Commissioner’s Corner
April 2019

Office of Inclusion

In our work to end service refusals, the TLC met with Hazel Dukes, president of the NAACP’s New York State Conference. Left to right: Kala Wright, Hazel Dukes, Malcolm Cain, and Naomi Silkowitz.

Last year, the TLC worked with the City Council to create the Office of Inclusion, a dedicated team of staff members who will work to eradicate service refusals through education, outreach, and prosecution. Please join me in welcoming Malcolm Cain (pictured above) as the director of this new office. Prior to this position, Malcolm served as our deputy director of External Affairs, and also worked at the TLC’s licensing division, as well as at OATH before the TLC. The office includes a dedicated prosecutor, Naomi Silkowitz, and education and outreach staff members.

Some of the work the office has already done in its infancy is to hold important meetings with a diverse range of stakeholder groups, including the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, the NAACP New York State Conference, the Senegalese Association in America, the Independent Drivers Guild, and Green Taxis of New York. The TLC is finalizing a film on service refusals with NYC Media, and have begun doing extensive outreach with palm cards in many languages with different messages tailored for drivers and passengers.

Service refusals in the taxi and for-hire vehicle sector continue to be a serious problem in New York City, and drivers face losing their license if they don’t pick up a passenger because of their race, ethnicity, destination, disability, sexual orientation, or gender. If you are a driver, you can play a huge role in ending discrimination in our city by picking up everyone, and by encouraging your colleagues to join you in this. You also protect your TLC Driver License by obeying the law, and it helps you bring home more
money. If you are a passenger who is refused service, please know that the TLC will prosecute drivers who break the law. It is also not just a problem for street hails with taxis, but also in the app sector. Don’t hesitate to take a picture of the medallion or app car plate number, and to contact 311 so the TLC can investigate and take appropriate action.

**FHV Driver Pay**

Beginning February this year, Uber, Lyft, Via, and Juno were required to pay drivers a minimum pay standard for each trip, based on time, distance, and how busy the companies keep drivers. A driver pay calculator is easily accessible on the TLC website. If you don’t believe you are being paid correctly, please contact our Driver Protection Unit at [driverpay@tlc.nyc.gov](mailto:driverpay@tlc.nyc.gov). We are also closely monitoring driver pay through the records submitted by the large app companies. You can learn more about this new pay standard on our website nyc.gov/taxi. We also have an explainer video in many different languages on the NYC TLC YouTube channel.

**Transition**

*Deputy Commissioner for Uniformed Services Bureau Dianna Pennetti and Commissioner Meera Joshi at a walkout ceremony in our Woodside facility.*

It has been a privilege to serve as the TLC Commissioner the past five years. I’ve greatly enjoyed working with our staff and licensees on smart regulation during a time of rapid change in the industry. I am proud of the groundbreaking work the TLC has done to regulate the for-hire vehicle industry, including the first of its kind driver pay protection and data collection, accessibility, pausing new licenses and consumer protections, as well as the removal of outdated regulations in the taxi industry and working with Council on measures like decreasing the medallion transfer tax. I also couldn’t be prouder of the work the TLC has done to make our streets safer and to
honor our most talented drivers with Vision Zero, significant efficiencies in our licensing processes, significant improvements in the quality of driver education, connecting drivers with financial and mental health resources, and encouraging Access-a-Ride trips in TLC-licensed vehicles, as well as providing citywide Accessible Dispatch service.

As much as I will miss my colleagues at the TLC, I know they will continue to thrive under the leadership of Acting Commissioner William Heinzen. William has done tremendous work as our Deputy Commissioner for Policy and External Affairs, and I hope you will join me in warmly welcoming him to the position. I look forward to staying in touch with you in my new role as a visiting scholar at the NYU Rudin Center for Transportation Policy and Management.

Until next time, drive like your family lives here!