NEW YORK CITY
TAXI & LIMOUSINE COMMISSION
REGULATORY REVIEW HEARING

November 9, 2021
10:15 a.m.
Held Remotely
via Zoom

BEFORE:
RYAN WANTTAJA, General Counsel

Board of Commissioners:
CHAIR ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK
BILL AGUADO
STEVEN KEST
THOMAS SORRENTINO

Julia M. Speros
Court Reporter
SPKERS:

Luis Useda
Sonam Lama
Mohammad Islam
Balhar Singh
Michele Dottin
Jinwen Wu
Deqian Chen
Fayzi Nurulloev
Jacky Lin
Alex Kanan
Israel Acevedo
Huascar Medina
Aladdin Jabber
Manuel De La Cruz
Larbi Aitaabou
Joziel Andujar
Gerson Fernandes
Peter Mazer
Andrew Vollo
Lloyd Dinma
Julio Batista
SPEAKERS CONTINUED:
Tina Raveneau
Ashraf Ahmed
Clinton Brown
Richard Dakota
Raul Rivera
Anwar Malik
Pedro Accosta
PROCEEDINGS

MS SCOTT: Good morning. Today's Commission Meeting and Public Hearing is about to begin.

This meeting is being conducted remotely via Zoom and simulcasted to the TLC's website and Facebook accounts. All persons wishing to testify were asked to sign-up in advance of the hearing. All registered speakers are joining the meeting via Zoom.

If you are speaking today, your audio and video were automatically muted. When your name is called, the moderator will activate your account and you will have control of your camera and microphone. When ready, please state your name and affiliation, and then proceed with your testimony.

Public testimony will be limited to two minutes per speaker. Any additional comments may be submitted in writing to the Commission. When your testimony is complete, your audio and video will be muted by the moderator.
Closed captioning is available for today's meeting.

Consecutive interpretation is also available. During the sign-up process, individuals were asked if they require language assistance. Spanish, French, and Mandarin interpreters have been made available. When your name is called, please speak and the interpreter will repeat your testimony in English.

Thank you for your attention.

Please hold until we are ready to begin.

We will repeat this message in Spanish, French, and Mandarin.

For our participants who have signed up to speak, please ensure that the name that you're using on your display screen matches the name that you used in the sign-up, as we'll be using that to contact you.

Spanish interpreter, please go ahead.

(Message was repeated in Spanish.)

MS. SCOTT: French interpreter, please go ahead.
(Message was repeated in French.)
MS. SCOTT: Mandarin interpreter, please go ahead.
(Message was repeated in Mandarin.)
MS. SCOTT: Madame Chair, the floor is yours.
CHAIR HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: All right.

Good morning and welcome to today's online Public Hearing of the New York Taxi and Limousine Commission. Today is Tuesday, November 9, 2021 and it is 10:24 a.m. and I call this meeting to order.

I am Aloysee Heredia Jarmoszuk, Commissioner and Chair of the TLC. We are joined this morning by Commissioners Bill Aguado, Steven Kest, and Thomas Sorrentino. Additionally, we are joined by a large set of participants from the public, 89 presently, who have signed up to testify at this morning's meeting.

During my Confirmation Hearing before the New York City Council in February of 2020, I committed to conducting a wholesale review of the
TLC's regulatory framework in order to ensure that our rules are equitable and adapted to the 21st century needs of our licensees, passengers, and industry members, as well as the public.

The TLC has begun this review, with myself and our staff from across the agency, working internally and externally with stakeholders, including through Black Car and Livery Task Force and our Taxi Advisory Group, and industry stakeholders, to identify sections of our rules that are in need of changes or adaptation and modernization.

Today's meeting is part of that ongoing review. Specifically, today we are inviting stakeholders and members of the public to testify and share with us what rules are thought should be changed and why.

We are particularly looking for testimony that addresses some of the following questions, but are not limited to these -- but are there rules outdated
and no longer justified in light of the
industry, regulatory and public needs
and practices.

Are there rules that impose
different requirements on different
industry sectors without adequate
testification (sic). Are there rules
that would be -- that could be amended
to be more effectively -- or to more
effectively accomplish the rules; goals
or rules that should be streamlined and
made clearer to improve industry
compliance, regulatory oversight, and
public transparency.

Additionally, are there rules that
would help modernize the industry,
strengthening the driver and customer
experience with strengthening the
licensee and customer experience.

We are looking for -- forward to
hearing your testimony and using your
insights to inform the TLC's regulatory
review and rule changes as we move
forward.

Before we begin, we would like to
share some updates with you from the TLC and the City.

So, New York City's commitment to the taxi industry and its success continues to be steadfast. The Medallion Relief Program has been distributing grants since September of 2021, delivering critical debt forgiveness to medallion owners. As of today, we have 204 medallion owners with -- who originally had a cumulative total debt of 58.6 million -- and they have cumulatively received 23 million dollars in debt relief and forgiveness.

We have had over 1,100 medallion owners make appointments with the TLC Owner/Driver Resource Center and we anticipate reaching a fair number of those licensees, in addition to the 204 already fully serviced before the end of this calendar year and in the weeks ahead, into the new year.

As many of you may be aware, New York City, with assistance from Senator Schumer, reached an agreement for
borrowers with the New York Taxi Workers Alliance and Marblegate, one of the larger medallion loaning -- lending institutions, to build on the success of the medallion relief program.

The agreement includes a City funded deficiency guarantee to reduce principals and monthly payments further. The City will provide funding for a guarantee on the loan principal and its interest, and will work with all other lenders to reach similar terms or better terms.

Obviously, participation is optional for all parties involved. We have been disbursing grants since September and we encourage all individual medallion owners, who have a need for relief, to please contact the TLC Owner/Driver Resource Centers so that we can get your case underway.

Obviously, this is a very bespoke process and several meetings have to take place between the medallion owners and the lenders. So, the sooner we can
initiate the process for each medallion owner, the better.

   So, if you are a medallion owner -- an individual medallion owner in need, we strongly encourage you to schedule your first initial appointment if you have not already done so and we're very much looking forward -- the TLC -- to having our iconic taxi sector thrive in New York City and we continue to see an increasing number of taxis on the road as the industry gains greater market share and more -- and our passengers overall, and so we're very hopeful for this bolster for the -- for the taxi segment.

   We are also cognizant of the needs of our other segments, including the black car and livery sectors, and we are working also to bolster those areas. So, we are working on a comprehensive approach for the entire industry so that we can continue to be the best for-hire transportation industry in the world.

   Just a quick point on COVID-19:
We are very much seeing that nothing will help the industry recover faster than New York City defeating COVID-19 and we continue to urge TLC licensees and all New Yorkers to receive the vaccine.

Vaccines offer the best protection against hospitalization and death, and we are very glad to be at a point where everyone who is five-years and older can receive the vaccine. You've all seen the public service announcements, that if you go to a New York City run site, there are incentives there for the first dose for all ages -- or all age groups -- and so we encourage you to do that.

We'd also like to remind everybody that there are other things health-wise to be cognizant of. So, if people can also take advantage of getting their flu shot, that is also very important. The flu is obviously the -- most common during the fall and winter months and we are approaching that time, and we want to make sure that we are taking care of
ourselves and our whole City here.

A few words on our Taxi Improvement Fund:

If you drive a green or yellow wheelchair accessible taxi, please make sure that you're enrolled with the TLC's Taxi Improvement Fund and the Street-Hail Livery Improvement Fund to earn extra money for every trip you take. You will also receive a one time $100 signing bonus after completing your first 20 trips in a wheelchair accessible vehicle.

When you drive a wheelchair accessible taxi, you have more access to fare opportunities. Wheelchair accessible taxi drivers are needed for accessible dispatch trips, especially our green taxis.

In addition to the metered fare, drivers receive an additional dispatch payment. No enrollment is necessary and drivers receive accessible dispatch trips through the Taxi Driver's Information Moderator.
So, we thank those who are and will be taking wheelchair accessible passengers -- wheelchair accessible -- providing wheelchair accessible rides to passengers to help make New York City more accessible to everyone.

A short -- or brief words on seat belts:

We all know that there have been seat belt law changes underway for the last year and in New York State, no matter where you sit in the car, everyone must buckle up, and as of November 1st of this year, the New York State law requires all TLC licensed vehicles to have a visible notice in the cars that remind everyone that the seat belts must be available and that is the law to buckle up.

The TLC has provisioned those stickers -- or those informational decals for free for all of our TLC licensed drivers that need them and those are available at the TLC's Long Island City licensing office, as well as
the TLC's inspection facility in Woodside, Queens.

TLC licensed vehicle owners and drivers can also create their own signs and we ask that you follow the language that is available and the decals that we have available online and that we have available at no cost.

And a quick word on Vision Zero:

So, daylight savings time ended over the weekend this past Sunday. Our days are much shorter now and the same intersections that you or we have traveled last week at 5 p.m. is now darker this week making it harder for all motorists on the road to see pedestrians and cyclists during the late afternoon and early evening rush hours.

So, I am -- I'd like to just ask that all of our TLC licensees exercise more caution and diligence, and I'd like to thank you for being extra careful during this time of year.

We ask that you go slowly while turning and to please scan the road with
as much caution as possible,
particularly with left-hand turns.
Please always come to a full stop at red
lights. Please obey the speed limit of
25 miles per hour, and fully obey all
traffic signals.

And just as a reminder, you know,
the faster you or we drive, the longer
it takes to stop, and we really want
this to be a happy holiday season for
all of our licensees and New Yorkers,
and driving safely is the best way to
make sure that everybody gets home to
their families intact.

As always, we'd like to thank you,
all of our TLC licensed drivers, for
being world class transportation
professionals, and we're grateful for
your hard work to keep our City streets
safe. Our licensed drivers are the best
partners in the Vision Zero.

And before we get into the public
session, I want to take a moment to
formally acknowledge Commissioner Nora
Marino, who has stepped down from our
Commission.

She has dutifully served the Commission for over a decade and we'd like to thank her for her tenure and her commitment of all of those years, and as appropriate, given all that she has done over her service, I'd like to afford her an opportunity to address all of you.

So, Commissioner Marino, the floor is yours.

COMMISSIONER MARINO: Thank you, Madame Chair. I'm not going to take up too much time -- so emotional for me.

I've served on this Commission for 10 years. I can't even believe it has been 10 years. I was appointed in 2011 by Mayor Bloomberg. I've served under four Chairs -- three Chairs, one Acting -- so that's four Chairs. I have seen this industry grow, and change, and evolve in ways none of us could have imagined.

I've served with many Commissioners -- I wish Commissioner Polanco was able to be here today because she was the
only one out of the current Commission
that was on the Commission when I came
on all those years ago and Libby and I
have, you know, really gotten to be
friends.

I made a lot of friends here.
There's a lot of amazing people at the
TLC. It has been quite a ride.

When I first came on, I knew
nothing, really, about this industry and
I always really wanted to make it a
point to learn from the people in the
industry because as a small business
owner myself, I always felt -- you know,
I always tried to figure out -- you
know, put myself in their shoes. Like,
how would I feel if nine people were
making decisions about my business who
had never been in my business.

So, I always wanted to really learn
as much as I could and understand
people's perspectives cause this
industry is just so -- it has so many
moving parts and if you make a decision
on one thing, it affects so many other
things. It's like taking a balloon --
if you push in on one side, it pushes
out someplace else and that's what, you
know, our decisions -- that's the affect
they have. If you make one decision for
one of the industry, it seems to have an
affect somewhere else.

So, every rule we've ever voted on
-- every regulation -- is just -- you
know, it has been very important, even
if it doesn't seem like an important
one, it can have some unintended affect
on someone else. So, I've done my best
to take all those factors into
consideration and I hope I've done a
good job.

I tried to be an independent thinker
and do what I always felt was right with
respect to whatever rule, or regulation,
or vote was before me. But after
10 years, it's just time -- it has been
time for me -- or it is time for me to
just move on.

I want to thank the public and thank
the City of New York for allowing me to
serve in this capacity. It has been a
great honor and I've learned a lot. I
know a lot about the industry now after
10 years compared to that first day and
I remember the first day when I walked
in and sat at that dais. I was a
nervous wreck and I was just like, "Oh,
my God. I don't know anything about
this industry".

So, I really tried to dive right in
and speak to as many people as I could
from the black cars, the yellow cars,
and -- you know, back then, we didn't
even have green cars. There was no Uber
and Lyft. I mean, it has just been such
a wild ride and there have been so many
changes in this industry and God only
knows where it's going to be 10 years
from now.

But I really appreciate these few
minutes. I felt I owed it to the
public, and to the Commission itself,
and to the City to just say a few words
and not just disappear. I wanted to
just thank everybody and thank the City
for giving me this opportunity.

   It has been an honor and I've done
my best to do a good job, and I just
wish everyone the best and I hope
everyone in this industry and beyond --
but for purposes of today, in this
industry -- and everyone at the TLC,
just has a bright, successful future and
I am confident that they will.

   I think the industry is in very good
hands with this current Board and I
think everyone cares, and that's just so
important to care about the people
you're regulating cause that's one thing
I learned. Like, this wasn't -- this
was never about me. This was about the
industry that we regulate and the
effects that our decisions have on these
individual people and families.

   There are people and families
involved and there shouldn't be any, you
know, unwarranted pressure from any side
just for some agenda that has nothing to
do with the purpose of why we were here
and I always tried to keep that in mind,
that's there's people whose lives are affected by our decisions and I always tried to take that into consideration no matter what vote was before us.

So, I just wanted to take these couple of minutes, and I appreciate you, Madame Chair, for allowing me to have this time just to tell everyone that it has been a wild ride. Like I said, we didn't even have the green cars, or Uber and Lyft back then and I remember Taxi Tomorrow was a big deal and that's like completely obsolete now. It has just been -- that was like the biggest deal. It was in the papers every week and it's completely obsolete.

It's just things like that that have really changed, and evolved, and grown, and shrunk, and it has just been just a wild 10 years. So -- and a lot of votes and a lot of chaos at some times, but it has been an incredible experience that I feel very blessed to have.

So, I want to thank everyone. I'm going to miss everyone a lot and I hope,
you know, we can stay in touch. The public -- you know, I'm always accessible for whatever. I always tried to be accessible and still am.

But just thank you all and thank you for this opportunity to say good-bye. It really means a lot to me. It's a little emotional -- 10 years, wow. I can't believe it. So, thank you.

COMMISSIONER AGUADO: If I may -- may I say a few words?

CHAIR HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Sure.

COMMISSION AGUADO: Nora, it has been a pleasure working with you. You had such a significant moral compass that helped define the issues for us in many, many ways. Your independence in thinking, your fairness to all, especially the commitment to communities and labor, I'm going to miss it and I'm going to miss having you at these meetings.

Thank you for the pleasure and honor of working with you.

COMMISSIONER MARINO: Thank you,
Bill. That means a lot. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER SORRENTINO: I'd like to also say to Nora, it has been a pleasure serving with you as well for the last four years that I've been on the Commission and I wish you well and all the best to you. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER MARINO: Thank you -- thanks, Tom. Sorry.

CHAIR HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: It's all right. Well, we're happy to see you and have had you on this morning -- and, again, I've expressed this to you individually -- we appreciate your service and everything that you've done for the City and for the Commission, and we are forever grateful for your service and I appreciate that you've taken the time to join us today -- okay --

COMMISSION MARINO: Thank you.

CHAIR HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: -- and we'll certainly be in touch and we want you to be in touch as well, please.

COMMISSIONER MARINO: Thank you. I just want to -- I just want to add
really quick, that the TLC staff is really the best.

I mean, Alan, and Brian, and Tanya -- and just all these people that come together -- Brian -- to make these things happen and it's just an amazing group of people and I'm just very blessed to have been able to be a part of it for the last 10 years -- and every time I say that, I can't even believe it has been a decade -- 2011.

But life goes on and I wish everyone the best, and I wish the industry the best and I'm confident that it will be the best.

CHAIR HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Thank you, again, and thank you for your kind words and we wish you all the best.

COMMISSIONER MARINO: All right. Thank you, everyone. I'm going to log off.

CHAIR HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Bye-bye. All right. And so now we'll proceed back to the business of today and we'd like to thank everyone who has signed up
for taking the time in advance to share your feedback with the TLC and we look forward to hearing from you now at this public meeting.

And with that, I turn things over to our general counsel, Ryan Wanttaja.

MR. WANTTAJA: Thank you and thank you, again, Nora, for the kind words and thank you for your service to this Commission.

Good morning. Before we begin, if you have signed up to speak today and are logged into Zoom, please make sure your display name in Zoom is the same name you signed up to speak with. If your name in Zoom does not match the name you signed up to speak with, we will not be able to identify and call on you.

Also, due to the volume of speakers who have signed up, testimony will be limited to two minutes. I will give you a warning when 30 seconds are remaining and then ask you to conclude your testimony.
If you would like to submit written testimony to supplement, or in lieu of testifying today, you may do so by emailing your comments to tlcrules@tlc.nyc.gov. Again, that email is tlcrules@tlc.nyc.gov.

And with that, we will begin our Public Hearing. When I call your name, you will be promoted to a speaker and may un-mute yourself and begin your testimony.

Our first speaker will be Luis Useda followed by Sonam Lama.

(No response.)

MR. WANTTAJA: Luis Useda, you may un-mute and begin your testimony.

(No response.)

MR. WANTTAJA: It appears you are still muted. You may un-mute and begin your testimony.

MR. USEDA: Good morning. My name is Luis Useda. Can you hear me now?

MR. WANTTAJA: Yes, we can. Thank you.

MR. USEDA: Okay. Thank you guys
for giving me another opportunity. I spoke a couple months ago.

The last time I spoke to you, my situation has been bad -- economic situation -- but through so many problem. But, again, I'm here for -- see if you can do something for people like me who own TLC license but we don't got opportunity to have TLC plate.

Right now I'm (indiscernible) in Westchester County cause the pay in Westchester County is not fair. You don't make money. You (indiscernible) a mile, gas, toll and at the end of the day, you don't make money at all. So, I'm stuck but I have to work cause I got four kids and my regular job is not much money what I make.

So, I decided to rent a car, so right now, I have four weeks already -- I'm back in New York City but I wish if I can own my own plate and that way I can save 1,400 a month and I can, you know, use it for my kid and my family.

And I had the car but I don't have
the plates, so I don't know if you can
do something about it or thinking about
it cause it's -- I don't see it fair to
people who got only one license, they
own around 5 or 10 license plates.

So, you know --

MR. WANTTAJA:  30 seconds remaining.

MR. USEDA:  Pardon me?

MR. WANTTAJA:  30 seconds remaining.

MR. USEDA:  Okay. So -- yeah, yeah

-- and thank you again for the

opportunity, guys, but please if you can
do something about the plate, you know,
I'd really appreciate it.

MR. WANTTAJA:  Thank you for your
testimony.

Our next speaker will be Sonna Lama

followed by Mohammad Islam.

MR. LAMA:  Hello. Can you hear me?

MR. WANTTAJA:  Yes, we can hear you.

Thank you. You may begin your
testimony.

MR. LAMA:  Hi. Good morning to all
Commissioners and to all my fellow
drivers. My name is Sonam Lama. I'm a
driver -- TLC driver working for almost six, seven years and I'm also an organizer working for a nonprofit organization.

So, my -- really simple question is, I find -- I'm an immigrant first, right. So, what I find (indiscernible) is in every (indiscernible) in America, a doctor becomes Chief of Medicine; a police officer becomes a Police Commissioner. Why in TLC a driver not becoming a Commissioner? What is behind this thing?

I have a huge respect for our current Commissioners that are working -- I give a big salute, okay. But in terms of professional drivers being on that (indiscernible), I never see a good opportunity to the drivers. Why? Because we're immigrant? That's my question.

And what I also wanted to emphasize is, when you have a driver -- a professional driver -- a veteran driver who has experience on that Commission
seat as a Commissioner, opportunity is given. There are so many things that he or she can deal with it. I take the whole history till now, none of the driver have become Commissioner. Why not?

TLC is organization; it's not different from the politics, right; or now you guys want me to understand is this a politics organization too.

So, please, we want the driver in a place where other Commissioners are there too -- a good opportunity to be given. And my last thing is that --

MR. WANTTAJA: 30 seconds remaining.

MR. LAMA: Thank you.

My last question is, a police officer -- not a regular one -- TLC police officers, they are abusing drivers like sheep. Why not giving them a training to treat driver with respect and dignity, not like sheep. Please, I want you to amend and please, whatever is behind the scenes, please take my voice to them so that we, drivers, get a
lot of benefits and resources.

Thank you so much, TLC, for giving me this opportunity.

MR. WANTTAJA: Thank you for your testimony.

Our next speaker will be Mohammad Islam followed by Balhar Singh.

MR. ISLAM: Okay. You hear me?

MR. WANTTAJA: Yes, thank you. You may begin your testimony.

MR. ISLAM: Hi. Good morning --

Okay. I am driving yellow cab taxi more than two decades and I see lot of unfair thing during TLC.

Number one, when the TLC sold the medallion, there's two kind of medallion, like wheelchair accessible and regular one, and I bought the medallion like 15 years before. I pay more money to the -- for a regular medallion. Now, I'm not in lottery; I have to buy the accessible thing.

So, last 15 years, I pay more
interest, more down payment for (indiscernible) medallion, so this is kind of unfair to me.

Also, there is City creating the new bus lane. The bus gives (indiscernible) to the passengers -- City of New York -- whoever leaving the City. So, same job we do. We give service to the public. People need go to their office, go to -- need go to their -- make a doctor appointment, hospital, or take their kids to drop off to their school.

At least we can drive bus lane as long as we have passengers. Sometimes, no bus in the bus lane. We start in the traffic, not able to move forward.

Also, we need more taxi (indiscernible) in the City because like so many taxi, we need to use sometimes bathroom, or buy food, or buy tea, coffee -- we can't find parking.

Also --

MR. WANTTAJA: 30 seconds remaining.

MR. ISLAM: But you gave me two minutes on this so -- okay.
So, also the car, before it was very (indiscernible). There also (indiscernible) drivers. You recently, about seat belt sticker, I want that on there to put the sign. They don't want to even talk. Oh, it's (indiscernible) the thing.

So -- also, sometimes go to TLC (indiscernible) employee. They treat the cab taxi driver like (indiscernible). Some of them nice, but some of them very rude. You need to give more training or more professional people while you hire.

MR. WANTTAJA: Two minutes has expired. Please conclude your testimony.

MR. ISLAM: All right. Just thanks for listening because I have some other (indiscernible). It's hitting us, you know. So, try to focus on it.

Also, bike lane, 70, 80 percent bike lane never stay in their lane. If anything happened, then all wrong with the cab drivers. They do some of them
like snake. So, TLC --

MR. WANTTAJA: Time has expired.
Conclude your testimony.

MR. ISLAM: TLC owner -- the Uber owner (indiscernible), the TLC established 1969 or '70, '71 -- somewhere (indiscernible) -- the TLC is not a good company. Now, I see --

MR. WANTTAJA: Thank you for your testimony. We're going to move onto our next speaker.

Our next speaker will be Mohammad Islam followed Balhar Singh -- our next speaker will be Balhar Singh followed by Michele Dottin.

MR. SINGH: Hello. Good morning, guys. Thanks for giving us opportunity.

First I want to tell, you know, the electronic hands-free device should be allowed by -- while working like as (indiscernible) because we're living in technology world. It is hard -- you know, Uber and Lyft -- we are also using a technology. Those kinds of -- because it's business -- phones, apps -- these
also distracting driving -- everything
is hands-free driver means device
distract driving.

(Indiscernible) TLC officer, who is
like, you know, catching a driver
mistake should be judged at -- while,
you know, they're giving a ticket.
They're going to look to the TLC driver,
why they, you know, break the rules, you
know. It feels like, you know,
sometimes driver have no choice to break
the rule. So, they're going to consider
those things.

So, another thing that I have, that
taxi and FHV means taxi driver should be
allowed to make the U-turn. You know,
if they make the safe turn, you know, I
mean, they should be allowed to make a
U-turn.

So, I have one question. I see, you
know, Uber and Lyft, their business is
growing. What we don't have, TLC have
manpower -- everything -- money. They
have everything. Why is medallion go
down? Because it's (indiscernible)
fault. I mean, how is business running, you know what I mean.

Those companies have the same (indiscernible) technology but we're not promoting; we're not advertising. We have a card but we don't advertise anything. So, it's like a feeling of the TLC because Uber and Lyft, they're using a technology.

They are growing day by day, but medallion people getting loans. You know, they are now bankrupt, you know. So, they couldn't afford to, you know, (indiscernible) loans. So, I want you to think about, you know, these concerns.

Thanks for giving me opportunity.

MR. WANTTAJA: Thank you for your testimony.

Our next speaker will be Michele Dottin followed by Leonardo Lara.

MS. DOTTIN: Good morning. Can you hear me?

MR. WANTTAJA: Yes, we can. Thank you.
MS. DOTTIN: Hi. I'm Michele Dottin and I'm an organizer.

First and foremost, I'd like to say thank you. Second, I'd like to ask that all licensee be given access to bus lane to drop off passengers -- riders safely -- elderly, the sick, the disabled riders -- parents with children. The drivers from all sectors have a right to be able to drop off the riders safely.

You gave us this license. We should be able to do the job properly without being worried that we're going to be ticketed and then end up earning no money just by getting one ticket for the day.

Second, all taxi stands should be converted for all licensees. There shouldn't be a separation of license or type of vehicle you drive.

TLC point base on double jeopardy, if you go to a court of law and you're charged with a crime, you only pay for it once. You shouldn't have to pay for it twice.
So, it should be a way that you can actually make it fairer to the driver. If you give the ticket, then that's who they pay. If DMV gives the ticket, that's who they should pay.

Points on drivers shouldn't be so high. You know that our drivers, regardless, are on the road 10 times more than a regular driver. Chances of them getting a ticket is higher based on all of these new rules -- putting bikes lanes, bus lanes in the way.

For drivers' protection services should be structured to protect the drivers a little bit better because leasing and rental companies have more than one vehicle on a license, it is impossible for them to track the actual car to protect --

MR. WANTTAJA: 30 seconds remaining.

MS. DOTTIN: -- (indiscernible) when there are -- you know, when there's an issue with the leasing companies.

The ADA -- the service animals -- should be updated to make sure that app
companies recognize that emotional support animals are not ADA compliant and they should not be able to use that against the drivers to deactivate them.

And last but not least, we -- WAV vehicles, the incentives should be across the board for all sectors -- yellow, green, and FHV because FHV drivers are not getting the same incentives as yellow cabs.

So, please -- and more rules and regulations for bike riders. If you expect the drivers to be responsible, you need to hold the bike riders responsible too in the way that they drive, and we all know and you all know that bikers have -- they do not follow the laws and that --

MR. WANTTAJA: Time has expired. Please conclude your testimony.

MS. DOTTIN: So, I ask you, Commissioner, you have been a friend; you have been listening to us. You have been asking for our opinion and we're giving it to you today to ask for a
little bit more fairness across the board for -- especially for our black car drivers because we're not seeing it. We're still fighting to be treated the same and considered the same. So, thank you all and thank you for listening, and let's hope that this will make a change.

MR. WANTTAJA: Thank you for your testimony.

Our next speaker will be Jinwen Wu followed by Deqian Chen, both of whom have indicated they need a Mandarin translator. So, if we can get our Mandarin translator ready.

I see Jinwen Wu is in, so you may un-mute yourself and begin your testimony.

MS. SCOTT: Mandarin interpreter, please provide instructions to Jinwen Wu.

(Mandarin Interpreter used.)

MR. WU: Okay. I wanted to testify. Three months ago when I came out from the Grand Central Highway, I was
stopped by the police and they say that
I was over speed, and I say that it
takes a while -- once I get out from the
highway, it takes a little while to
reduce the speed.

So, there's a process, but the
police gave me a ticket so I feel a
little bit like confused. So, they
asked me to come here to give the
testimony. That's why I'm here.

MR. WANTTAJA: So, this is not a
hearing on that summons, but we will
have a member of our External Affairs
Department reach out to you to discuss
your issue.

MR. WU: I just want to know if
there's a video of the incident -- of
the highway and what people came out
from the highway right after passing
through the highway. So -- that there's
a video there.

So, I think most people will commit
extra speed, so I think is it a policy
problem? I mean, is it considered as a
policy and is it a policy problem?
MR. WANTTAJA: We will have a member of our External Affairs team reach out to you to discuss your specific citation. Thank you.

MR. WU: Okay -- okay.

MR. WANTTAJA: Thank you.

And our next speaker will be Deqian Chen who has also indicated they need a Mandarin translator, and he'll be followed by Fayzi Nurulloev.

MS. SCOTT: Mandarin interpreter, please provide instructions to Deqian Chen.

(Mandarin interpreter used.)

MR. CHEN: Okay. As a TLC driver in Manhattan, we feel stressful because sometimes we have the problem with the bicycle and the walking people.

Sometimes when the light turn red, the walking people still keep walking across the road and once we turn, so it's easy to get a ticket for us.

So, I just feel like our -- in Manhattan, the bicycle and walking people, they have higher priority than
us, the drivers. So, is it possible to have better transportation policy to allow -- to let the bicycle or the walking people to obey the traffic light so that we could drive safely?

MR. WANTTAJA: Does that conclude your testimony?

MR. CHEN: Yeah, yeah, yeah -- is there like a traffic disorder -- something -- yeah, I would like to express.

Yeah, it's not all the problem; all the problems are made by our TLC drivers. There are a lot of different reasons they cause a problem. So, is it possible to ask the City to have better traffic order or policies?

MR. WANTTAJA: Of course, that's what the purpose of this hearing is, is to hear feedback from the public about ways we might change our rules and regulation. So, we appreciate your comments and your feedback, and we'll take them into consideration.

MR. CHEN: Okay. TLC drivers, our
driver license, we got 12 points. So, once we (indiscernible) two to three points will be deducted. So, if we (indiscernible) five to six times so we don't have anymore -- don't have our points anymore.

So, that's why we have been very careful by driving very carefully. We don't want to be -- all the points to be deducted. So, we have been very careful actually.

MR. WANTTAJA: Well, thank you for your testimony and we will take all of your comments into consideration for today.

MR. CHEN: Okay. Thank you -- thank you for your hearing.

MR. WANTTAJA: Thank you for your testimony.

Our next speaker will be Fayzi Nurulloev followed by Jacky Lin.

(No response.)

MR. WANTTAJA: Fayzi, you may un-mute yourself and begin your testimony.
MR. NURULLOEV: Hello. Can you --

MR. WANTTAJA: Yes, hello -- yeah,
we can hear you. Thank you.

MR. NURULLOEV: Hi. I don't know
how I became of this meeting, but I had
hearing date today at this time. You
sent me link and I become this meeting.
What should I do now?

MR. WANTTAJA: This is not a hearing
on any of your summons. This is an open
hearing on our regulatory review
process.

So, if you have an open summons,
somebody from our External Affairs
Division will be reaching out to you to
let you know what you should do.

MR. NURULLOEV: So, it's going to be
right now because I had at 9 o'clock
this hearing today --

MR. WANTTAJA: Yes --

MR. NURULLOEV: -- so I don't
know --

MR. WANTTAJA: Yes, we can have
somebody reach out to you right now. We
have your email address from you signing
up to speak, so we can have somebody get
in contact with you right now.

MR. NURULLOEV: Okay. Now, can I
say something?

MR. WANTTAJA: Sure -- sure.

MR. NURULLOEV: Yes, I want to say
about the officers -- TLC officers --
how they treat the drivers.

Now, I have a summons. When he
stopped me, he asked me why I did the
U-turn. I explained why I did the
U-turn because that was a guy with
flack. He asked to -- don't go through
because there is a shooting movie.

When I make a U-turn after that --
he told me to do that -- the TLC officer
stop me and start screaming, "Why you
doing this", "You broke the law" --
blah, blah, blah. He treat me like I'm
a terrorist, you know. So, I explained
what happened -- what happened -- and I
showed him -- he didn't listen to me; he
just give me ticket.

I want to ask you to talk with the
officers. They can't do that to
drivers. I know we are all immigrant, maybe we don't speak really good English, but we're working in the City like them and we pay all taxes. We do whatever we need to do and I'm asked you, just -- I don't know -- figure out this problem because it's not going to be good all the time.

They treating us like nothing and about the dog rules -- about the dog rules, I want you to do something with this regulation because I understand somebody love the dog, but if I'm taking this customer to restaurant with his dog, after dropping off, I have to clean the car because there's too many hairs, too many --

MR. WANTTAJA: 30 seconds remaining.

MR. NURULLOEV: Yeah, it's going to take my time. I'm working for Uber. This is my own car. I'm paying for the insurance; I'm paying for gas. I'm paying for everything, but I cannot spend my time to clean after this dog.

So, there has to be, if there's a
dog, I have decline that customer. I cannot take this.

MR. WANTTAJA: Thank you for your testimony and we will have somebody from our External Affairs reach out to you about your hearing this morning.

MR. NURULLOEV: Thank you so much.

MR. WANTTAJA: Our next speaker is Jacky Lin followed by Alex Kanan.

MR. LIN: Hi. Good morning, everybody. My name is Jacky. I'm from the -- one of the organizers at IDG. You know, there's a few things I just want to address here.

You know, one of the things is TLC ticket. You know, I believe DMV tickets, when you are -- plead guilty, it's from the date of conviction, but TLC ticket is like, you know, the date you are pleaded guilty. That's when it counts. You know, it would be a lot easier for a driver if it was all at the same date, like fall into DMV guidelines kind of thing. That's the first thing.

Another thing I wanted to say was,
you know, if we could lower the fines or even the settlements, right. And the reason why I say that is because, you know, drivers, we are suffering enough. We're not earning as much as before. You know, ever since the unemployment ended, there's a large surplus of drivers coming back. Our daily earnings have dropped dramatically. That's another thing.

Also, you know, faster response times from -- like, whether we email TLC, call TLC -- you know, this was large -- long, long, long, long wait time. It would be very helpful if we could have a shorter wait time or even, you know, have nicer people working at the desk as well at the TLC office while we're doing like the TLC work -- when I'm helping some drivers out.

And also the call-back feature on the TLC line, it doesn't really work in my opinion. You know, like they call me back two minutes later and they're like, "Oh, you're now at the top of the line".
I'm still waiting there for like an hour-and-a-half for them to answer the phone.

Also, if we -- like, some drivers, right -- like on the TLC system, the licenses -- "Oh, your vehicle is not active", "Your TLC license is not active". You know, instead of doing it on the weekend -- on a Friday afternoon or a Thursday afternoon, could we push all those to like a Monday or Tuesday -- or even a Wednesday -- and the reason why I say that is because, you know, we all know TLC system is not up and running on the weekends.

They only shut the drivers off for that time. It prevents the drivers from earning during that time. You know --

MR. WANTTAJA: 30 seconds remaining.

MR. LIN: -- maybe we could push that off to a Monday or Tuesday, that way drivers can correct it and then they only have one day downtime instead of a whole weekends' worth of lost work.

Also, you know, like doing the
settlement -- right now, I believe you guys stopped doing the settlements online. You know, it was very helpful when it was on -- through via email and the reason why I say that is because, you know, drivers, they can send it in and they can get this thing done and it was a lot easier process instead of just waiting there three hours, four hours, five hours. You know, that's a lot of time that drivers have lost, you know, from doing this.

You know, what I'm trying to say is we've got to push for -- push for online access for everything. It's much easier that way. It modernizes the whole system, you know, and that's something that, you know, would help the drivers achieve this -- do what they got much faster.

MR. WANTTAJA: Time has expired. Please conclude your testimony.

MR. LIN: Thank you for your time today.

And -- but last but not least, yes,
I do also promote -- you know, I believe we need a driver on the Commissioner seats, you know, that way they understand what drivers are going through instead of just having, you know, another person that says, "Oh, I have a masters in this or that" or "a bachelor's in this and that".

You know, I believe drivers deserve a seat on the Commissioner's seat as well because they understand the rules; they understand what drivers go through.

Thank you for your time.

MR. WANTTAJA: Thank you for your testimony.

We will be moving onto our next speaker. Next up is Alex Kanan followed by Israel Acevedo.

MR. KANAN: Can you guys hear me?

MR. WANTTAJA: Yes, we can. Thank you.

MR. KANAN: Hi. I'm Alex. I'm a medallion owner of four years. I've been driving taxi for seven years.

Overall, the devastation of this
industry, going from a million dollars of a medallion to about 100,000 is more than just, you know, these massive debts on the medallions, you know. There was an intrinsic value.

I mean, obviously, it was a little bit inflated, yes, but there's an intrinsic value here that needs to be upheld. There's a competitive advantage -- a competitive moat that has been eroded over the years through competition, through green cabs, through Uber and Lyft, and just all this, like, double-standard of regulation between the industries, right.

I think something that definitely needs to be addressed is a fare increase. We've been -- it has been long overdue. It needs to be a minimum fare across the board.

So, for example, if I'm at the airport and somebody wants to get in my yellow cab and go to New Jersey, the standard, you know, out of town rate is $5 a mile. So, why is it that Uber gets
to charge half of that and undercut me
by 50 percent, but then also when it's
busy, they charge two, three times the
price in the City or at the airport. I
don't think that's fair.

Another thing is eliminating the
congestion surcharge and the MTA -- all
this money that we give to the MTA as
yellow cab drivers, makes no sense at
all. Like, do we get health benefits
like the MTA does? Do we get a
retirement plan? Do we get to use the
bus lanes? No.

So, I don't see why we have to, you
know, pay the MTA all this money and how
we have to add to a congestion charge.
Like, why are we being charged to work
in the City that we pay medallion to --
you know, to work in. It makes no
sense.

Like, if anything, Uber and Lyft
drivers -- you know, the companies
should pay that congestion charge.
They're the ones who attribute (sic) to
the congestion. They outnumber us about
10 to 1 at this point. Also, all that extra traffic that all these Uber and Lyft drivers cause reduces the, you know, earnings on the meter cause we're stuck in traffic.

Also, I think the wheelchair accessibility rules are out of date. There's no reason to have 50 percent of the fleet wheelchair accessible. I think we can do the same job with like 20 percent or 10 percent of the capacity with like better dispatching.

Those wheelchair accessible vans are very noisy and it just reduces the passenger experience; like, it's not as good as a ride. What else --

MR. WANTTAJA: 30 seconds remaining.

MR. KANAN: All right. Let's see -- yeah, so ultimately, it's like how do we make the drivers -- you know, how do we make it so that, you know, there's more money in drivers pockets also at the end of the day.

Also, another thing I don't think is fair is like the ad revenue that I make
as a medallion owner is like $100 a month or whatever for the roof ad and the screen in the back. There's no way these companies are paying -- you know, Verifone and CMT that much money.

So, I think the medallion owners should see a little bit more money from ad revenue too. So -- yeah, that's about it.

MR. WANTTAJA: Okay. Thank you for your testimony.

MR. KANAN: All right.

MR. WANTTAJA: Our next speaker will be Israel Acevedo followed by Huascar Medina.

MR. ACEVEDO: Good morning. Can you hear me?

MR. WANTTAJA: Yes, we can. Good morning.

MR. ACEVEDO: Good morning -- good morning. Good morning Commissioner Aloysee -- good morning all. For those that don't know me, my name is Israel Acevedo and I am a New York City TLC owner, operator, and advocate and I have
been in the industry for six-and-a-half years.

In hopes of protecting the livelihood of thousands and thousands of drivers, if the TLC must enforce the red light camera violation with points, I would like to suggest and hope the TLC would consider amending the penalty for red light camera from zero dollars and three points to zero dollars and two points per violation.

In addition, I would also like to suggest that the TLC allow drivers to take the point reduction course to reduce points every 12 months versus every 15 months.

Thank you for having me. That's all I really have to say.

MR. WANTTAJA: Thank you for your testimony.

Next up, we will have Huascar Medina, who has indicated they need a Spanish translator.

MS. SCOTT: Spanish interpreter, please give instructions to Huascar
MR. MEDINA: Good morning. Thanks for the opportunity --

SPANISH INTERPRETER: I'm so sorry.

MR. MEDINA: Good morning, everybody. Thanks for the opportunity to letting me to speak here in this audience. My name is Huascar Medina.

A while ago the TLC promised to suspend the medallions only for a year.

Now, I am a father with four kids and my wife is pregnant. I know soon my kids are going to go to college and I'm going to be responsible for all these expenses.

So, my question is, when are you going to allow for me to recover this medallion?

CHAIR HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: I just want to clarify quickly that it was in regards to the cap on new vehicle licenses.

So, the question is, with respect to when will the TLC allow for additional
vehicle licenses. I just want to clarify the testimony as I heard it.

SPANISH INTERPRETER: Okay.

MR. WANTTAJA: Thank you. That's a good clarification and we are taking testimony on all of this today. So, your comments will be noted and taken into consideration.

CHAIR HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Ryan, you're good to proceed.

MR. WANTTAJA: Okay -- all right. Thank you.

All right. Well, thank you for your testimony.

Our next speaker will be Aladdin Jabber followed by Manuel De La Cruz.

(No response.)

MR. WANTTAJA: Alladin, you may un-mute yourself and begin your testimony.

MR. JABBER: Hi. Can you hear me?

MR. WANTTAJA: Yes, we can. Thank you.

MR. JABBER: All right. Just raise your hand when I'm at 30 seconds.
MR. WANTTAJA: You got it.

MR. JABBER: I'd like to thank the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission for having this hearing and actually how do I share video as well -- one second.

I'd like to thank the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission for having this hearing and giving the drivers the opportunity to share their thoughts on the TLC and providing ideas for improvements.

I've been a licensed TLC driver for almost three years. Since starting in March 2019, I have been given -- I have given 6,869 rides. I spent a good deal of time working before the pandemic and worked entirely through the pandemic at this -- up until this point done entirely on the Uber and Lyft platforms.

I've seen differences in traffic conditions going from the pre-pandemic and now post-pandemic times. I was born in Flushing, Queens and I have lived in New York City my entire life.
Currently, Uber and Lyft account for over 80 percent of the ride hailing market share. Of that, Uber accounts for over 70 percent. Driver behavior is almost entirely dictated based on the monetary incentives that Uber and Lyft offer.

From the 1980s up until the early 90s, Domino's Pizza offered a 30-minutes guarantee, which led to so many fatal car crashes that it made their drivers' death rate comparable to minors and construction workers. It wasn't until several lawsuits that this promotion was dropped in 1993.

We cannot depend on companies like Uber and Lyft to self-regulate when it comes to the health and the well-being of the drivers. They base their bonus structures and incentives entirely on TLC regulation.

New York City and visitors of our great City are finding unique and different ways to get around the City from Citi bikes, electrified scooters.
and skateboards. On a daily basis, a
driver can experience several
inexperienced cyclists on the road with
thousands of rental scooters throughout
the City. Ride hailing drivers, more
than anyone, need to be well-rested and
diligent to protect themselves and the
countless others they share the road
with.

On a weekly basis, Uber offers
incentives for drivers Monday through
Friday. Drivers have to complete 100
trips to receive sometimes as much as
$500. This is a dangerous
(indiscernible) that is being offered in
front of drivers.

The average trip takes 20 minutes.
That's 2,000 driving minutes to
complete.

MR. WANTTAJA: (Indicating.)

MR. JABBER: That doesn't account
for the time it takes for drivers to
reach the passenger, the wait time --
also the time it takes the driver to
drive back to areas that have no hails.
These types of incentives require drivers to go well beyond the maximum driving allowance that TLC drivers are given. No monetary incentive should contradict New York City's Taxi and Limousine Commission mandated maximum work hours. Drivers should never be incentivized (sic) to drive longer or harder to (indiscernible) safe.

Uber and Lyft also offer incentives for driving multiple trips in a row without being able to turn off the app -- "consecutive trips" as Uber calls them and "street bonuses" as Lyft calls them -- usually offered during early morning school hours when parents should be feeling safe bringing their kids to schools, TLC -- Uber and Lyft driver are frankly trying to complete bonuses during a time period when they should be driving extra diligently.

MR. WANTTAJA: Time has expired.

Please conclude your testimony.

MR. JABBER: I'm just going to jump to the end. I wrote quite a bit.
MR. WANTTAJA: You're welcome to submit the comment to our email address as well if you would like to do that in lieu of --

MR. JABBER: Okay.

MR. WANTTAJA: Yeah.

MR. JABBER: Okay. I just want to say this last part.

And, finally, the most important issue requiring immediate attention is the fact that there are only 30 locations with 122 parking spots in the entire City available for for-hire vehicle to rest.

Imagine 80,000 people trying to share 122 parking spots; imagine over 60,000 active daily drivers all trying to use the bathroom two or three times a day and only having 30 locations to do so. And even worse, only 18 of those 30 spots are in the island of Manhattan, which almost all of them are being taken up by vehicles owned by those who have placards from other City Departments.

MR. WANTTAJA: -- testimony.
MR. JABBER: Okay. Thank you very much.

MR. WANTTAJA: And, again, you're welcome to submit written comments to tlcrules@tlc.nyc.gov.

MR. JABBER: Thank you.

MR. WANTTAJA: We will move onto our next speaker. I see Manuel De La Cruz has joined us, and next up after him will be Larbi Aitaabou.

Manuel, please begin your testimony.

MR. DE LA CRUZ: Hi. Can you hear me? Hello?

MR. WANTTAJA: Yes, we can hear you. Thank you.

MR. DE LA CRUZ: Great. Thank you for giving me this opportunity.

I want to bring up a point in regards to the seat belt mandate as far as statewide in New York State. I believe most of the riders and public do not -- are not aware of the seat belt.

So, as you speak, I'm doing some research and getting like an audio device that I can put on my vehicle so
the minute the passenger gets in a vehicle, they will be able to hear that they must buckle up.

And also another point I want to bring in regards to car seats, there's a major issue with that. My experience where I see that a passenger brings in an infant and don't have a car seat, so obviously, I'm not going to be able to assist them to bring their infant to the vehicle. So, possibly the next driver might accept that, which is no-no and they may be not aware of that particular issue.

And my next point is, can you consider more in the future for drivers to purchase or rent electrical vehicles -- and that's something where it's great, which I've seen yellow cabs and I got a feedback from a couple of drivers and the customers love that -- having that electrical vehicle.

And also rest stops -- there should be more rest stops in the City. Obviously, it's going to be difficult
cause I see there's more bike lanes, and hopefully that can be implemented more improved.

Thank you and thank you for giving me this opportunity.

MR. WANTTAJA: Thank you for your testimony.

Just one quick point of clarification, any current FHV license holder can put their FHV license on an electric vehicle today.

So, there's nothing stopping anybody from putting their FHV license on a battery electric vehicle, but certainly we take your comments that we should be expanding the access to battery electric vehicles and finding ways to make them more widely available to drivers.


MR. WANTTAJA: Thank you.

Our next speaker will be Larbi Aitaabou, who I see on screen now.

MR. AITAABOU: Yes.

MR. WANTTAJA: Following him will be
Joziel Andujar.

So, thank you and you may begin your testimony.

MR. AITAABOU: Thank you so much. I like the way you pronounce my name but it's Larbi Aitaabou. It's very easy, just like a taboo, but I'm not a taboo.

Let's get into business:

I think -- one of the things I want to start with -- well, thank you for giving us the opportunity today to give our feedback and opinion about what the rules should be, you know, after COVID basically.

So, long time no see you, Commissioner. If you remember me -- moderate one of the meetings with the drivers and thank you for that opportunity that you give us at that time. We hope to see you again.

But here's the thing with me today, I feel like, you know, the industry has been, you know, helping a lot of drivers getting a job and, you know, the licensing and everything -- creating the
independence and the flexibility that
everyone relied on.

One thing is that, yeah, we are
paying -- you know, FHV drivers right
now are paying congestion pricing, but
they're really not making a lot of money
when you get stuck behind the traffic.
And right now, as you can witness, a lot
of traffic in the City for whatever
reason. People probably get a lot of
money and they decided just to drive,
which caused a lot of congestion.

Drivers are not benefitting from
that since we are the drivers that have
been moving the City throughout the
whole pandemic and continue to do so.
So, you should probably consider to
speak to DOT and allow drivers with
passengers -- FHV with passengers to
actually use, you know, the bus lane,
which actually can help a lot of the
traffic as well.

Speaking of moving violation,
traffic-related tickets should not --
and I'm sorry to say this -- TLC
business. DMV is actually doing a great job at that and when you add in actually the fines that the TLC are charging the drivers, that kind of put drivers in a really, really bad hardship. You should consider, you know, those fine -- eliminating them if possible and work something with the DMV.

Right now, as we can see, cars are very hard to get by, due to the shipment. So, TLC plates not being used by those big owner fleets, that they are actually exploiting, you know, the driver -- drivers everywhere -- should be returned to the TLC and recycled back to individuals.

Maybe you can create a list for drivers actually that -- once you actually -- be fully independent and get those recycled TLC plates to them because those are the workers and the people that deserve to have independent plates, and also you are closing the gap on exploiting drivers.

The battery electric vehicles should
be open for individual drivers,
especially a person like me. I like to
go green. I want to help the
environment as well. I don't have a
plate right now, but I was, you know,
planning to get an e-vehicle --

MR. WANTTAJA: 30 seconds remaining.

MR. AITAABOU: Thank you -- and
should be considered for individual
drivers and well, and trust me, that
would help a lot.

One last thing, the consumer
complaint -- and been witnessing that a
lot of drivers are coming to me and
asking me for help -- how to deal with
that. I think that's a little bit --
you know, we need to eliminate the bias
on that.

Just look into it and see if we can
fix on that because I can call the phone
and complain about any TLC plates and
the person will get a hefty fine.

Thank you for your time. I
appreciate the work we're doing and we
hope to see you guys soon. Thank you.
MR. WANTTAJA: Thank you for your testimony.

Our next speaker will be Joziel Andujar followed by Gerson Fernandes.

MR. ANDUJAR: Hello -- yeah.

MR. WANTTAJA: Hello -- yes.

MR. ANDUJAR: Hey, hello. How are you guys? Hi to you all -- everybody in TLC. I really love the good participation of drivers in this kind of hearing. It's really -- I think it's good for the industry.

I just want to say -- use my time wisely and I just want to put out this thing about the plates:

I know, like the Commissioner was saying on (indiscernible) in the meeting she had with the drivers, that, you know, they're trying to reduce, you know, the amount of cars that are driving in the City because of congestion and this and that, and -- but I don't understand -- we have to find ways that really, we the drivers, are getting the plate because that's the way
the drivers can spend less time in the road.

If they go east below the congestion and get the congestion out of the way, we need to get those plates so we can make the most money and one way to do it is we have TLC, that you got corporation plates and you got individual plates, and, you know, it can be transferred to one another, but if you can make a regulation that we can buy a plate for a fellow driver -- the one that retired -- or a pay for a corporation, that can be, you know, something.

It's a good solution and ban all plate acquisition by corporation because why it's fair that corporation can buy plates -- one for others -- you know, I buy this corporation for the (indiscernible), I get all the plates. You know, that's not really fair. Why is that fair?

Another thing is inflation. We're living in times where everything is up. Since the pandemic start, it got
expensive and all this minimum pay, it has to be reviewed. Why? I know before the gas, it was higher before, but it was only the gas. Now everything -- everything is an expense -- the gas, the food -- everything has gone through the roof --

MR. WANTTAJA: 30 seconds remaining.

MR. ANDUJAR: -- and we have to be fair.

This minimum pay, it has to be regulate and must, you know, in the livery -- in the livery bases, because we are the most that deal with those people in low, you know, income communities. You know, so we need the help; we need that compromise.

Another thing, for end this, I think we need a hearing. We need an audience only for accessible because I know that City struggling with the Access-A-Ride and I have some ideas that we, the drivers, can be in both -- make some money and everybody is happy. This is going to help the citizen; this is going
to help the MTA with it, and I think everybody is going to be happy.

But we need to get things done, not only talking, talking, talk -- blah, blah, blah -- no, no. We need to compromise.

Thank you all. Thank you, Commissioner. Thank you, everybody. Bye.

MR. WANTTAJA: Thank you for your testimony.

Our next speaker will be Gerson Fernandes followed by Peter Mazer.

MR. FERNANDES: Can you hear me?

MR. WANTTAJA: Yes, we can. Thank you.

MR. FERNANDES: Yeah, good morning. I just want to say that I'm an owner-driver from 2000 and I own my own car and I own my medallion and the car. And now in April, my car will be expiring because I have to get a new one because, of course, I got a long-time -- the TLC gave me a long time to change my car.
But I would like to say that instead of having a certain type of car, like Uber or Lyft have, give us more accessibility to other models so that we are able to -- how you say -- even for the payment, we are able to -- what do you call that -- shop around.

So, I'm asking for this, if it's possible, for TLC to make any plan for that because from 2003, I had two of the Crown Victorias and now I've got Transit Connect, which is a regular one.

So, that's what I would like to ask the TLC, to make like more models accessible so, as owners, we can -- we are more able to shop around.

That's one thing and the next thing is in the bus lane, if you have elderly customers -- I am not saying the regular customers -- give us a chance to drop in the bus lane so that way they take time to come out. We cannot push them, "Go out, go out, the bus is behind". So, like, that way, so that we don't get a ticket.
That's all I want to say. Thank you.

MR. WANTTAJA: Thank you for your testimony.

Our next speaker will be Peter Mazer followed by Andrew Vollo.

MR. MAZER: Good morning.

MR. WANTTAJA: Good morning.

MR. MAZER: My name is Peter Mazer and I'm general counsel to the Metropolitan Taxicab Board of Trade -- a 70-year-old trade association. We've represented thousands of medallion owners at hearings and our full service driver center has represented 4,600 drivers at OATH hearings at no charge.

I first encountered the TLC rule book 32 years ago when I started as an Administrative Law Judge at the TLC's tribunal. At that time, the rule book contained 185 rules. There are 842 pages of rules regulating this industry.

Drivers are subject to 64 pages of rules and 51 separate rules that can result in suspension or revocation of
their licenses. So, any attempt to streamline, or simplify, or revise these rules is definitely a daunting task and not a two-minute subject, but I would like to address a couple of specific areas.

The first relates to license suspensions and I'll start with an example. Drivers who are fined at a hearing must pay their fine in full within 30 days or the TLC license is suspended. Most of the summonses adjudicated today are for traffic offenses and they carry a fine of $400 plus points.

New York State recognized that suspending a motorist driver's license for nonpayment of fines creates an ever widening circle of poverty from which there is no escape since one cannot work to pay the fine if the driver's license is suspended.

Early this year, the State passed legislation which prohibits the suspension of drivers' licenses merely
for the nonpayment of a fine. It also requires that payment plans be offered and grants Hearing Officers discretion to reduce fines below the statutory minimum.

The statutory minimum fine for most traffic offenses in the State is $138 dots. TLC licenses face a fine of $400 for the same offense, which the Hearing Officers have no discretion by the Hearing Officer to reduce the fine. There are no payment plans and the deprivation of one's ability to earn a livelihood until the fine is paid in full.

MR. WANTTAJA: 30 seconds remaining.

MR. MAZER: The TLC -- thank you.

The TLC can easily replicate the State's approach to summonses and still enforce its rules to protect the public. Owners, agents, and non-driver businesses face license suspensions also for a whole array of rules. Most have nothing to do with public safety and many create untenable situations for
owners and businesses.

I will address these in written comments that I will submit, but also would point out that suspensions are imposed immediately. Many times drivers and owners do not know of the suspensions. A grace period before the imposition of a suspension would be a fair and equitable way of looking at this.

I will be supplementing these by written comments and I'll answer any questions that you may have. Thank you for your time and giving me the opportunity to testify today.

MR. WANTTAJA: Thank you for your testimony and we look forward to those written comments.

MR. MAZER: Thank you.

MR. WANTTAJA: Our next speaker will be Andrew Vollo followed by Lloyd Dinma.

MR. VOLLO: Yes, hi.

MR. WANTTAJA: Hi.

MR. VOLLO: Hi -- I'm listening -- hi.
Yeah, my name is Andrew Vollo and I've been a fixture in the Taxi FHV Driver Institute for the industry, actually, for 40 years, including 30 years as a LaGuardia Community College director for the Taxi FHV Driver Institute. I've consulted with the TLC in conception, design, and implementation of many successful driver training programs.

The TLC requires its licensed drivers to complete a continuing education course as part of each license renewal. The Agency rule mandates that drivers complete an authorized license renewal course, Rule 80-04J3. However, this rule has not been enforced for seven years, in that, the course is currently nonexistent.

Taxi and FHV drivers do important work. We all benefit when the work is treated as such. It's time to require truly professional standards from drivers, as well as the TLC. The TLC should enforce their mandates. Frankly,
we owe better to passengers,
pedestrians, but also to the drivers.

   Look, all New York City taxi drivers
could serve as a valuable resource for
New York City. TLC licensed vehicles
are ubiquitous on the City streets, and
for that reason, TLC drivers set the
tone as how the rest of us drive. If
the TLC drivers set a better example for
other drivers, it would undoubtedly have
a major impact on street safety.

   New York City should set the gold
standard for professional driver
training nationwide. The training
should TLC policies on moving
violations, sharing the road safely with
pedestrians and bicyclists, increasing
awareness about higher crash street
types, dangerous behavior, like
aggressive driving and driving while
distracted --

    MR. WANTTAJA:  30 seconds remaining.

    MR. VOLLO:  -- and under the
influence, how to manage technology
distractions, and all the TLC rules
mandated by the City's now unfamiliar Vision Zero, as well as further instructions on safe, courteous professional driving.

Laws are important for a society. They serve as a norm of conduct for citizens. One can only hope that when the Mayor-Elect, Eric Adams' new TLC administration comes on board, they properly enforce and enhance the education of New York City's safest.

Thank you for your time. I appreciate it.

MR. WANTTAJA: Thank you for your testimony.

Our next speaker will be Lloyd Dinma followed by Andy Shirpa.

(No response.)

MR. WANTTAJA: And we have Lloyd Dinma --

MR. DINMA: Okay. Thank you very much.

Hello, everyone. I am an Uber driver; I also drive for Lyft from time to time. I say hello to all of you and
I wanted to thank you all for this opportunity you've given to us to express ourselves regarding how we feel about the TLC rules. Here I come.

I feel that some of the TLC rules are anti-immigrant and implicitly racist. This is manifested in how draconian and (indiscernible) they are.

Let's look at Cooper's Law (indiscernible) and access (indiscernible).

In Cooper's Law, this is a law that says that whenever a TLC license is suspended -- gets in an accident -- (indiscernible) -- his license has to be suspended pending an investigation. (Indiscernible.) Now, I have never met Cooper's mother, but I can say (indiscernible) to assume that she's white and has a (indiscernible) resources available to her (indiscernible).

This law (indiscernible) the (indiscernible) society. (Indiscernible) white teenage girl,
however, the face of the taxi driver, Uber driver, or Lyft driver is (indiscernible) immigrants who can speak English and comes from -- comes from my socioeconomic status.

Two weeks ago, you had to clarify your no-mask policy that (indiscernible) every driver is guilty of (indiscernible) complaints about not wearing a mask. So, clearly, there is some kind of bias here.

Whatever happened to the notion that you were innocent until proven guilty? Is this America? In what other industry does this happen on a regular basis?

Regarding the fines and the violations (indiscernible), there should be a policy of first-time offender (indiscernible), especially since the fines are so steep. You pay as much as $300 for a stop sign. That's a lot of money. We're always on the road.

MR. WANTTAJA: 30 seconds remaining.

MR. DINMA: No one is perfect in their jobs. You all make mistakes. You
made a mistake with your mask policy rollout. Should you all be fined for that? No. I look forward to your open mindedness on this (indiscernible) and I do agree with the sentiment that was expressed.

We should have drivers on this seat representing us as opposed to the regular ultra-liberal ivy league (indiscernible).

Thank you all and have a nice day.

MR. WANTTAJA: Thank you for your testimony.

Our next speaker will be Andy Shirpa followed by Julio Batista.

(No response.)

MR. WANTTAJA: Andy Shirpa, you may un-mute your line and begin your testimony.

(No response.)

MR. WANTTAJA: Andy Shirpa, you may un-mute your line and begin your testimony.

(No response.)

MR. WANTTAJA: One more call for
Andy Shirpa here.
(No response.)

MR. WANTTAJA: Okay. Let's move onto our next speaker then, Julio Batista, followed by Galina Gaviniker.

MR. BATISTA: Hello. I'm here.

MR. WANTTAJA: Hi -- yes, hello.

You may begin your testimony.

MR. BATISTA: So, how are you?

Thank you very much for allowing me here. Thank you, Commissioner; thank you, everyone.

So, I just wanted to say something I think. In my opinion, TLC is supposed to review the rules in both things. One thing is what is the rules now necessary to make it (indiscernible) to improve and (indiscernible) the service.

And the second thing is, how enforcing the rule in street because in my case, I just came in 2015 to TLC when my life working was maybe ending. So, I'm not ending since last year -- since March last year. But I talk to many drivers that are struggling. They
struggle (indiscernible) but they have
(indiscernible) like me. They have to
pay beginning of the year.

So, when you license -- when you are
DMV registered -- renew insurance,
sometimes, the (indiscernible)
inspection is very expensive. So, when
you check, they're spending all of this
on the (indiscernible) for the year.

So, this is a lot of money.

But when the New York City Office
down the street -- so they just to make
hard time for the driver. They're hard
working people. That's the drivers,
hard working people. I don't mind
they're working for Uber, yellow cab --
I don't mind. So, it's hard work
because I did for six years. I know how
it's done.

So, my car is full. I spent a lot
of money to make full my car
(indiscernible) and now it's in my
driveway. It's parked there in my
garage --

MR. WANTTAJA: 30 seconds remaining.
MR. BATISTA: -- doing nothing.

So, the best thing you can do, I think the Commission, is check the rules, which rule is (indiscernible) for the betterment of the drivers.

Another thing is, how they (indiscernible) to go through street to enforce the rule because in my case, I don't (indiscernible). They give him a ticket. I went to airport with my friend and they give me a ticket? One ticket was $500 and they send another ticket for $10,000 already. That's ridiculous but I have it here -- $8,000.

MR. WANTTAJA: Time has expired.

Please conclude your testimony.

MR. BATISTA: Thank you very much.

MR. WANTTAJA: Well, thank you for your testimony.

MR. WANTTAJA: It looks like next we have Tina Raveneau followed by Ashraf Ahmed.

(No response.)

MR. WANTTAJA: Tina, you may un-mute your line and begin your testimony.
MS. RAVENEAU: Can you hear me?

MR. WANTTAJA: Yes, we can. Thank you.

MS. RAVENEAU: Hi. Good morning.

Good morning all Commissioners.

I would like to like (indiscernible) on a few things and (indiscernible) opportunity.

I'm a driver and an organizer helping drivers every day with issues in the industry. One thing -- (indiscernible) -- a few concerns:

One, we need to -- if you guys can really decrease the high fees that drivers, you know, are facing right now. The fees are very high; the tickets are very high and we all know that if drivers have, you know, all these high fees coming to them, it does at some point create hardship.

Also -- I also want to address, we need more restrooms. As a woman driver, it's very hard to get a restroom in the City. It's very hard -- you know, getting parking is very hard --
(indiscernible) -- rest stop, you know, and the signs are not even all complete at FHV. They still have the signs -- sometimes they can break and then come back to a ticket. That has to be priority.

I mean, not having access to a restroom is also a health issue, right, for specifically women drivers. So, that also really needs to be addressed.

Okay. Drivers should be able to put their license (indiscernible). As workers, you know, we take (indiscernible) -- (indiscernible) same time as our friend. We should be able to at least put our license in storage temporary and have time for our family.

Like, you know, it's -- you have -- you guys have to help us really create an environment where we can spend time with our family and not be burdened by having to, you know, still try to pay all these fees -- insurance fees.

We should be able to take a break, go overseas, and come back and have our
stuff storage and come back and continue working. Like, (indiscernible), you know, to pay money to an agency, like TLC, I think you have the power to really enforce -- you know, approve them like that, to really have drivers spend more time and quality time with their family.

MR. WANTTAJA: 30 seconds remaining.

MS. RAVENEAU: You did it -- saw it work in the pandemic and I think you can continue to make it work.

Also -- I also want to say and really stress, this is the second meeting that you guys have really given drivers like us late notice. 89 drivers plus other people on this call does not -- does not really represent the 200,000 drivers.

(Disruption in transmission.)

MS. RAVENEAU: Please give -- if you really want to hear problems, give us enough time to plan and get our thoughts together to come to you and tell what's really happening. This is not enough
time, you know, to really have the
problems and cries of workers.

Thank you.

MR. WANTTAJA: Thank you for your
testimony.

And I'll just note that anybody is
still welcome to provide written
comments on any part of the regulatory
review process here. We -- this isn't a
hearing on a proposed set of rules, so
there is no deadline for comments.

Obviously, the sooner the better,
but to the extent that anybody listening
would like to provide testimony at a
future date, again, please email those
comments to tlcrules@tlc.nyc.gov.

So, moving on, our next speaker will
be Ashraf Ahmed followed by Clinton
Brown.

(No response.)

MR. WANTTAJA: Ashraf, you may
un-mute and begin your testimony.

(No response.)

MR. WANTTAJA: Ashraf, you may
un-mute and begin your testimony.
MR. AHMED: Hi -- hi, everyone.

MR. WANTTAJA: Yes, we can hear you.

Please begin your testimony.

MR. AHMED: Yeah, I'm just talking about a few points and a short message.

Number one, I'm talking about the meter. The meter is never raised like more than 10 years ago. So, everything raise, as you know -- as everyone here knows what's going on with the price.

Like, small example, I take my wife, my kid to restaurant. I used to pay five, six years 50 something, now I pay 110, 120. It's the same restaurant. My income going to double or no? My income going down. So, for our life, it's not easy for our cost as family.

So, the meter should be raised as soon as possible. We're talking about that before.

But something else is the same trip a yellow cab driver make it 10, $12 with snow coming, like 10 inch, 12 inch -- we ask the driver if you can work. You can work; nobody stops a driver work. So,
the same trip, make it Uber, like $35
and we're talking to each other. We
know Uber driver as a friend. So, I
make this one 35 -- 40 -- I make $200 --
$15.

So, we need to see what's going on;
how we can control the meter with
pandemic -- I mean with hurricanes or
with the snow coming -- that 12 inch --
how we can do something for driver. The
same one trip, $10, make it $35. We do
that right now, you know, when it's busy
-- Uber or whatever.

Number two is the benefits. Uber
and Lyft, they give some benefit for
driver; like they have some driver
benefits. I know some friend. He can
go to the dentist; he can go to get
eyeglass or reading glass. He get free,
but I think they like 10 cents from each
trip -- 5 cents -- I don't know.

The TLC collected 30 cents from each
trip from us. As you know, the meter
start with $3.30. I think 2.50 going to
MTA, 30 cents is going for TLC. The
driver gets nothing. So, we should get some driver benefits.

So, it's two message; one for the meter, one for the driver, benefits. We can do something. If you need to go to eye doctor or dentist, we can work in ways.

MR. WANTTAJA: 30 seconds remaining.

MR. AHMED: Yeah, that is important thing I want to talk about.

The relation between the TLC police officer and the street. I drove now like 26 years and I said before to the Commissioner, I'm one of the best driver and I have certificate from ex-ex Commissioner. Commission is very important.

I want the TLC officer stop me to tell me, "Are you okay", "How is everything". It has happened for me once in 26 years. I was so glad he stopped me. He didn't give me any fine; he just check how is the situation, "You good". So, this relation is very important to us.
Thank you so much -- thank you --

thank you.

MR. WANTTAJA: Thank you for your
testimony.

MR. AHMED: Thank you.

MR. WANTTAJA: Our next speaker will
be Clinton Brown followed by Richard
Dakota.

MR. BROWN: Hey, good morning. Are
we here?

MR. WANTTAJA: Yes, we can hear you.

Thank you.

MR. BROWN: Yeah, I'm a driver, but
I frequent the airport. As you can
tell, I'm at LaGuardia Taxi Lot, P7, as
we speak.

They need some lines. Port

Authority was supposed to paint some
lines on these -- in this lot. This is
ridiculous. This doesn't make any
sense. As you can tell, there's no
lines and it's a bit out of order.

Not only that, at times we pick up
passengers from a terminal going to the
next terminal after waiting in the lot

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for maybe a half an hour. So, we pick up that passenger, take them to the next terminal. The driver has to come back and wait in the lot again. That's not economically sound and that's basically all I wanted to say.

There's a lot to talk about it and a lot of people want to give their opinions about the business. It's a good business. It's flexible and I appreciate meeting you guys today.

All right. I'm done. Thank you.

MR. WANTTAJA: Thank you for your testimony.

MR. BROWN: All right.

MR. WANTTAJA: Our next speaker will be Richard Dakota followed by Austin Choudhary.

(No response.)

MR. WANTTAJA: Richard, you may un-mute yourself and begin your testimony.

MR. DAKOTA: All right. Is it still -- good afternoon. Commissioner -- I want to greet everyone here. Thank you.
Commissioner, thank you from our last meeting at City Hall.

I want to thank you for having something like this and my perspective on this is that this is just the beginning and I'm hoping that I can stay in contact with the TLC in whatever area of the TLC that is continuing to do this cause we're reviewing the TLC rules also.

So, first thing I want to say is that, you know, the gentlemen came on -- Mr. -- the attorney, Peter Mazer, and he made a very, you know, powerful point -- when he started with this business, it was 185 rules and now we have 865 pages of rules, as an entrepreneur, wanting to do things the right way, I must say that it is quite the onerous task reading and trying to put things in their proper perspective to make sure you're making the right moves as you enter the industry.

And so my statement, with all of that, is that I think that there needs
to be, with the changing times -- 21st century technology and all of that -- not just minor modifications, but a radical overhaul of the rules so that they really reflect the industry and the way that professional drivers -- I'm emphasizing the word "professional" -- professional drivers operate in that industry.

And also keep it in mind that we set the example for the entire world in this industry -- okay -- just because of where we stand in the City that we're in.

So, having said that, there needs to -- you know, a lot of the complaints -- what you're hearing, as I've seen them, they're coming from a place of not being -- where the professional driver is not seen the same way as the TLC and is not seen the same way as the passenger that the professional driver is taking.

MR. WANTTAJA: 30 seconds remaining.

MR. DAKOTA: Thank you.

The TLC is seen as the overarching
-- I don't -- demigod or whatever. The passenger, I guess, you know, tells the TLC what to do and this -- and the driver just has to take whatever he gets and that's unfortunately sort of the operating environment.

Any new rule-making has to completely overhaul that so that everybody is seen on the same level and expected to uphold their end of the bargain. Okay. Same level, uphold your end of the bargain so that there's dignity maintained in this industry.

I am hoping that I can stay in contact with the TLC rules -- department and be a part of this radical change that is needed. Thank you.

MR. WANTTAJA: Thank you for your testimony.

Our next speaker will be Mohamed Zakout followed by Raul Rivera.

(No response.)

MR. WANTTAJA: Mohamed, you may un-mute yourself and begin your testimony.
MR. ZAKOUT: Good morning, everyone. Do you hear me?

MR. WANTTAJA: Yes, we can. Thank you.

MR. ZAKOUT: All right. So, I want to see the Commissioner for a second -- I want to see her face if it's possible. Do you hear me?

MR. WANTTAJA: Yeah, we're on video, sir. I'm not sure --

MR. ZAKOUT: Okay. I'm just waiting for the Commissioner.

MR. WANTTAJA: Oh, she's on. Thank you.

MR. ZAKOUT: All right. I don't know if she hears me or not. I just want to confirm she hears me.

CHAIR HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: We can hear you, sir.

MR. ZAKOUT: Okay. 19 years driving yellow cab, a family man with three kids. I need you to have a pen and a piece of paper and to take a look at this. (Indicating.)

This is a receipt from JFK. I've
been sitting here -- you can check with your people through the satellite -- for two hours sitting in the taxi stand after you guys have the new law, no (indiscernible) slip for the yellow cab driver. I end up having $15.

I start my shift at 4:30 in the morning; I make five local trip and one trip JFK for $52 with zero tip. It's fine, no problem. Sitting down in that taxi stand for an hour and 41 minutes, I end up having $15 trip with zero tip. No problem with that. Now I have to go back to the taxi stand because the traffic, it would take up to hour and 15 minutes going back to New York City.

So, if I go back to the taxi stand, I'm going to sit down additional two hours. So, two hours waiting time and two hours again waiting time. I don't know where I'm going to go with the next trip, but let's give an example.

I'm going back to New York City. I make another $50. So, 50 and 50 and 15, I make $115 within five hours and I
already done four hours in the morning. That's nine hours. My shift is 12 hours for $100. So, that's me. I'm going to go home to my kids with maximum $40 in my pocket, if God forbid, I didn't get no violation.

Can you calculate that and you tell me how I'm going to feed my kids with that? This is the receipt.

(Indicating.) I pulled over on the shoulder right now right in front of the Port Authority.

Ma'am, you guys have a corruption in your facility -- corruption everywhere. This is how I am --

MR. WANTTAJA: 30 seconds remaining.

MR. ZAKOUT: Tell me -- yeah, I know, I know -- 30 seconds. No problem.

Tell me how I'm going to feed my kids with that, ma'am. Give me one solution for a human being having three kids driving 19 years in New York City. Everybody make millions -- the brokers, the TLC -- using the people -- the slaves, which is us behind the wheels.
I call myself a slave behind the wheel in order for all of you guys to make money, and get the benefits, and get what you want. Please, track my license number and contact me with a solution, how I'm going to feed three kids with this. (Indicating.)

Please re--change the law, return the (indiscernible) slip back to the airport. We are not Uber and Lyft; you pick up someone and you drop them off, and you get--receive a call on your phone. We are yellow cab. Please think. We are a human being; we need to be making money to feed our kids.

I have a lot to talk about it, but this person give me only two minutes. It's fine. No problem with that. I respect everybody else.

If you find a solution, I'm going to send you an email with the slip and you can track everything--what time I log in, how much money I make--and tell me at the end how I'm going to pay $100 lease, at least $25 gas, plus the MTA
surcharges, plus the transportation cause I live in Jersey.

MR. WANTTAJA: Time has expired.

Please conclude your testimony.

MR. ZAKOUT: Thank you very much. I hope I get an answer.

MR. WANTTAJA: Thank you and I will once again remind people, if you do have additional testimony, you are welcome to email us at tlcrules@tlc.nyc.gov.

So, next up we will have Raul Rivera followed by Anwar Malik.

MR. RIVERA: Hello. Can you hear me?

MR. WANTTAJA: Hi. Yes, we can.

Thank you.

MR. RIVERA: Thank you for time.

Hello, Commissioner.

Yeah, I understand that the topic is streamlining -- making everything smoother for the drivers and the industry. I didn't write anything down. I don't -- I don't even know what to say today, but I still felt the need to testify.
We're trying to work with the Commission as best as we can to achieve the reform of the TLC that's needed. There's a lot of -- there's a few things that the Commission is doing and we appreciate it, but we have to touch on the topic of money. We need a hearing on money; we need a raise.

We're also working closely with the new Mayor-Elect, Eric Adams. He has also signed our petition. He has three of our bills that have been drafted for the benefit of the drivers.

Yeah, the rule book, like Mr. Richard Dakota was saying -- the rule book seems to be a little bit excessive. There should be a way to streamline the rule books for the drivers and for the TLC, but I think -- I mean, it's a silly idea -- I'm not sure -- but I was thinking, you know, everybody has a smartphone nowadays -- if it's possible that we can send a text.

When we have an answer -- I mean, when we have a question, we can send a
text to the TLC and we get back, at least, a generalization response, so we don't have to go through that rule book or that chapter because it's so -- I think you have to be a lawyer really to go through that chapter.

But that's all I have to say today, but we thank you for your time. We're working closely with the new Mayor. Again, I have to repeat, he signed our petition and he is listening to the drivers.

We thank you for the time.

MR. WANTTAJA: Thank you for your testimony.

Our next speaker will be Anwar Malik followed by Pedro Accosta.

MR. MALIK: Okay. All right. Hi guys.

I wanted to begin with just saying, like you have made the appointments systems for everything, but there aren't a lot of appointments available for like base transfers and especially WAV vehicles.
For a base transfer, it takes about three to four weeks, and to make more appointments available, I suggest that not everything should be done through an appointment system. Other stuff can be done just by a walk-in, which is actually okay.

And we asked before about the red light ticket points to be waived or at least send a warning for the first time, but no one will listen to that, even though someone said they will look into it. We didn't get an answer back.

And we are generating a lot of money with those surcharges -- the MTA and all that stuff -- and, yes, that time we did get a pay raise, but then what happened, we're back to the same hole with a lot more drivers on the road. Uber has hired thousands more and TLC is still giving out the TLC license.

You said it before, the solution is not to cap the plates; the solution is to cap the license. So, that just gets to me to think, all that raising the pay
and everything -- the minimum wage rules
-- that was just done to collect more
money for the City. Nothing else.

And we still can't use the bus lane
even though we generate so much income
for the City, and now to screw it all
up, they're adding yellow cabs to the
Uber app so they get more business. I
mean, do you guys not see the FHV
drivers are not making enough. I'm
happy for the yellow cabs, but let's
make the playing field even.

Let us do street-hails also and let
us have rooftop advertising also. It's
sort of racist that some cars are
getting (indiscernible) and other cars
aren't getting the same.

And the last one was, I heard those
officers, they want protection and are
asking for more things, like firearms.

MR. WANTTAJA: 30 seconds remaining.

MR. MALIK: Just think for a moment,
if they feel unsafe and then just
imagine how unsafe we are -- how unsafe
we feel driving 12 hours a day.
Drivers are getting robbed, shot and killed but TLC is doing nothing about it. That's it.

MR. WANTTAJA: Thank you for your testimony.

Our next speaker will be Pedro Accosta followed by our final speaker, Jermaine Wall.

MR. ACCOSTA: Hi. Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify here in this important hearing.

I cannot say so much, but I want to point a few very important things like my friend Larbi said before.

First, I've been driving for over 20 years, so I know a lot about this thing going on, but like Larbi said before, TLC shouldn't be involved in traffic violations because this is affecting so much drivers.

Please, we have enough police officer doing their job outside, so I don't think we still need you behind us because your enforcement department is
just kind of chasing us like a cat to a mouse, trying to get us into trouble. It's only that. We -- I know that we make mistake, but they are just chasing us, hiding someplace to see if we make a mistake to find us any problem.

Also, with the plate -- I do say about the plate -- like if (indiscernible) for the first time, they give -- they have like the opportunity to put a down payment of three percent. You should allow a person for the first time to have the plate. Please, probably no more than one, but one plate for any single person.

And the main thing that I want to talk about is about the WAV vehicle. We all know the green and yellow have so much benefit when they buy a vehicle like that and that's great. I am okay for them to because I know they have a lot of money, so that's great. But at the same time, you should consider that we have the same benefit as well.

Because if you know, like I have
said a couple of times ago, the yellow
and green are not even doing the job
that they're supposed to do here in the
boroughs. We are doing that job. So,
we don't have that incentive.

So, you have to consider that. When
a person in a wheelchair go to an
appointment or somewhere else that they
need to go, the most cars available in
the City near them is the fastest they
can get a service. It's easy for me,
and for you, and for all of us who can
walk, jump out of a car or jump out of a
train and go into a restaurant or a
public place to use the bathroom, but
those people, they don't have the
opportunity to use the bathroom.

Twice, I believe, it has happened to
me because I have a WAV with me -- I
drive a WAV -- that two of them has been
in my car and they feel so embarrassing
and the only thing I tell them is
that --

MR. WANTTAJA: 30 seconds remaining.

MR. ACCOSTA: -- because I
understand the situation, but please, the most car -- the most WAV vehicle that we have in the City is the best job that we can offer to this community and their needs.

I strongly suggest you -- Senora Aloysee, por favor -- please consider these like a priority, not for us only, but also for the people who need the wheelchair vehicle near them.

Thank you so much, guys.

MR. WANTTAJA: Thank you for your testimony.

And our final speaker has dropped off, so this concludes the Public Hearing on our Regulatory Review process.

CHAIR HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: All right. Well, we thank everybody for their time and their testimony, and if there are people who have additional things to share or to provide, you're welcome to provide written testimony to the TLC via email and you may do in any language you feel -- in any language that you need.
We're happy to accept it.

And so it is 12:26; we will conclude this Public Meeting at this time and we thank you again.

(Time noted: 12:26 p.m.)
CERTIFICATION

I, JULIA M. SPEROS, a Notary Public for and within the State of New York, do hereby certify:

That the witness whose testimony as herein set forth, was duly sworn by me; and that the within transcript is a true record of the testimony given by said witness.

I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 9th day of November, 2021.

[Signature]

Julia M. Speros

LH REPORTING SERVICES, INC. 718-526-7100
In Re TLC Regulatory Review Hearing NYC - Taxi & Limousine Commission

November 9, 2021

$10 96:11
$100 13:11 57:1
105:3 106:24 (4)
$10000 90:13
$115 104:25
$12 95:22
$138 80:7
$15 96:5 104:6,12
$200 96:4
$25 106:25
$300 86:21
$330 96:24
$35 96:1,11
$40 105:4
$400 79:14 80:8
$5 54:25
$50 104:24
$500 63:14 90:12
$52 104:9
$8000 90:14
& 1:4
'70 35:6
'71 35:6
1980s 62:8
1st 14:14
21st 7:3 101:1
30minutes 62:9
70yearold 78:12
accomplish 8:10
90s 62:9
accosta 3:9
109:17 112:7,9
114:25 (5)
9th 117:18
account 4:15
62:1 63:21
able 17:24 25:8
26:18 33:16
38:10,12 40:3
64:12 67:2,9
77:5,6,16
92:11,15,24 (16)
about 4:4
18:10,18 20:3,8
21:13,16,16
29:2,2,13 34:4
37:15 44:20 47:7
48:10,10 49:6
54:2 55:25 57:9
69:12 72:21 73:15
83:18 85:4 86:9
95:5,6,19 97:10
99:7,9 106:16
110:1,8 112:2,17
113:8,17,17 (41)
accept 67:12
116:1
access 13:15 38:5
52:15 68:16 85:10
92:7 (6)
accessaride 75:21
accessibility 56:7
77:4
accessible 13:5,1
3,15,17,18,23
14:2,3,4,6 23:3,4
32:19,24 56:9,13
75:20 77:15 (18)
accident 85:14
adapted 7:3
add 24:25 55:16
71:2
adding 111:7
addition 9:19
13:20 58:12
additional 4:21
13:21 59:25
104:18 107:9
115:21 (6)
additionally 6:18
8:15
address 17:8
46:25 49:14 65:2
79:5 81:2 91:21 (7)
adressed 54:17
92:10
acting 17:18
action 117:14
activate 4:15
active 51:7,8
65:17
actual 39:18
45:11 61:5
70:20 21
71:1,2,13,18,19
82:4 110:7 (12)
ad 56:25 57:2,8
ada 39:24 40:2
adams 108:10
adams' 84:8
administration 84:9
administrative 78:19
advance 4:9 26:1
advantage 12:20
54:9
advertise 37:6
advertising 37:5
111:14
advisory 7:11
advocate 57:25
affairs 42:13
43:2 46:14 49:5 (4)
affect 19:4,7,12
affected 22:2
affecting 112:21
affects 18:25
affiliation 4:18
afford 17:7 37:13
after 13:11 19:20
20:3 42:19 47:15
48:15,24 66:9
afternoon 15:18
51:9,10 99:24
112:9 (5)
again 24:13
25:17 26:8 27:5
28:6 29:11 66:3
69:20 94:15 99:4
104:20 107:8
109:10 116:4 (14)
against 12:8 40:4
age 12:15
agency 7:8 82:14
93:3
agenda 21:23
agents 80:21
ages 12:15
aggressive 83:20
ago 18:3 28:2
41:24 50:10 78:18
86:6 95:8 114:1 (8)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Page Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>brian</td>
<td>25:3,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brief</td>
<td>14:7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bright</td>
<td>21:8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bring</td>
<td>66:18, 67:5,10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bringing</td>
<td>64:17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bright</td>
<td>21:8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>broke</td>
<td>47:18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brokers</td>
<td>105:23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brown</td>
<td>3:5, 94:19, 98:7,9,13, 99:15 (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buckle</td>
<td>14:13,19, 67:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>build</td>
<td>10:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>burdened</td>
<td>92:21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>car</td>
<td>18:13,18,19, 25:24, 35:25, 36:21, 37:1, 69:8, 71:1, 99:9,10, 100:15, 111:8 (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>businesses</td>
<td>80:22, 81:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>busy</td>
<td>55:3, 96:12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buy</td>
<td>32:24, 33:20,20, 74:11,17,19, 113:19 (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>byz</td>
<td>76:9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bye</td>
<td>25:22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>3:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cabs</td>
<td>40:10, 54:12, 67:19, 111:7,11 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>calculate</td>
<td>105:7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>calendar</td>
<td>9:21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>callback</td>
<td>50:21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>called</td>
<td>4:14, 5:8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>calls</td>
<td>64:13,14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>came</td>
<td>18:2,9, 41:24, 42:18, 88:21, 100:12 (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>camera</td>
<td>4:16, 58:6,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>century</td>
<td>7:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>charge</td>
<td>55:1,3,16,23, 78:16 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>charges</td>
<td>38:23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>charging</td>
<td>75:17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chair</td>
<td>1:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chairs</td>
<td>17:18,18,19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chairwoman</td>
<td>32:13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>change</td>
<td>17:20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>changes</td>
<td>7:14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chapters</td>
<td>101:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chaos</td>
<td>22:21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chapter</td>
<td>109:4,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>certifies</td>
<td>97:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>certification</td>
<td>117:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>certify</td>
<td>117:6,12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chief</td>
<td>30:9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>children</td>
<td>38:8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>choice</td>
<td>36:11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>choudhary</td>
<td>99:18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Page Numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>circle</td>
<td>79:19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>citation</td>
<td>43:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>citi</td>
<td>62:25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>citizen</td>
<td>75:25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>citizens</td>
<td>84:7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clarifying</td>
<td>57:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>college</td>
<td>59:14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coming</td>
<td>50:8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>company</td>
<td>35:8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comparable</td>
<td>62:12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>competition</td>
<td>54:12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>competitive</td>
<td>54:9,10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>compliant</td>
<td>6:24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>common</td>
<td>12:22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>community</td>
<td>23:19 75:16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>community</td>
<td>82:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>company</td>
<td>85:9,12,18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>corporation</td>
<td>85:9,12,18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>close</td>
<td>5:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>closely</td>
<td>108:9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. H. REPORTING SERVICES, INC. 718-526-7100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Re TLC Regulatory Review Hearing NYC - Taxi & Limousine Commission
November 9, 2021

distracting 36:1
distractions 83:25
distributing 9:7
dive 20:10
division 46:15
dmv 39:4
does 38:7 49:16,23 71:1,8
don't 30:9
doctor 33:10 97:6
doesn't 50:22 63:21 98:20
dog 48:10,10,13,15,24
doing 50:18 51:8,25

dolllars 9:13 54:1

dominos 62:9
done 11:17 16

dot 70:18
dots 80:8
dottin 2:7 35:15
down 16:25 33:1

driver 8:17
drivers 13:17,21,23 14:23
driver's 13:24

driving 16:12
dropped 50:9 62:15 115:14
dropping 48:15
drove 97:12
due 26:20 71:10
duly 117:8
during 5:4 6:22

dutifully 17:2
each 11:1 82:13

early 15:18 62:8 64:15 79:23

earn 13:9 80:13

earnings 50:8 56:4
easier 49:22
easily 80:18

east 74:3

easy 43:22 69:6

economic 28:4
economically 99:5

education 82:13 84:11
effectively 8:9,10

effects 21:18
elderly 38:7

electric 68:11,14,16

electrical 67:17,22

electrified 62:25

electronic 35:19

eliminate 72:17

eliminating 55:6
else 19:3,7,13
email 27:5 46:25
emailing 27:4

emotional 17:13
emphasize 30:22
emphasizing 101:7
employee 34:9
encountered 78:17

encourage 10:17

11:5 12:16

LH REPORTING SERVICES, INC. 718-526-7100
In Re TLC Regulatory Review Hearing NYC - Taxi & Limousine Commission
November 9, 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>end</th>
<th>9:20 28:14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>38:14 56:22 64:25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75:18 102:10,12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104:6,12 106:24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| eric | 84:8 108:10 |
| eroded | 54:11 |
| escape | 79:20 |

| especially | 13:18 |
| 23:19 32:12 41:2 |
| 72:2 86:19 109:24 |

| everywhere | 71:14 105:14 |
| evolve | 17:21 |
| evolved | 22:18 |

| example | 54:21 79:9 83:9 95:11 |
| 101:11 104:22 |

| excessive | 108:16 |
| exercise | 15:20 |
| exex | 22:18 |

| evening | 15:18 |
| ever | 19:8 50:6 |

| even | 17:15 19:10 |
| 20:14 22:10 25:10 |
| 34:6 50:2,16 |
| 51:12 65:20 77:5 |
| 92:2 107:23 |
| 110:11 111:5,12 |
| 114:2 (17) |

| evening | 15:18 |
| ever | 19:8 50:6 |

| every | 13:9 19:8,9 |
| 22:15 25:9 30:8 |
| 58:15,16 86:8 |
| 91:10 (10) |

| everybody | 12:17 |
| 16:13 20:25 49:11 |
| 59:7 73:8 75:24 |
| 76:2,8 102:9 |
| 105:23 106:19 |
| 108:21 115:19 |

| everybody | 12:10 |
| 14:6,13,17 |
| 21:4,5,7,12 |
| 22:8,24,25 |
| 25:12,20,25 32:12 |
| 70:2 84:23 88:12 |
| 95:1,9 99:25 |
| 103:1 112:10 |

| everyone | 12:10 |
| 14:6,13,17 |
| 21:4,5,7,12 |
| 22:8,24,25 |
| 25:12,20,25 32:12 |
| 70:2 84:23 88:12 |
| 95:1,9 99:25 |
| 103:1 112:10 |

| expiring | 76:22 |

| explained | 47:11,20 |
| expiring | 71:13,24 |

| express | 44:11 |
| 85:3 |
| expressed | 24:13 |
| 87:6 |

| far | 66:19 |
| fare | 13:16,20 |
| 54:17,20 |
| faster | 12:2 16:8 |
| 50:11 52:20 |

| fastest | 114:10 |
| fatal | 62:10 |
| father | 59:12 |
| fault | 37:1 |

| favor | 115:7 |
| fayzi | 2:10 43:10 |
| 45:20,23 |

| feature | 50:21 |
| facebook | 4:7 |
| February | 6:24 |

| feedback | 26:2 |
| 44:20,23 67:20 |
| 69:12 |

| feel | 18:17 22:23 |
| 42:7 43:16,23 |
| 69:22 85:3,5 |
| 111:23,25 114:21 |
| 115:25 |

| feeling | 37:7 |
| 64:17 |
| feels | 36:10 |
| fees | 91:14,16,19 |
| 92:23,23 |

<p>| fellow | 29:24 |
| 74:12 |
|------------|-----------------------------|
| fernandes  | 2:19 73:4 76:13,14,17 (5)    |
| fhv        | 36:15 40:8,8 68:9,10,13 70:4,19 82:2,6,20 92:3 111:9 (13) |
| field      | 111:12 |
| fighting   | 41:4 |
| figure     | 18:15 48:6 |
| final      | 112:7 115:14 |
| finally    | 65:9 |
| find       | 30:6,7 33:21 73:23 106:20 113:6 (6) |
| finding    | 62:23 68:17 |
| fine       | 71:6 72:22 79:10,14,21 80:1,6,8,11,14 97:22 104:10 106:18 (13) |
| fined       | 79:9 87:2 |
| fines      | 50:1 71:3 79:18 80:4 86:16,20 (6) |
| firearms   | 111:20 |
| force      | 7:10 |
| foremost   | 38:3 |
| forever    | 24:17 |
| forgiveness | 9:14 |
| forhire    | 11:23 65:13 |
| formally   | 16:24 |
| forth      | 117:8 |
| forward    | 8:20,24 11:8 26:3 33:16 81:17 87:3 (7) |
| framework  | 7:1 |
| frankly    | 64:19 82:25 |
| free       | 14:22 96:19 |
| french     | 5:6,14,24 6:1 (4) |
| follow     | 15:5 40:17 |
| floor      | 6:5 17:9 |
| flu        | 12:20,22 |
| flushing   | 61:24 |
| focus      | 34:21 |
| follow      | 15:5 40:17 |
| full       | 16:3 78:14 79:10 80:15 89:20,21 (6) |
| funded     | 10:6 |
| funding    | 10:9 |
| further    | 10:8 84:2 117:12 |
| future     | 21:8 67:16 94:15 |
| gains      | 11:12 |
| galina     | 88:5 |
| gap        | 71:23 |
| garage     | 89:24 |
| gas        | 28:14 48:22 75:3,4,5 106:25 (6) |
| gave       | 33:24 38:11 42:7 76:24 (4) |
| gaviniker  | 88:5 |
| general    | 1:13 26:6 78:10 |
| generalization | 109:2 |
| generate   | 111:5 |
| generating | 110:14 |
| gentlemen  | 100:12 |
| gerson     | 2:19 73:4 76:12 |
| girl       | 85:25 |
| given      | 17:6 31:2,14 38:5 61:15,16 64:4 85:2 93:15 117:10 (10) |
| gives      | 33:5 39:4 |
| glad       | 12:9 97:21 |
| glass      | 96:19 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Page 132 References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mayorelect</td>
<td>84:8, 108:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mazer</td>
<td>2:20, 76:13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>me</td>
<td>17:13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medallions</td>
<td>54:4, 59:11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medicine</td>
<td>30:9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medina</td>
<td>2:14, 57:15, 58:22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minimum</td>
<td>54:19, 75:1, 80:5,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mind</td>
<td>21:25, 89:15, 101:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mindedness</td>
<td>87:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meetings</td>
<td>4:3, 5:11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>message</td>
<td>5:13, 6:1, 95:5, 97:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>met</td>
<td>85:17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>metered</td>
<td>13:20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>metropolitan</td>
<td>78:11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>michele</td>
<td>2:7, 35:15, 37:20, 38:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>69:17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>4:15, 25:13, 25:25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>modernization</td>
<td>7:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>modifications</td>
<td>52:16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>millennia</td>
<td>105:23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mohamed</td>
<td>102:20, 23:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mohammad</td>
<td>2:5, 29:18, 32:6, 35:12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moment</td>
<td>16:23, 111:22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>money</td>
<td>13:9, 28:13, 15:18, 32:22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moment</td>
<td>75:1, 111:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minor</td>
<td>101:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minor</td>
<td>62:12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minute</td>
<td>67:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minutes</td>
<td>4:21, 20:21, 22:6, 26:22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minutes</td>
<td>33:25, 34:15, 50:24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minutes</td>
<td>63:17, 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minutes</td>
<td>104:11, 106:17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>miss</td>
<td>22:25, 23:20, 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meter</td>
<td>56:4, 95:7, 196:7, 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>met</td>
<td>97:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>metered</td>
<td>13:20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>metropolitan</td>
<td>78:11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>michele</td>
<td>2:7, 35:15, 37:20, 38:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>69:17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>models</td>
<td>77:4, 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moat</td>
<td>54:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>month</td>
<td>28:23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>month</td>
<td>57:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>monthly</td>
<td>10:8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>money</td>
<td>13:9, 28:13, 15:18, 32:22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>month</td>
<td>28:2, 41:24, 58:15, 16 (5)</td>
</tr>
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<td>month</td>
<td>28:23</td>
</tr>
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<td>moral</td>
<td>23:15</td>
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<td>more</td>
<td>8:9, 9:11, 13:15, 14:6, 15:21</td>
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<td>months</td>
<td>12:23</td>
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<tr>
<td>months</td>
<td>28:2, 41:24, 58:15, 16 (5)</td>
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<td>more</td>
<td>8:9, 9:11, 13:15, 14:6, 15:21</td>
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<td>13:9, 28:13, 15:18, 32:22</td>
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<td>13:9, 28:13, 15:18, 32:22</td>
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<td>12:23</td>
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<td>28:23</td>
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<td>57:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>monthly</td>
<td>10:8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>much</td>
<td>11:8, 12:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>much</td>
<td>15:12, 16:1, 17:13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>much</td>
<td>18:21, 28:17, 32:2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LH REPORTING SERVICES, INC. 718-526-7100
repeat 5:10,13
109:10
repeated 5:23
6:1,4
replicate 80:18
reporter 1:22
represented 78:13,15
representing 87:8
require 5:5 64:1
82:22
requirements 8:5
requires 14:15
80:2 82:11
requiring 65:10
research 66:24
resource 9:17
10:20 83:4
resources 32:1
85:21
respect 19:19
30:14 31:21 59:24
106:19 (5)
response 27:14,17 45:22
50:11 60:17 84:18
87:16,20,24 88:2
90:23 94:20,23
99:19 102:22
109:2 (16)
responsible 40:13,15 59:15
rest 65:14
67:23,24 83:8
92:1 (5)
restaurant 48:14
95:12,14 114:14
(4)
restroom 91:23
92:8
restrooms 91:22
result 78:25
retired 74:12
retirement 55:12
return 106:8
returned 71:15
revenue 56:25
57:8
review 1:5 6:25
7:6,17 8:23 46:11
88:15 94:9 115:16
(9)
reviewed 75:2
reviewing 100:9
revise 79:2
revocation 78:25
richard 3:6 98:7
99:17,20 108:15
(5)
ride 18:8 20:16
22:9 56:16 62:2
63:5 (6)
riders 38:6,8,10
40:12,14 66:21 (6)
rides 14:4 61:16
ridiculous 90:14
98:20
right 6:7 19:18
20:10 24:11
25:19,23 28:10,20
30:6 31:8 34:18
38:9 42:19
46:18,24 47:2
50:2 51:5 52:1
54:15 56:18 57:12
60:11,13,24 70:4,8
71:9 72:5 91:15
92:8 96:12
99:12,15,23
100:18,22
103:5,15
105:11,11 109:18
115:18 (43)
riv¬era 3:7 102:21
107:11,13,17 (5)
road 11:11
15:16,25 39:8
43:21 63:3 84:7
86:22
110:19 (11)
robbed 112:1
rollout 87:2
roof 57:2 75:7
rooftop 111:14
row 64:11
rude 34:12
rule 8:23 19:8,19
36:12 78:17,20
82:14,16,17 88:20
90:4,8
108:14,15,18
109:3 (16)
rulemaking 102:7
rules 7:2,13,20,25
8:4,7,10,11,15
36:9 39:11 40:11
44:21 48:10,11
safest 84:11
safety 80:24
83:11
said 22:9 97:13
101:15 110:12,22
112:15,18 114:1
117:10 (9)
salute 30:16
same 15:12 26:14
33:7 37:3 40:9
41:5,5 49:23
56:10 80:9 92:14
95:14,21 96:1,11
101:20,21
102:9,11 110:18
111:17 113:23,24
(23)
sat 20:6
satellite 104:2
save 28:23
 savings 15:10
saw 93:10
say 20:23 23:6,11
24:3 25:10 38:3
42:1,4 47:4
49:25 50:3 51:13
52:5,13 58:18
65:8 70:25 73:13
76:18 77:1,5 78:1
84:25 85:18 88:13
93:13 99:6
100:11,18 107:23
109:7 112:13
113:7 (34)
saying 73:17
77:19 108:15
109:20 (4)
says 53:6 85:13
scan 15:25
scenes 31:24
schedule 11:5
school 33:12
64:16
schools 64:18
schumer 9:25
scooters 62:25
63:4
scott 4:2 5:24
6:2,5 41:19 43:11
58:24 (7)
screaming 47:17
screen 5:17 57:3
68:23
screw 111:6
season 16:10
LH REPORTING SERVICES, INC. 718-526-7100
LH REPORTING SERVICES, INC. 718-526-7100