

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

----- X

October 21, 2014
Start: 10:19 a.m.
Recess: 10:42 a.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Rm,
14th Fl.

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

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Daniel R. Garodnick
James Vacca
Margaret S. Chin
Stephen T. Levin
Deborah L. Rose
James G. Van Bramer
Mark S. Weprin
David G. Greenfield
Costa G. Constantinides
Carlos Menchaca
I. Daneek Miller
Antonio Reynoso
Rory I. Lancman

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

[background comments]

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Today we will vote on a piece of legislation that we know will make a real difference in protecting some of the most vulnerable workers in our city -- taxi and livery drivers. In this case, neither the statistics nor the headlines lie; according to the federal government, taxi and livery drivers are 20 times more likely to be the victim of a homicide on the job than the average worker, but we don't have to have the federal government to tell us; we know from experience; every New Yorker knows about a rash of violence against our drivers that occurred this summer; just this past June a yellow taxi driver was attacked with a skateboard after he told his passenger his nationality. Our drivers are sometimes the frontline for these hate driving attacks and we need to make sure we protect them in every way possible. Each incident is a tragic reminder of the risk that taxi and livery drivers take each day simply by going to work to provide for their families and to provide a vital transportation service to the City and to all New Yorkers.

1
2 Proposed Int 082-A will require that a
3 warning of the potential consequences of assaulting a
4 driver be placed in every taxi and livery car. We
5 know that this simple addition will make anyone think
6 twice before deciding to assault a taxi or a livery
7 driver, an action which is never excusable. For me,
8 this issue is personal; as a former livery driver
9 that I was, I want to thank the bill's sponsor,
10 Council Member Lancman, the drivers who came to
11 testify on this bill, Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito
12 and the Administration for working with us on this
13 important piece of legislation.

14 Vision Zero is all about safety on our
15 streets; taxi and livery drivers play a big part in
16 setting the example of safe driving and so it is
17 imperative that we do all we can to protect them on
18 the job; this bill will do just that.

19 No I invite the sponsor of this vital
20 legislation, Council Member Lancman, to deliver an
21 opening statement.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Thank you Mr.
23 Chairman and to the members of the Committee and to
24 Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito and the staff who
25 worked to get us to this point. As you said, the men

1
2 and women who drive our taxis and livery cars and the
3 other vehicles that are covered by this legislation
4 are very, very important to us as New Yorkers, but
5 also as an integral part of our mass transportation
6 system and it is very, very dangerous work. And so
7 I'm very, very grateful that we're gonna take this
8 modest but I think important step towards ensuring
9 their safety and letting everyone know that when they
10 get into a taxi or a livery that there will be very,
11 very serious consequences for assaulting that driver
12 and that New York City cares about their safety and
13 will take the measures that are necessary to make
14 sure that they go home to their families safe and
15 sound after performing such a vital and essential
16 service for New York City. So thank you very much.
17 [background comment]

18 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Do any of my
19 other colleagues would like to say anything? No? So
20 since no one, I now call for the vote on proposal Int
21 No. 082-A and I ask the Clerk to please call the roll
22 and I recommend a yes vote.

23 COMMITTEE CLERK: Kevin Penn [sp?],
24 Committee Clerk, roll call on the Committee on
25 Transportation, Int 082-A. Council Member Rodriguez.

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

6

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Chin.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Rose.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Van Bramer.

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Weprin.

COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Constantinides.

COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Menchaca.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: By a vote of 7 in the affirmative, 0 in the negative; no abstentions, the item's been adopted. Members, please sign the Committee Report.

[background comments]

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you and I will leave it open for the next 30 minutes and I would like to thank the staff of this committee, Jonathan Sofar [sp?], Kelly Enliofront [sp?] and also my Chief of Staff, Carmen De La Rosa and my Communication Legislator/Director, Lucas Acosta.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

[pause]

[background comment]

COMMITTEE CLERK: Greenfield.

COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: May I explain my vote? No, I'm joking. I vote aye. [laughter] Thank you.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Vote stands at 8 in the affirmative.

[pause]

[background comments]

COMMITTEE CLERK: Vacca.

COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Miller.

[background comments]

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Explain my vote.

[laughter] [background comments] For the record, my Chair, Rodriguez, thank you, and thanks Councilman Lancman for introducing this legislation which under the circumstances I would love to support, but I rise today however to express my dismay at the manner in which the Taxi and Limousine Commission has been conducting business. This law, Int 082, has been amended to include commuter vans so that the drivers of these vehicles may also receive

1
2 signage to be promulgated by the TLC in order to help
3 protect the drivers, yet TLC has done little to
4 protect constituents in my district and throughout
5 the City who are often victims by these same commuter
6 vans. There are hundreds of illegal vans running
7 throughout Southeast Queens and throughout the City,
8 thousands throughout the City and many more properly
9 licensed vans which are operating in illegal fashion;
10 they do business directly in front of bus stops,
11 intimidate mass transit passengers and hold little
12 regard for the rules of the road, particularly given
13 the nature of the business is so frequently illegal.
14 Recently a young woman from my district ended up in a
15 coma after the police engaged one of the vans in a
16 high-speed chase; this is how bad things have gotten.
17 Despite my pleas, these concerns have gone on deaf
18 ears from the TLC and I've heard nothing but excuses
19 on their part. With this in mind I cannot in good
20 conscience vote for this legislation which supports
21 TLC while it repeatedly fails to support and protect
22 the constituents and the citizens of New York City.
23 A good relationship is beneficial to all parties at
24 the table, but this one I certainly think is
25 unhealthy. I will abstain from voting on Int 082;

1
2 the TLC has become far too comfortable with surface
3 measures, decals, stickers; neither which will keep
4 my constituents alive or out of the hospital. TLC's
5 ridership and drivers deserve more substantially safe
6 solutions. I abstain.

7 COMMITTEE CLERK: Reynoso.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: I vote aye.

9 COMMITTEE CLERK: Vote stands at 10 in
10 the affirmative, 0 in the negative and 1 abstention.

11 [pause]

12 COMMITTEE CLERK: Levin.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I vote aye.

14 COMMITTEE CLERK: Vote stands at 11 in
15 the affirmative, 0 in the negative and 1 abstention.

16 [pause]

17 [background comments]

18 COMMITTEE CLERK: Garodnick.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Aye.

20 COMMITTEE CLERK: Final vote in the
21 Committee on Transportation; 12 in the affirmative, 0
22 in the negative and 1 abstention.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: And with that
24 we thank everybody for being here today and this
25 committee meeting is adjourned.

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 October 22, 2014