average more
24 than 100 miles each day as they help New Yorkers and
25 visitors get from one place to another. On the whole

2 our licensees are safe and responsible drivers. And
3 in fact, on September 8th the TLC will recognize the
4 best of the best. 295 drivers whose name will appear
5 on the first ever taxi and limousine honor roll.
6 These drivers have not been involved in a crash that
7 caused an injury, have not committed a single traffic
8 violation and have not violated any of TLC's safety
9 related rules within the last five years.

10 This is especially important given the
11 context of the legislation being considered today.
12 These drivers and all TLC drivers deserve protection.
13 As they keep their passengers safe in the backseat.
14 And I hope that you will join us on September 8th
15 also to honor these outstanding drivers.

16 As Council Member Lancman mentioned the
17 reality is that driving can be a very dangerous job.
18 Taxi drivers and for-hire vehicle drivers put in
19 countless hours behind the wheel in order to provide
20 for themselves and their families. And as they do
21 this they face personal risks. And just a few weeks
22 ago livery drivers, Mr. Kane and Mr. Bah (phonetic)
23 were tragically murdered in the Bronx. These events
24 are reminders of the risks associated with driving
25 professionally.

2 Intro 82 mandates and prominent warning
3 to deter those considering assaulting a driver.
4 Attention, assaulting a taxi or livery driver is
5 punishable up to 25 years in prison. It is our hope
6 that this warning will create a moment of reflection
7 and will be enough to prevent an assault on a driver.
8 Drivers of vehicles operating for-hire deserve this
9 help. Today all MTA subway, busses and stations
10 include signage alerting the public of penalties for
11 assaulting an MTA employee. As the driving force
12 behind the third largest mode of transportation in
13 New York City, TLC licensed drivers should be given
14 the same respect.

15 We support this legislation with one
16 recommendation. A few small changes to the bills
17 current language. As it's written today, the
18 legislation only includes taxi and FHV drivers. It
19 leaves out commuter van and para-transit drivers who
20 are also TLC licensees. So we would suggest that the
21 language be redrafted to insert TLC licensed driver
22 in the place of FHV and Taxi Driver. This change
23 would expand the bill to include all TLC licensed
24 drivers as they all deserve this level of protection.

2 This concludes my testimony. Thank you
3 again for giving me the opportunity to testify and
4 I'd be happy to answer any of your questions.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PETITO: Good morning
6 Chair Rodriguez and members of the council. I'm
7 Susan Petito, Assistant Deputy Commissioner of
8 Legislative Affairs of the New York City Police
9 Department. On behalf of Police Commissioner William
10 J. Bratton, I am pleased to be here today to express
11 the administration's support for Intro 371 which
12 would amend the Administrative Code to create civil
13 penalties for violation of vehicle and traffic law
14 Section 600, commonly referred to as leaving the
15 scene.

16 As you know there is an intense and
17 comprehensive focus within the administration and the
18 police department on enhancing traffic safety and
19 preventing vehicle collisions. The bill provides an
20 additional tool to encourage compliance with one of
21 the most basic responsibilities of drivers. To stop
22 and provide their identifying information if they
23 have cause to know that they hit someone or
24 something, causing either personal injury or property
25 damage.

2 The vehicle and traffic law sets forth a
3 penalty scheme for leaving the scene based on the
4 type of injury or damage caused. For property
5 damage, leaving the scene is a traffic infraction
6 punishable by a fine of up to \$250.00 and/or
7 imprisonment for up to 15 days. For personal injury,
8 the criminal penalty range from a Class B misdemeanor
9 to a Class D felony with fines ranging from \$250.00
10 to \$5,000 depending upon the circumstances, the
11 extent of the personal injury and any prior
12 convictions.

13 Intro 371 provides an additional remedy
14 for these egregious violations allowing for civil
15 penalties which would be enforced by the service of a
16 notice of violation returnable to the environmental
17 control board. The bill represents a thoughtful
18 means of holding drivers accountable for the basic
19 decency one would expect from those operating motor
20 vehicles on our crowded streets.

21 We appreciate the opportunity to provide
22 our comments on the bill and thank you for your
23 consistent focus on the issue of traffic safety.

24 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Before we get
25 into questions, I would like to also recognize

2 Council Member Reynoso who is here with us, and also
3 Council Member Vacca.

4 I know that also the Chair of the TLC she
5 has to leave very soon because other events that she
6 has on her schedule so I would like to ask my
7 colleagues if there any questions that we have
8 related to the TLC please make those questions first,
9 in case she has to leave before this panel section is
10 over.

11 I have a few questions first. One is on
12 Intro 82, do we have information on how many assaults
13 of taxi and for-hire vehicle drivers account for 2013
14 and also so far in 2014. And is the rate for assault
15 increasing or decreasing?

16 COMMISSIONER JOSHI: I have information
17 on 2014 which I can provide for you today and I can
18 provide for you after the end of this hearing and
19 follow-up information on 2013. In year to date, or
20 actually up until August 24 of 2014, Yellow Taxi
21 drivers, there has been one felony assault and 27
22 misdemeanor assaults. Livery taxi drivers, I'm
23 sorry, livery drivers, there's been four felony
24 assaults and 11 misdemeanor assaults. So that's a

2 total of five felony assaults year to date and 38
3 misdemeanor assaults.

4 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Is that 2014, you
5 said?

6 COMMISSIONER JOSHI: That's 2014. Up
7 until August 24th. And I will provide for you,
8 following the hearing, the 2013 statistics.

9 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: And if you can
10 share with us if there has been an increase or
11 decrease compared to 2013, to the number that we have
12 in 2014.

13 COMMISSIONER JOSHI: Yes, we can do the
14 same comparison of January 1st to August 24, 2013 and
15 compare to this year to give you a sense of whether
16 there's an increase or decrease.

17 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Okay. My second
18 question is on Intro 371 at the beginning of this
19 section we overrode a veto of Mayor Bloomberg to
20 require the PD to begin reporting on hit-and-run
21 incidents in 2015. Have you started the process of
22 collecting that data? How many hit and run incidents
23 were recorded in 2013 and so far in 2014?

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PETITO: Well we will
25 develop it, you know, certainly in time to comply

2 with the mandate. Um, that information is captured,
3 I don't know if it's captured in exactly the way the
4 legislation requires, but it will be. And it will be
5 made available as required.

6 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: And before I call
7 my colleagues, I just to say that in concentration
8 with the colleagues who've co-sponsored our Intro
9 371, I would like to say that even though we have
10 started proposing the maximum of \$5,000, while we
11 also are here for many constituents through the
12 social media there is also an interest in seeing the
13 \$5,000 increase. So I say that we continue
14 conversation to see how at the end of the process, we
15 look at the possibility not to limit on the \$5,000 as
16 a maximum penalty but to work with a higher number
17 that both the administration and us can agree.

18 So, first let's go for questions, Council
19 Member Miller.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Good morning to
21 the panel. Thank you for coming out and Commission
22 Joshi, so good to see you again and I applaud all
23 that is being done today on behalf of public safety
24 and in particular Intro 82 and protecting our taxi
25 and limousine employees. Having been one that was at

2 the forefront, obviously at the MTA assault
3 legislation. I know how important it is to... that
4 those workers that they return home to their family,
5 but most important but to public safety in general.

6 So that being said, I'm going to kind of
7 parlay some of that experience over here and ask you,
8 what are the methods of recording the assaults? Do
9 you have a particular group of folks designated to
10 handle this problem?

11 COMMISSIONER JOSHI: By recording, do you
12 mean tracking the number of incidents?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Yes.

14 COMMISSIONER JOSHI: That is the primary
15 responsibility of NYPD. And we work with OMAP a
16 section of NYPD to make sure that we get the data on
17 assaults that happen and effect our licensees and
18 that we can keep track of that as well. But they're
19 the primary repository for all crime statistics.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: So... I'm going to
21 digress for a moment, because I know when this
22 legislation, and I'll be brief, took place on the MTA
23 side we kind of had the same system in place and
24 there was no real coordination and the agency itself
25 had no idea that there was hundreds of employees

2 being assaulted and so I think that it would like of
3 behoove us now that we have that kind of agency
4 coordination which kind of segue in to my next
5 question. About the coordination between the police
6 department and most importantly the district
7 attorney's office. Because it's also been my
8 experience that most of these cases were not
9 prosecuted as felony cases and most of the time these
10 assaults in the past of transit workers were given
11 all type of reprimands of getting off with
12 misdemeanors. And so, in order for it to have real
13 teeth, there has to be coordination between the
14 agencies and I would implore that we kind of commit
15 to that here today. Because it is that important to
16 those workers and the public safety.

17 COMMISSIONER JOSHI: Absolutely, and I
18 think should Intro 82 pass, it would be important to
19 let the effected DA's know that it is a law and it's
20 a warning that everybody has as soon as they get into
21 a taxi or a livery.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Okay. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Council Member
24 Menchaca.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Yes. Thank you
3 so much. And I also went to echo the sentiments of
4 the good work both of these Intros are doing for
5 public safety. I want to focus on Lancman's Intro
6 82. I'm really specifically looking at maybe
7 expanding a little bit more of how we think about the
8 way we communicate the message and would TLC be open
9 to incorporating a digital message on the technology
10 that is currently available for all the cabs.

11 COMMISSIONER JOSHI: Absolutely. So
12 Yellow taxis and borough taxis have an in-taxi
13 technology now which has a screen on it and this
14 would be an excellent portal for giving the message.
15 For those vehicles that are licensed by us that don't
16 have that technology, we would have to use a sticker
17 or some other visual aid. But I think stickers,
18 obviously are the most practical. But I think we
19 should leverage where we have the opportunity to add
20 this to the things that appear on that portal.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: And also just
22 to be clear, we were talking on the side here and it
23 would be an addition to not to replace the...

24 COMMISSIONER JOSHI: In addition to
25 sticker, a second reminder on the taxi TV screen?

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Right.

3 COMMISSIONER JOSHI: We're open to
4 whatever the most effective method is to get the
5 point across. And so we welcome your suggestions.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Great. Thank
7 you again to both of my colleagues.

8 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Council Member
9 Reynoso.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Hello, how are
11 you Commissioner?

12 COMMISSIONER JOSHI: Good, how are you?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Good. It's a
14 pleasure to see you again. And very happy to see you
15 here and again I think you're doing a great job, by
16 the way. Specifically, with the TLC drivers, this
17 piece of legislation that is being pushed by Council
18 Member Lancman is being held to high regard in my
19 district. Which is a largely Dominican population
20 and many taxi drivers. So they do want to show their
21 support. I know that it's still not a felony to
22 assault a TLC driver but I just want to make sure
23 that, you know, the general public knows that a lot
24 of these drivers are walking around with money in
25 their pockets and it's their livelihood for the week

2 at times. And to not have that sense of security is
3 something that's of concern to them on a daily basis.
4 It's a job where we're actually working with a
5 divider in a place where you would want the most
6 pleasant ride and not to feel threatened.

7 So I just want to show my support to both
8 pieces of legislation and actually surprised that
9 Council Member Van Bramer's legislation isn't already
10 on-hand. So glad to see that he caught that and is
11 doubling the penalties so that folks really start
12 taking it serious. You cannot leave a crime. So I'm
13 extremely excited about that.

14 I did just want to give another statement
15 quickly in Spanish for my driver's specifically in my
16 district.

17 (SPANISH SPEAKING)

18 Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Council Member
20 Vacca.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: Commissioner, I
22 thank you too for your fine work. Relative to the
23 Lancman legislation, which I'm a co-sponsor of. I do
24 see a need to follow-up namely with, once an arrest
25 is made of someone who attacks a taxicab driver, I

2 think that we should have a presence in the courts.
3 I'm interested in knowing, what happens to these
4 individuals? I dread to think what happens, because
5 I'm just fearful too many of them are right back out
6 on the streets. I don't know how many of them end up
7 getting paroled, community service or how many of
8 them actually go to jail for attacking a taxicab
9 driver. I can't help but put the news on in my
10 borough, in the Bronx, and see this constantly
11 happening to cab drivers. And I'm outraged by it,
12 but the TLC would be well served to have a component
13 in their office that does court monitoring. What are
14 the DA's and the judges doing when it comes to
15 prosecuting these individuals and what type of
16 punishment are they actually getting. I think the
17 public would be well served by knowing. I think that
18 when we do find out it would be an awakening.

19 But I would like your agency to consider
20 this. It's not something that I want to do
21 legislatively, but it's something I think we can do
22 administratively. I'd like your response to that.
23 I'd like to know if that's something that you've
24 considered or is that something you're interested in
25 pursuing?

2 COMMISSIONER JOSHI: It's definitely
3 something we'll consider. I think that piggybacks
4 off of Council Member Miller's comment about
5 following through with the DA and understanding what
6 happens with the prosecution. And it is an important
7 message to tell the rest of the story. It's one... the
8 first part of the story is there's been an attack and
9 sometimes tragically a death. The second part is
10 that there's been an arrest. But we're often missing
11 the third part, which is what happens after the
12 arrest. And I think that's where we can all work
13 together to be better about the messaging to the
14 public it serves as a deterrent as well as the
15 sticker serves as deterrent to those who are thinking
16 along the lines that taxi drivers and livery drivers
17 are easy targets and that they can get away with it.

18 So it's definitely a consideration for us
19 and I think there's an important public message in
20 that information. So thank you for raising it.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: Commissioner, I
22 thank you for you being open to this. There's not a
23 day that goes by that we don't read about people who
24 have committed crimes, been convicted 8 times, 12
25 times and 15 times. We assume in the newspapers,

2 when we see someone arrested, we assume that that's
3 resolved. It's not resolved. Because recidivism is
4 a big problem in this city. Now recidivism, when it
5 comes to people attacking cab drivers, really worries
6 me. If they're going to continually prey on cab
7 drivers or if they think they can go from one borough
8 to another and do what they want to do. So, we just
9 can't be considering legislation in vacuum. The
10 legislation sometimes is adopted, but then where do
11 we go from there. And this piece is missing, this
12 piece is missing. What happens when someone is
13 arrested for attacking a cab driver? That piece is
14 missing. So for our legislation to be successful, we
15 need court monitoring. The public has a right to
16 know what judges did what. They have a right to know
17 what the DA has recommended. Shedding some sunlight
18 never hurts. I think we need sunlight here. And I'd
19 be interested in working with you if you need me to.
20 I hope we could involve other members but I think
21 it's something your agency really should pursue.

22 COMMISSIONER JOSHI: Yes. And it's
23 something we couldn't do alone. It obviously
24 involves coordination with PD and the District
25 Attorney's office.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: Yes. And if you
3 need assistance from the council in legislation, but
4 I do think a court monitoring project is called for.
5 Thank you.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Thank you
7 very much Chair. Just one quick question, Deputy
8 Commissioner. And dove tailing on what Chair
9 Rodriguez asked earlier. Is the department currently
10 keeping track of areas where there's a prevalence in
11 hit-and-run accidents and when you are able to
12 determine those negative trends, does enforcement,
13 increased enforcement follow where you may have seen
14 that. Obviously, we're all too familiar with the
15 response when there's a hit and run accident, as
16 we've seen in our district when there are those
17 electronic billboards that go up and all of that
18 after the crime is committed. Um, but are there
19 other tools that are used when you determine
20 patterns, and do you determine patterns, or are you
21 in the process of figuring out how to determine
22 patterns?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PETITO: Well no, as
24 a routine regular part of the work of each individual
25 police precinct. They will identify the collision

2 prone locations which, of course, sometimes include
3 hit and runs. If they're serious consequences. If
4 there's a critical injury, another component of the
5 police department will come into play, which is the
6 Collision Investigation Squad. And again, they'll
7 make... they're do a detailed investigation and make
8 recommendations about any number of either
9 engineering solutions or enforcements solutions and
10 again that's also part of the regular work of the
11 Traffic Safety Team in each precinct. So if there is
12 a corridor where there is a certain number of hit and
13 runs, it wouldn't necessarily be hit and runs, it
14 would also be any collision, but they would be
15 looking at that very carefully. And again, in
16 traffic stat, they are questioned and routinely
17 discussed by... those locations are discussed by the
18 command structure of the Transportation Bureau with
19 DOT presence. So it is a pretty comprehensive effort
20 to identify and try to ameliorate conditions which
21 may lead to vehicle collisions.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Okay. I want
23 to thank Commissioner Bratton again and the NYPD as
24 well as the administration for working with us on
25 this and supporting Intro 371. Thank you.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PETITO: Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: I'd also like to
4 say before calling to our last council member,
5 Council Member Chin who wants to ask questions, then
6 Council Member Dan Garodnick also has any questions
7 to ask. That we also know that we need a lot of help
8 from Albany when it comes to providing more tools to
9 the DA to be able to prosecute cases related to hit
10 and run. Like for me, a personal case that I was
11 involved with, one of my best friend's sons, he died
12 as a result of a hit and run on Mosholu Parkway. And
13 even though on Fox 5, they aired the video where the
14 driver who did the hit and run, he few hours after he
15 put his car on fire to get rid of the evidence. And
16 still the tools that the DA have and the NYPD have,
17 Albany did not allow, in this particular case for the
18 families of Jose Rivera (phonetic) to get more than...
19 he has got two years and it took us like to mobilize
20 to go the extra mile to get a particular case that
21 wasn't just limited to a driver who hit someone in a
22 state. That guy, a few hours after, you seen the
23 video on Fox 5, putting his car on fire, walk out
24 from that scene just to get rid of the evidence.
25 Still the state law does not allow all the tools, so

2 I also know that we need to work in collaboration
3 with the DA and NYPD and to see to... to ask for more
4 support from Albany so that we can have... that we can
5 be able to strengthen the law that we can apply in
6 those cases where irresponsible drivers, they hit and
7 they leave the scene of those incidents.

8 Council Member Chin.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you Chair.

10 Um, in the Commissioner's testimony, I think she made
11 a great suggestion in terms of adding commuter vans
12 and para-transit. Especially in my district, we have
13 a lot of commuter vans that serve Chinatown, to
14 other, to Flushing and to Brooklyn. Does the police
15 department or the TLC keep track of incidents of
16 assault against commuter van drivers or para-transit
17 drivers?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PETITO: If they are
19 performing livery duties, yes, yes, they would be
20 included in the numbers that Commissioner Joshi
21 provided. And those numbers are based on stick
22 counts. There is no actual way to separate out as a
23 computerized category, assaults on livery drivers or
24 for-hire vehicle drivers, so what our folks did was
25 go through the assaults and then cull them out by hand

2 in a sense. So, it would include any kind of livery
3 driver for-hire.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: But the statistic
5 that she provided earlier, it did break out in terms
6 of taxi driver and livery drivers. So the police
7 department can be able to do that, whether that for-
8 hire vehicle, or that TLC licensed..

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PETITO: Well I
10 believe that they would.. I don't believe that they
11 would have done it separately. It would just be
12 livery. But I will check on that.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yes, I mean, if
14 you're providing statistics for 2013 it would also be
15 good to get the fuller pictures in terms of assault
16 on commuter, van drivers and para-transit.

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PETITO: My
18 speculation is that they're included in the general
19 livery, like non-taxi folks. But I'll confirm that.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Okay. Thank you.
21 And um Chair, I also would like to add my name to the
22 bill, Intro 82 as a co-sponsor. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: So thank you to
24 the TLC and the NYPD for your participation. And
25 also for supporting those two bills. As we know, a

2 special thanks to Families for Safe Streets and
3 Transportation Authority and all those groups that
4 have been advocating to improve safety in our city.
5 So thank you and now we'll be calling the next panel.

6 Noah Budnick, Deputy Director,
7 Transportation Alternatives, Michael Arvanites for
8 Black Car Assistance Corporation and Carolyn Castro.

9 (PAUSE)

10 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: You may begin.

11 DEPUTY DIRECTOR BUDNICK: Good morning
12 council members. My name is Noah Budnick, I'm Deputy
13 Director of Transportation Alternatives. Thank you
14 for convening this hearing this morning. Thank you
15 Chairman Rodriguez, thank you Majority Leader Van
16 Bramer for putting in this bill and thank you Council
17 Member Lancman as well for putting in this
18 legislation.

19 I just want to speak quickly to Council
20 Member Lancman's legislation. It sounds like there's
21 broad agreement and we're one of those agreeing
22 parties. It's a common sense bill. The fact that it
23 mirrors the MTA's rules about putting up signs
24 educating the public that it's a crime to assault
25 subway and bus drivers. It makes sense to extend

2 those same protections to all for-hire vehicle
3 drivers. I appreciated TLC Chair Joshi's
4 recommendation to put the signs in all TLC regulated
5 vehicles and hopefully the council will work with the
6 TLC to incorporate that.

7 I live in Flatbush, so I'm a dollar van
8 rider. And having those signs in dollar vans as well
9 as all the para-transit vehicles that serve the city
10 is great. We have a huge public transit network in
11 the city and we forget that all for-hire vehicles are
12 part of that network. And so they help us live car
13 free lifestyles in New York which is a wonderful
14 thing about living in the city, but they also set the
15 pace on city streets. So they're safety is paramount
16 and can't be separated from Vision Zero and giving
17 driver's piece of mind will hopefully help them
18 concentrate more when they're driving their vehicle.

19 On Council Member Lancman's bill, one
20 thing I appreciate, it kind of is the nexus of public
21 safety and traffic safety and we've seen, as the city
22 has gotten safer over the years, the traffic safety
23 is on par with a lot of public safety concerns.
24 There's more people killed in traffic than are
25 murdered by guns. And as the Police Commissioner

2 says, a death is a death. And so the way that this
3 bill looks after public safety in the transportation
4 context is unique. And I think it is great for the
5 council to move forward on.

6 On Council Member, Majority Leader Van
7 Bramer's bill, we're also very supportive of this
8 legislation to extend hit and run penalties into the
9 New York City Administrative Code. We have a couple
10 of recommendations that hopefully will strengthen the
11 bill. I'm glad to hear that Chair Rodriguez
12 mentioned being open to increased fines, because
13 that's basically the theme of the recommendations
14 that we hope you'll consider this morning.

15 You know, since New York City can't pass
16 laws assigning jail time for hit and run, we hope
17 that you consider increasing the monetary fines in
18 this bill to serve as a deterrent, as a stronger
19 deterrent for drivers so that they know that this is
20 very serious.

21 Furthermore, we feel like there should be
22 protections extended to the most vulnerable people on
23 New York City streets. Our young and our old, people
24 who are walking, who are biking. We all know the
25 statistics, they're disproportionately affected in

2 traffic. You know, somebody who is walking, is ten
3 times more likely to be killed in a collision than
4 passengers in a vehicle. So to include increased
5 penalties in the hit and run legislation for drivers
6 who strike somebody on foot and on bike, I think
7 would be great. It would mirror the state statutes
8 that we've all championed, Hayley and Diego's Law.
9 And the city council's new bill that the mayor just
10 signed that allows the police department to better
11 enforce failure to yield rules in the city. So more
12 protections for people on foot, on bikes, for those
13 who are old and those who are young.

14 Then there's an issue of repeat offenders
15 which is in the state statute of hit and runs and if
16 you are convicted in multiple hit and runs there's
17 additional fines that go along with that. Looking at
18 the city council legislation today, it seems that it
19 mirrors the state statute in a lot of ways, so
20 including that provision for repeat offenders I think
21 would help show a very strong... send a very strong
22 message from the council. And also for drivers who
23 are intoxicated or drivers who have a suspended
24 license or who are unlicensed. Often times people
25 flee the scene because they think they can escape the

2 law, they can get away with it. Or with intoxicated
3 drivers, the way the law is set up right now is that
4 if you're drunk and you hit somebody, the best thing
5 you can do is flee and sober up. And that is a very
6 perverse incentive that hopefully the council can
7 work with the de Blasio administration to correct and
8 again send a strong message to New Yorkers.

9 Moving forward it will interesting to
10 learn more about who are the drivers involved in hit
11 and run and if there are efforts that can be made to
12 target them. Transportation Alternative feels like a
13 very important part of this legislation will be a
14 high profile and aggressive public education campaign
15 that makes New Yorkers aware of these penalties. Our
16 goal is not to put people in jail or to give people
17 fines, our goal is to prevent the collisions from
18 happening in the first place. Or if there is one, to
19 insure that the driver stays at the scene so that the
20 families and the victims can get justice and help as
21 soon as possible. And that's what we appreciate
22 about the legislation this morning. So along with
23 that, the public education should accompany this
24 legislation when it rolls out and on an ongoing basis
25 so that people know that this isn't an I Gotcha, this

2 isn't just the city trying to burden New Yorkers any
3 more. This is the city council and the mayor sending
4 a message to New Yorkers that New York is a city of
5 high morals, we care about our fellow New Yorkers, we
6 extend a helping hand in the event of a collision and
7 that that is the goal of these laws that are being
8 put forth today.

9 So thank you for having us here this
10 morning and I look forward to working with you on
11 these bills.

12 DIRECTOR CASTRO: Good morning and thank
13 you for spearheading this initiative Councilman
14 Lancman and the Transportation Committee for
15 following through. Thank you Councilman Rodriguez.

16 My name is Carolyn Castro, I'm the
17 Executive Director of the Livery Roundtable. I'm
18 here this morning to discuss Intro 82, to "requiring
19 signs regarding penalties for assaulting taxi and
20 livery drivers". We thank you for spearheading
21 protective measures to the drivers of the livery and
22 black car industries and for listening to our
23 concerns for our constituents.

24 Overall we have no issue with this bill.
25 However, we would like the language to reflect more

2 closely to the bill Council Member Lancman carried in
3 the Assembly which specifically states, every for-
4 hire vehicle shall post a sign on the interior of
5 such vehicle stating in not less than 16 point print
6 that quote again, attention assaulting a taxi driver
7 is punishable by up to 25 years in prison. Provided
8 that operators of the livery or black car vehicles
9 shall have the right but not the obligation to post
10 such a sign while providing for-hire vehicle
11 services.

12 It is a minor difference in the
13 description of the bill, but a very big difference to
14 the driver, as it allows him the flexibility to
15 decide whether or not he would like the sign placed
16 on the vehicle.

17 Thank you very much.

18 DIRECTOR ARVANITES: Good morning. My
19 name is Michael Arvanites. I'm the Director of
20 External Affairs at the Black Car Assistance
21 Corporation. I appreciate the opportunity once again
22 to speak with you and give testimony regarding the
23 package bills before the committee. Thank you Chair.

24 While the Black Car Assistance
25 Corporation always supports efforts to improve driver

2 safety, Intro 82's requirement that signage be placed
3 in every for-hire vehicle is against 40 years of
4 regulations for the industry in New York City.
5 Placing any signage in black cars and luxury limos is
6 counter to the stark TLC rules. There's always been
7 exemptions for black cars and luxury limos to show
8 any signage which includes but isn't limited to
9 licensing the vehicle, base affiliation, there's no
10 camera requirements, no passenger bill of rights, the
11 driver's license information, etc. in the rear of the
12 car for the passenger view.

13 It's quite frankly a non-issue for our
14 industry. We almost exclusively deal with corporate
15 accounts and 100% credit card and invoice accounts.
16 As Council Member Reynoso pointed out before he left,
17 the dangers in the cash that they have on hand, the
18 luxury limo and black car industry doesn't have any
19 cash on hand. So that sort of eliminates the
20 incentive for assault.

21 When safety practices like cameras and
22 partitions were wisely put in the yellow and livery
23 industry vehicles, a car vow was made for the black
24 car industry. We request the same in this instance
25 from Councilman Lancman's bill. There has been no

2 recorded instance of assault on black car luxury
3 limos as you heard the commissioner testify. She
4 include the assaults on taxi-drivers and livery cars
5 and then left out the fact that in the history of the
6 deluxe limo and black car industry there haven't been
7 any.

8 It is simply stated that signage is not
9 necessary in our cars as the drivers and passengers
10 have a professional relationship and understanding.
11 The clients know the driver and the drivers know the
12 client. The professional look of the cars as well as
13 the client's perceived safety would be diminished by
14 requiring otherwise.

15 Chairman Rodriguez, I thank you and the
16 committee members for their time and attention
17 protecting driver and pedestrian safety. The Black
18 Car Assistance Corporation supports the other measure
19 before the committee today. However I leave you with
20 request that Intro 82 be further reviewed and altered
21 to reflect what has been a long standing practice by
22 the TLC for licensing and signage of black cars and
23 luxury limos.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Thank you very
25 much for your testimony. Um, yes, so when we had the

2 bill in the State Legislature, we had carve out for
3 livery and black car drivers. The issue was raised
4 at the time and it's something certainly cognizant
5 of, we wanted to leave it as straight forward as
6 possible and here at this hearing what idea people
7 might have. For the black car industry, am I correct
8 that in almost every instance the operator of the
9 vehicle is the owner of the vehicle? Isn't that the
10 way that industry is structured?

11 DIRECTOR ARVANITES: You have to own at
12 least 51% of your car. I would say without having
13 the figures in front of me, over 90% own 100% of
14 their cars. The only exemption would be when the
15 base operator they're affiliated with sometimes
16 assist with the financing and leasing of the car.
17 They own a percentage of it.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: So I think what
19 we're looking at based on what we had done in the
20 legislature, um and your testimony, is something that
21 would allow an owner/operator of the vehicle to have
22 the right but not the obligation. And something
23 along those lines we can have a dialogue about,
24 getting the words right. But I'm certainly aware of
25 the differences in yellow cabs, liveries, black cars

2 and the different threats and customer base that they
3 all deal with. So I appreciate your bringing it up
4 and we're definitely going to talk about it.

5 DIRECTOR ARVANITES: Thank you
6 Councilman.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Thank you
8 very much again Mr. Chair and thank you to all the
9 panelists and Noah, I want to thank Transportation
10 Alternatives. Once again you've been amazing
11 partners in our efforts to achieve Vision Zero and
12 you are there and have been there with us every
13 single time there's been a tragedy in my district and
14 throughout the city which has been far too many as we
15 all know. And I know we're about to hear a message
16 from the families from my district, but I want to say
17 that Chair Rodriguez and I are already talking and in
18 agreement that we would very much agree and want to
19 pursue additional fines. And I appreciate your
20 recommendations and your support of this legislation
21 and all the work that we all continue to do together
22 to achieve Vision Zero. So thank you for that and
23 we'll continue to talk about those recommendations.
24 But I appreciate everything you've done for the

2 families, including Luis Bravo and Maribel is about
3 to testify on behalf of the family. But I thank you.

4 DEPUTY DIRECTOR BUDNICK: I appreciate
5 it. Any way that we can be of assistance, we're here
6 for you.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: I have just a... I
8 want to make a distinction between the two
9 organizations, obviously an association and one
10 representing owner operators. I think that the
11 objective of this legislation is to protect workers.
12 Also to facilitate public safety and again drawing
13 back on my experience on the MTA and the assault
14 legislation. It was stated that in terms of the
15 black car, because they're pretty much a non-cash
16 entity, that assaults don't occur. And I would just
17 like to submit that nor does bus drivers or
18 conductors carry cash either, and assaults occur
19 every day. And so, I would very much caution not
20 having signage for anyone. I think for this
21 legislation to have teeth, signs have to exist. And
22 so I just wanted to clarify that. But also in terms
23 of the Association and to the members of the panel
24 who have really bought input to the critical
25 legislation. I would say that you have to continue

2 to be vigilant in doing so and as was indicated by
3 Council Member Vacca and other members of the council
4 here. This legislation wasn't brought by the
5 agencies, it wasn't brought by the owner/operators,
6 right, and this is to protect the workers and is
7 incumbent upon yourself to make sure that it has
8 teeth. That all those involved continue to do what
9 they have to do. That the agencies coordinate within
10 each other because if you don't do it, it's not going
11 to get done. So I applaud what you're doing. But
12 there is a lot more work to be done to make sure that
13 this really has an impact that was intended.

14 (Background talk)

15 (Pause)

16 MARIBEL EGIPCIACO: My name is Maribel
17 Egipciaco, I am from Queens to Make Queens Safer. A
18 group of parents that were very concerned about all
19 the deaths of tragic crashes in Queens. I am also
20 here today on behalf of some of the Parents from
21 Safer Streets which is a group of parents that
22 organized themselves from all different places in the
23 city that have lost their family member due to
24 crashes.

2 None of them could come here today
3 because it was kind of... they either had to work or
4 had something else on their agendas, but the major
5 message is thank you so much for presenting this bill
6 to increase the fines on people who leave the scene
7 of an accident or a crash.

8 The family of Luiz Bravo, Martha
9 Bruncajas (sp?) couldn't make it, but she says that
10 the pain that she always feels because of the death
11 or her son is not going to go away. But anything
12 that can be done to help stop all of these tragedies,
13 she supports and she wants them to be passed. She
14 said that she wants, even though they haven't found
15 the person that killed her son, she wants the people
16 that are found and are taken to pay for what they've
17 done. And increasing those fines and make awareness
18 of other people not to do it. That they have to stay
19 and wait to see what happened.

20 There was another family which is not in
21 the Queens District. The mother of Josebel
22 (phonetic) Rivera that also was killed in a hit and
23 run. She basically... I can read it in Spanish.

24 (SPANISH SPEAKING)

25

2 In other words she saying that, thank you
3 so much for putting this legislation. That it is one
4 step forward to Vision Zero and that she wants to
5 make sure that these people... the negligent people,
6 the drivers that they don't care about others, that
7 are caught and that they pay a bigger fine than what
8 they are doing fine. Because people don't care.

9 So the people from Families for Safer
10 Streets, also mentioned that they said that Vision
11 Zero is a multi-facet process and any little
12 legislation or any little changes that we can make to
13 help stop and get to the Vision Zero is very
14 important and please pass all these laws. Thank you.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Maribel, I
16 just want to say thank you for representing the
17 family of Luis Bravo and we have gotten to know each
18 other and seen each other a lot and we wish it were
19 under better circumstances. But every single time
20 there's been a tragedy in Queens, whether it's on
21 Northern Boulevard or Broadway or Queens Plaza,
22 you're there working to make it safer and making sure
23 that no mother loses her child again on the streets
24 of New York. And your courage and your tenacity
25 along with all of the members of your groups and the

2 families is inspiration to me and to all of us to
3 continue the work to make sure that we find justice
4 for Luis Bravo in Woodside and every other person who
5 is killed. So I want to say thank you on behalf of
6 everyone in my district but really across the city
7 for the work that you and Christina does and all of
8 the families. So thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: I'd also like to
10 recognize Council Member Weprin and now let's call
11 the last panel, Michael O'Laughlin, Erhan Tuncel,
12 David Pollack, Mamnunul Haq.

13 (Pause)

14 DIRECTOR POLLACK: Good morning Chairman
15 Rodriguez and council members. My name is David
16 Pollack. I'm the Director of the Melrose Taxi Action
17 Center and we represent the 26,000 members of Melrose
18 Credit Union. We believe drivers leaving the scene
19 of hit and run accidents should be punished in excess
20 of the current law and we thank Council Member Van
21 Bramer for doing just that in his Intro 371 which we
22 support.

23 We also support that Taxi and Livery
24 Driver Protection Act and the Intro 82. And thank
25 you Councilman Lancman and all the sponsors for

2 initiating this long overdue law. This law will
3 result in criminals thinking twice before making our
4 drivers their next victim. Amtrak train cars, New
5 Jersey Transit train cars, New York City buses and
6 subways all have signage warning potential criminals
7 of the penalties involved for assaulting
8 transportation workers. We believe this law is a
9 visual deterrent to crime and finally equalizes the
10 value of live of our drivers with those and other
11 segments of the transportation industry.

12 On behalf of each member of Melrose
13 Credit Union, we urge this committee to vote and pass
14 this proposed legislation and we also have a message
15 for all those thugs and thieves and criminals. Don't
16 assault our taxi drivers or you're going to jail for
17 25 years.

18 DIRECTOR TUNCEL: Good morning Chairman
19 Rodriguez and members of the Transportation
20 Committee, my name is Erhan Tuncel, I'm the Managing
21 Director of the League of Mutual Taxi Owners. Thank
22 you for allowing me to testify today.

23 The League of Mutual Taxi Owners stand to
24 support both bills that's on the floor today, 371 and
25 82.

2 On 371, Councilman Van Bramer, I think
3 hit and run is one of the most despicable acts any
4 driver can commit. And we fully support your bill.
5 And again, just like the gentleman before our panel,
6 I don't think the penalties go far enough. And that
7 you should look into increasing the penalties on hit
8 and runs and there's no reason for anyone to do that.

9 On 82, on September 20, 2010 we were
10 shocked to hear that Governor Paterson used his veto
11 power to deny taxi drivers, the unsung heroes of the
12 city and state, the right to be protected from
13 assailants. Taxi Driver's Protection Act had a great
14 potential to give taxi drivers the protection they
15 deserve by becoming the ultimate deterrent to anyone
16 with intent to cause harm.

17 The League of Mutual Taxi Owners thanks
18 and appreciates Council Member Lancman for his
19 efforts as a New York State Assemblyman and as a New
20 York City Council Member. We also thank Council
21 Members Koo, Levine, Rose, Vacca, Rosenthal, Dromm,
22 Richards and Chin for sponsoring Intro 82. The Taxi
23 and Livery Driver Protection Act which without a
24 doubt will save lives of taxi drivers.

2 Some members of the riding public think
3 it's open season on taxi drivers and assault them at
4 will for a variety of reasons. From drivers
5 religion, ethnicity, skin color, to his desire to
6 follow the law, to fulfil his obligations to the
7 Vision Zero initiative. Such as obeying the speed
8 limit. Yes, as ridiculous as it might sound, it's
9 true. Obeying the speed limit caused one our members
10 to get assaulted where he received a laceration to
11 his lip, bruising on his forehead, face and elbows
12 when he tried to protect himself from this madman.
13 Who's only reason to attack was that our member was
14 driving too slowly by obeying the speed limit.

15 The assailant was arrested and charged
16 with only a misdemeanor. There isn't a reason in the
17 world that justifies an assault on taxi drivers. We
18 deserve better protection under the law. Assaulting
19 a taxi driver should be a felony and carry a
20 mandatory jail sentence. In New York City you can
21 assault a taxi driver and walk away. But if you
22 assault a bus driver you go to jail.

23 Taxi drivers deserve the same protection
24 as bus or subway operators. We ask that the

2 penalties for assaulting taxi drivers be brought up
3 to equal the penalties for assaulting a bus driver.

4 Once again we support Intro 82 and urge
5 you to vote for it. However, we would like you to
6 consider amending the law to require these signs to
7 be posted on both the exterior as well as the
8 interior of the taxis for greater effect. Thank you
9 for your time.

10 MAMNUNUL HAQ: Hi my name is Mammunul
11 Haq. I am the co-founder and member of the
12 organizing Committee of New York Taxi Workers
13 Alliance. And I am a cab driver. I drove cab for
14 long. Thank you so much Mr. Chair and thank so much
15 Mr. Lancman for introducing this bill in City
16 Council. You have done that in the Assembly but
17 unfortunately didn't turn into a law. And I am one
18 of the victims. When I was driving a taxi cab, I
19 started in 1993 and in 2005, March 31st, right across
20 the river at the Brooklyn Promenade. And you may
21 remember I was in the front page of most of the
22 newspaper and the television. And I had been stabbed
23 by a passenger through the partition in my back.

24 And I cannot think still that day, how
25 traumatized and how dangerous it was. And my life

2 was six and a half inches life and death. If the
3 knife landed half inches in any other direction it
4 could be a big catastrophe. I could be dead inside
5 my cab or I could be a crippled wheelchair man. But
6 and after that I decided to leave the job. And I
7 can't drive full time. The last couple of years I
8 drive Sunday and I do have another job at I can
9 always have. It is a really dangerous job, we all
10 know. A 60% more dangerous job than any other job in
11 this country. But we don't have any law to protect
12 these taxi drivers.

13 I feel really sorry for my fellow drivers
14 who went through this trauma. Lost the eyes. Lost
15 the person's eyes. Slashed a few of the cab driver's
16 throats. Beaten to death on the sidewalk. Left on
17 the sidewalk. We all know that. But there is no
18 protection. We couldn't protect these drivers who
19 serve this city respectfully. Giving people days to
20 the life. Taking you to the theater, taking you to
21 the movie, giving you their life but they don't have
22 life. They work seven days a week, twelve hour
23 shift. It's really hard work but there is no safety,
24 there is no respect for the taxi drivers.

2 And I still remember my family went
3 through this trauma and I had little children at that
4 time and how shocking it was because I was in
5 hospital bed and maybe I'm not going to survive.
6 Finally I survive, thank God. I'm here today. And
7 this campaign was born from a hospital bed. I urge
8 to the politicians. I urge to the media. That you
9 should come up with some sort of legislation. Some
10 sort of law for the taxi drivers of New York City.
11 Back then he was an Assembly Member he introduced
12 this bill, but unfortunately it didn't happen. So
13 now it is in the City Council. So I hope it's going
14 to be passed and it will turn into a law. We want to
15 see this. This is what we want. To protect the taxi
16 drivers. Give them respect. Taxi drivers... high
17 rates of assault, felony assault, lots of taxi
18 drivers being assaulted every day. Only the person
19 who is the behind the wheel can know if they're
20 assaulted physically, mentally, verbally, even
21 sexual. We never look at it. We don't want to talk
22 about it. Only the visible things we can see which
23 is bigger, like mine, like those guys on the list who
24 lost their life. Like my friend Sagadaraman (sp?)
25 from my country Bangladesh. He... five years, more

2 than five years, he was in a coma then left us.

3 Nothing, just to get out from his car, bought a cup
4 of coffee and just opening his door someone came and
5 punch his head. So we don't want to see it anymore.
6 We want respect for the taxi drivers. Please pass
7 this legislation. And we don't want to see any
8 driver go through what I went through. Thank you.

9 BHAIKVAI DESAI: Good morning. Thank you
10 so much Chairman Rodriguez for bringing this critical
11 bill to this hearing. Councilman Lancman you have
12 been our angel on this issue. You stood with us. I
13 wish I didn't have to recall how many Sundays, we
14 stood at Penn Station next to drivers and family
15 members when drivers had been assaulted on this job.

16 Mamnunul mentioned Shasadur (phonetic).
17 I mean, you know, I've been doing this job for 18
18 years and when I saw what Shasadur's family went
19 through. I mean he was in a coma for five years, and
20 we lost him just a few years ago. Every single
21 weekend, his three daughters and his wife, his wife
22 was there every day at that hospital room. His
23 daughters, three little kids were there every single
24 weekend. They'd sit in that waiting room doing their
25 homework, you know, waiting to hear news, whether or

2 not their father was ever going to wake up again.
3 Keychan (phonetic) Kim, two years ago, remains also
4 in a coma, to this day, following an assault. Mr.
5 Kim was assaulted on New Year's while the rest of the
6 world got to celebrate, his family woke up to the
7 news that they're brother who'd been a taxi driver
8 and owner/driver, invested years of his life into
9 this industry. Serving thousands of members safely
10 throughout his tenure. On New Year's he spent his
11 night lying on a cold sidewalk floor after he'd been
12 assaulted by a passenger. And to this day, that man
13 remains in a coma.

14 Annoymal Branch (sp?) he was robbed at
15 7:00 in the morning on a busy street near a subway
16 stop in Brooklyn. He was robbed at gunpoint after he
17 turned the money over they shot him point blank range
18 in his eye. His wife had died from cancer just two
19 months before Mr. Malbronch (phonetic) himself was
20 shot in the eye.

21 Ali Fahad (phonetic). The car was having
22 trouble so he pulled over, turned off the meter, and
23 told the passenger, I'm going to check this car.
24 He's a certified mechanic. He said, I'm turning off
25 the meter, so you don't have to pay me for the fare

2 up to this point. And now if the car is fine I'll
3 turn it back on and I'll take you safely. And he
4 opened up the hood, as he's checking out the car, he
5 see's something from the side of his head and he
6 turns around and it was his passenger who had a
7 skateboard with the wheels out, hit him right in his
8 face, right in his eye. That man is now facing
9 blindness and he's also losing his hearing. These
10 are permanent injuries. You know, and you cannot
11 quantify the level of trauma, you know, that we have
12 seen drivers face. But if we did have to quantify
13 it, we know that that number is much higher than what
14 gets reported. You know we see in our office, we see
15 at least one incident of a serious injury every
16 single week. The majority of these cases are not
17 reported by drivers. And please bear in mind that
18 taxi drivers, livery drivers, as independent
19 contractors, we're not protected under the
20 Occupational Safety and Health Act. So all that we
21 can really depend on is city level or state level
22 legislation, to extend these rights.

23 I would like to state that both in the
24 states of California and Illinois, they have state
25 laws which say that an assault, any level of assault,

2 against a taxi driver, is indeed a felony in the same
3 way that we define assault against transit workers in
4 New York State. In Pennsylvania, warning signs
5 already exist in the back of a taxi. We do not want
6 to see New York City with the biggest taxi market in
7 North America lag behind in protection.

8 We would like to offer some amendments to
9 the proposed bill, a copy of which we've handed out
10 to you today. We'd like the wording to actually say,
11 taxi drivers serve the public, respect their labor.
12 Warning, assaulting a taxi or livery driver is
13 punishable by up to 25 years in prison. We would
14 also like the council to specify the font size and
15 the placement of the signs particularly in the taxi.
16 In the rear, we would like it to be in the middle of
17 the partition and not just on the side. And also,
18 while this might seem like a really minor point,
19 because it's going to be dollars and cents. We want
20 the signs to be paid for by the industry or even by
21 the City of New York through the TLC. You know, out
22 of respect to the fact that in this... the workers of
23 this industry serve a million every single day. The
24 very least that we can do is pay for these signs and
25 make sure that they are prominently displayed. And,

2 you know, send a signal, not only to New York City,
3 but throughout the state and throughout the country,
4 that taxi workers have a right to be protected on the
5 job. No worker anywhere should ever have to choose
6 between earning a living and staying alive. Taxi
7 drivers, livery drivers, black car drivers, all TLC
8 licensees, should have the right to be protected.
9 And we thank you so much for bringing this bill to
10 the table, you know. And we really call upon you to
11 expedite the passage. We've waited so long. And the
12 longer that we wait... every single incident that we
13 see, every single time we think to ourselves, if that
14 sticker, that warning, had already been in that car,
15 would the driver somehow been protected.

16 And so we urge you to pass this digital
17 should be in addition. Absolutely, thank you for
18 raising that councilman. It should not be in lieu.
19 We need it to be a sticker, because too many people
20 turn the TV screens off. We need that sticker to
21 have that same prominence as other important messages
22 that are displayed in the back screen. Thank you.

23 MICHAEL O'LAUGHLIN: Good morning chair,
24 good morning council members. My name is Michael
25 O'Laughlin. I speak today on behalf of Cab Riders

2 United. Cab Riders United is a new initiative.. oh
3 I'm sorry. Cab Riders United is a new initiative to
4 organize the public voice on behalf of the 1.2
5 million passengers who ride in the city's taxis and
6 for-hire vehicles and count on them to keep the city
7 going every day. Cab Riders United supports the
8 goals of Intro 82. Passengers have a right, when we
9 get into a taxi cab to expect that we will be safe.
10 The drivers of a taxicab have that exact same right.
11 They deserve to be guaranteed in their safety.

12 Cab Riders United strongly advocates the
13 principals of Vision Zero. The death and injury on
14 our city streets is unacceptable. We consider Intro
15 82 perfectly aligned with those goals. It's
16 important to realize that what steps we can take to
17 remove the fear of violence we should take. Fear of
18 violence for the drivers. It's the right thing to do
19 for the drivers. It's also the right thing to do for
20 the passengers and the public. Because relieving
21 that stress and that fear, that anxiety will result
22 in safer drivers.

23 Drivers have a right to safety, so do
24 passengers, and New Yorkers outside the vehicle.
25 Driving a taxi or a for-hire vehicle in New York is

2 challenging and important work. And we all benefit
3 when it's treated as such. The violent assault of a
4 driver is absolutely unacceptable. That should be
5 unmistakably clear. Intro 82 is an important step
6 towards making sure that is clear for every
7 passenger. Likewise, I think, in addition to the
8 acute violence that we've heard so powerfully about.
9 I'd encourage the council to also consider what
10 Robert Kennedy might have called another kind of
11 violence. Slower but just as deadly. The violence
12 of institutions. Indifference in action and slow
13 decay.

14 I'll give you one example. In New York
15 City for decades, we have had a partition which is a
16 valuable safety feature but which creates its own
17 risks. For decades we have asked drivers to work up
18 to a 12 hour shift behind the wheel. That's longer
19 than long haul drivers are allowed to drive a truck
20 according to the federal government by the way. And
21 yet many taxi drivers cannot even adjust their seat
22 position because of the unsafe partition that has
23 been installed in their vehicle. This is not only
24 inhumane, it's a matter of occupational safety and
25 health for the driver, and it's contrary to the goal

2 of maintaining the driver's alertness and safety
3 behind the wheel. It directly harms the driver, it
4 threatens the safety of passengers and the public as
5 well. Those same partitions that we've all seen for
6 decades installed during the hacking up of a taxi,
7 can also compromise the vehicle's structural
8 integrity, air bag deployment and its overall safety.
9 Because it alters the manufacturers intended
10 performance of the vehicle during a crash.

11 New York City should never allow taxi
12 business practices or vehicle modifications that can
13 put drivers, passengers or the New Yorkers outside
14 the vehicle at greater risk. Every TLC vehicle
15 should meet all federal crash safety and EPA
16 standards even after they're hacked up for use as a
17 taxi.

18 A few additional points on safety.
19 Research shows that well paid drivers are safer
20 drivers. Drivers should be better paid. TLC has a
21 right to honor the safest drivers and we look forward
22 to participating in that ceremony next week. We also
23 need to make sure that we require higher standards
24 for all drivers including a road test to prove that
25 they can drive a for-hire vehicle in New York City.

2 Taxis and Liveries are exempted from the
3 New York State Seatbelt Law. In the age of Vision
4 Zero that's something that we've got to change.
5 Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you
6 today.

7 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. Now
8 let's call...

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Thank you
10 very much. First I want to thank Council Member
11 Lancman for his leadership. I know he has a long
12 standing concern about this industry dating back to
13 his time in the New York State Assembly. So I want
14 to thank him for that work and I'd like to ask that
15 my name be added as a co-sponsor to this legislation.

16 I do want to just follow-up... I also want
17 to thank Mr. Haq. Thank you for coming out and
18 testifying. Interestingly enough I've known for your
19 years but I've never actually known that story. I
20 never made that connection. That really is a
21 terrible story but glad that you bounced back and
22 you're doing well.

23 I do want to ask a specific question.
24 Just something that you brought up, not directly
25 related to the bill, but I think it will be helpful

2 to know and maybe track. I think you mentioned that
3 you have at least one incident a week of violence. I
4 imagine you probably have a lot more incidents of
5 harassment, right. I mean I think that part of the
6 challenge is people don't respect taxi drivers. I
7 think the reason is obvious, right. They... because in
8 many cases they're immigrants, they're folks who make
9 less than other folks. They're in the service
10 industry and people think that it's acceptable to be
11 disrespectful which of course it's not. Do you have
12 a way of tracking, and if not, would you consider
13 trying to track, because I think it would be helpful
14 to know, when there are incidents where people either
15 say something that's offensive or discriminatory or
16 threatening. Because I imagine, right, taxi drivers
17 must get threatened a lot but they don't necessarily
18 report it. But that's an issue. They must get at
19 least verbally abused a lot, but it doesn't get
20 reported either. Do you have some sort of way of
21 tracking, if not, would you consider, maybe some of
22 the folks here representing the drivers, would you
23 consider a way of doing that. I think it would be
24 very helpful to know and to sort of get the message

2 out which people... many people don't realize that this
3 is happening on a very consistent basis.

4 BHAIKVAI DESAI: Yes, we've done a number
5 of things. So we've worked with the National
6 Institute of Health. Every other year we do a survey
7 of close to 400 drivers, a random survey just looking
8 at you know, incidents of verbal harassment and
9 experience of assault. And also specifically, when
10 racialized language or you know hate crimes are
11 committed. And so, the numbers, are just, they're
12 heart breaking. I mean I think that most drivers
13 would say that verbal harassment it's as common as
14 seeing a red light during your shift. Which is
15 really problematic, but it's also the reason why
16 we've proposed this specific language for the sign.
17 To say, you know, to remind the world that taxi
18 drivers serve the public and that the labor should be
19 respected and I think everything that you've
20 mentioned in terms of the service sector, 94% of the
21 workers are immigrants. People are low income. And
22 majority are people of color. You're individualized,
23 you're really isolated in that work space. And let's
24 face it, we've faced of really bad propaganda. You
25 know, even those statistics have always shown the

2 truth to be that, for example, that taxi drivers are
3 the safest motorists in the City of New York. You
4 know, the number of complaints against drivers have
5 gradually, you know, come down and they've been at
6 historical lows. And we've seen this workforce of
7 predominantly immigrant drivers really stabilize the
8 industry as opposed to having worked, you know,
9 transient workers in and out. The quality of the
10 service has very much gone up. Every indicator shows
11 that. But, I think, partly because of the racism and
12 the xenophobia. A lot of the images still remain
13 really problematic. And those problematic aspects
14 result in violence and harassment to drivers. And
15 so, but I think having this sticker and having the
16 language on the sticker that reiterates that the City
17 of New York, the State of New York, you as a City
18 Council as our public representatives, you respect
19 the labor of taxi drivers. I think will go a really
20 long way in changing that dynamic between the front
21 and the back seat. As well as the dynamic between
22 the driver and the passersby and the motorists next
23 to them.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Well I think
25 that's exactly what Council Member Lancman is trying

2 to achieve. And I'm sure he's going to take a look
3 at those suggestions. I will just add that if there
4 was a better way to track it. If there was some sort
5 of way to file a complaint. Just listening, just
6 sitting here, I will admit, I'm not a frequent
7 taxicab customer. I take mass transit or I drive
8 generally but just listening to these experiences
9 it's really just shocking that I today's day and age
10 we have an industry in New York City, an entire
11 industry where it is basically and allowed to harass
12 the employees of that industry. And that's
13 unacceptable. And so I think we separately, aside
14 from what we're doing here today, which I think is
15 significant and I think will make a difference. I
16 think we should have some conversations about how we
17 move towards creating a recognition and some
18 accountability. I can't imagine if there was any
19 other industry in the world if accountants were
20 yelled and cursed at and threatened, when they did
21 their jobs, I'm certain that they would not accept
22 it. And we should not accept it simply because of
23 the fact that as you pointed out and as we've pointed
24 that it's an immigrant group or it's a minority
25 group. Or it's folks that feel like they don't have

2 a voice. We certainly need to give a voice and I
3 think that this legislation from Council Member
4 Lancman goes a long way in doing that. And we'd love
5 to work with you some more to try to achieve these
6 results. Thank you very much.

7 DAVID POLLACK: Council Member
8 Greenfield. Thank you for bringing that up and as
9 I'm listening and thinking of how we can accomplish
10 what you just suggested. Perhaps you can help us get
11 TLC involved. Even more important, maybe get 311
12 involved in keeping record of assaults, unreported
13 police assaults to drivers.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Excellent
15 idea. Why don't we discuss it offline. I don't
16 think this hearing is the forum, but my staff will
17 follow-up with you. And let's look at that and see
18 if we can create some sort of database and some sort
19 of accountability for what's been happening out there
20 on the streets. Thank you very much.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Thanks for your
22 testimony, it's good to see you and it's been a long
23 haul, to use a driving metaphor. And I certainly
24 hope we never have need to stand outside Madison

2 Square Garden on a Sunday because another driver has
3 been assaulted or in some cases killed.

4 But I want to get into some of the
5 details of the suggested changes that you had. Has
6 it been a problem in the past where owners of the
7 cabs have required the drivers, the operators to pick
8 up the costs for different rules, regulation and
9 mandates? And is that something that you feel
10 strongly about putting the legislation or part of the
11 TLC rule making process.

12 BHAIKVAI DESAI: Well in our experience
13 you know if something is not explicitly stated in the
14 regulation or in the statute, in terms of costs is
15 not explicitly stated that it should not be borne by
16 the driver that it does end up being shifted over to
17 the driver. So, you know, we understand it would be
18 a minor cost, but just think that really out of sheer
19 respect that it's something that the driver should
20 not have to bear. And in our... Even the Attorney
21 General's office now has a unit that investigates
22 what we call lease cap overcharges. So where, the
23 TLC regulates the cost, the maximum amount that the
24 owners can charge to the drivers and we see many
25 violations of those rules. And now with both the

2 Attorney General's office and the TLC have been
3 investigating and prosecuting those types of
4 overcharges. So it's certainly for drivers who might
5 lease the medallion and own the vehicle. Driver
6 owned vehicle operators because of the sticker is
7 seen as part of the vehicle, as part of what we call
8 the hack up, then you know the cost would end up
9 being borne by the driver. Now the driver's anyway
10 are going to be paying with the time, if that should
11 be required. But it's a small thing but we really
12 think that it's more... it's just like I think there's
13 so much symbolism through this bill itself, right, of
14 really saying that we're taking a workforce that's
15 been so hidden for so many decades, in front of that
16 partition that we're... while the vehicle remains a
17 cultural symbol of New York City the workers have
18 been hidden. And I think what this bill does overall
19 is really lift that, you know, and make us recognize
20 that the drivers in the front seat are the most
21 valuable people in this industry. Without them there
22 is no industry. And so I just think having the
23 driver not be the one that has to bear the cost of
24 the sign would be a small gesture. I would hope it
25 wouldn't need legislation that the owners themselves

2 would know that something that they should take on,
3 but in our history has kind of shown us otherwise.
4 And that's why we would propose that it would be
5 legislated.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: And do you have
7 an opinion based on the folks you represent as well
8 as just your knowledge of the industry, on the wisdom
9 of allowing owner/drivers to post the sign if they
10 want but not requiring it. Making that distinction
11 between owners, drivers and drivers who maybe are
12 leasing the car for a shift or leasing the medallion
13 for some extended period of time. Or black car and
14 livery drivers which I know is not your focus.

15 BHAIKVAI DESAI: Well we do have many
16 members who have a hack license but will go back and
17 forth between a taxi, a livery and a black car. I
18 mean I think as Councilman Miller said earlier, we
19 absolutely believe that in order for this warning
20 sign to have true value, it needs to be seen across
21 the board. In all of these vehicles. Even the
22 exemption that exists for owner/operators now, it's...
23 you can either chose a camera or a partition. And
24 that's only if you're single shifted. If you have a
25 second shift driver that leases from you, then you

2 have to have that partition. So, I just think that
3 it's important that the council recognize... for the
4 passenger who gets in to the back seat if they don't...
5 they're not going to understand that the sticker
6 doesn't exist because this car is owned by the
7 driver. They're just going to see that in some cars
8 you see a sign and in some cars you don't. And it's
9 just going to lead to unnecessary confusion or much
10 worse, it's going to lead to people not taking that
11 sign seriously. You know, you have to see something
12 consistently to see the value in it.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: It won't kind of
14 penetrate the culture and have people view cab
15 drivers and how serious it is to endanger their
16 safety.

17 BHAIKVAI DESAI: Absolutely. You get
18 into a yellow cab you expect a meter. Because
19 there's one in every cab. We want that sign to have
20 that same kind of an impact.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Thank you.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Okay. Thank you
23 Mr. Chairman. Ms. Desai how are you, it's good to
24 see you.

25 BHAIKVAI DESAI: Thank you. You too.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: I'm currently in
3 this listing not on the bill but I'm going to correct
4 that error and join Council Member Lancman on this
5 bill. This is an important issue for New Yorkers I
6 think and in my district I do represent a lot of
7 people who drive taxis. Many of which are better
8 educated than most of the public. Doctors,
9 scientists and professors who have chosen to try to
10 raise their families by driving a taxi.

11 My question is this. Currently the signs
12 that are on busses and subways. I see there's a sign
13 wanting to be like them. They just state that the
14 assault is punishable by 25 years. It doesn't have
15 any extra language?

16 BHAIKVAI DESAI: Right, that's right.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: I do think
18 there's a distinction Council Member Greenfield was
19 pointing to that generally the public does not get in
20 close proximity to, certain train conductors, bus
21 drivers. It's a different dynamic. It's a lot of
22 people around. And the situation with someone
23 running a taxi is much different. So, I do like the
24 idea and I'm sure Councilman Lancman is open to it,
25 assuming it's legally fine, to come up with some type

2 of language to address that issue. To try to appeal
3 to the heart as well as the head a little bit to the
4 passengers. That these are public servants. That
5 these are people who are trying to get people around
6 and help us. And certain should be treated like
7 those other employees. But even given a special
8 attention. So I look forward to working with Council
9 Member Lancman and the other sponsors of this bill
10 and my colleagues to try to get this done. I think
11 it's very important. It's outrageous what has
12 happened so many times to taxi drivers and I'd like
13 to work with you and with everyone to try to get this
14 done. Thank you.

15 BHAIKVAI DESAI: Thank you so much.

16 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: With that, we
17 will come to the end of this hearing. I would like
18 to also thank the Committee Staff, Carmen De La Rosa
19 (sp?). As you know as we pass 11 bills related to
20 Vision Zero where the safety of the pedestrian and
21 the cyclist is very important. We also want to send
22 a message that the life of our livery and taxi
23 drivers is also very important. No doubt that having
24 the support from the administration, from the
25 industry, transportation advocate group on those two

2 bills. I have no doubt that we also on the council
3 will be moving very quick on working on some details
4 related to the logistics of those two bills. And
5 hopefully I would like to see those two bills be
6 moving to the floor very soon. I also would like to
7 invite everyone for our next Transportation Hearing
8 which is going to be on the 17th. And that hearing
9 is going to be a joint hearing with the Economic
10 Development Committee related to the city's
11 transportation infrastructure. And the meeting we'll
12 have on the 17th. And with that this hearing is
13 adjourned.

14 Thank you.

15 (Gavel)

16 (Background talk)

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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 September 8, 2014