

Taxi and Limousine Commission Meeting
December 18, 2014

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NEW YORK CITY
TAXI & LIMOUSINE COMMISSION
TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

Thursday, December 18, 2014
33 Beaver Street
Commission Hearing Room, 19th Floor
Borough of Manhattan
New York, New York
10:14 a.m.

Reported by:

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COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Meera Joshi, Chair

Frank Carone

Lauvienska Polanco

Jacques Jiha

Nora Constance Marino

ALSO PRESENT:

Chris Wilson, General Counsel

Christopher Tormey, Director of Applicant Licensing

Staff

The Public

The Press

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THE CHAIR: Good morning. We're going to start today's public meeting. The time now is 10:15.

Unfortunately, we need to start on a sad note. We want to take just a moment to acknowledge the senseless and cowardly murder of over 140 Pakistani's and 130 of them children, and on behalf of the entire Commission, just want to express our condolences and prayers to everyone, and I think everyone in the entire world has been touched by this evil tragedy.

Next on the updates is, last -- a few weeks ago, we had a Taxi Job Fair and I want to thank everybody who participated. Your contributions are the reason it was a success. We had thousands and thousands of applicants that came, learned about the taxi industry, and hundreds of them got started on becoming licensees, and we'll be working hard to process all those incoming applicants. I especially want to thank the TLC staff who did an amazing job shepherding hundreds of hundreds of people

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through that process in a professional manner, and I'd like to call out Brian Switzer and Justine Johnson who were really the architects of the program.

(Applause.)

THE CHAIR: I'm going to provide an update on one of our latest enforcement initiatives. As you already know, we have a presence and now a constant 24/7 presence at JFK airport. We have a special squad that's dedicated to enforcement at JFK. We started about two weeks ago with the joint enforcement initiative with the Port Authority and that is targeting hustlers that are inside the terminal. Those are hustlers that are preying on tourists and visitors and New Yorker's as they get off planes and start looking for ground transportation.

So, in two short weeks, we've had a productive session. In those two weeks, that's actually just -- in each week we did one enforcement effort, 12 cars were

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seized, 23 summonses were issued and, I think what will have the greatest deterrent effect, 11 arrests were made. So we're going to continue with those efforts because everybody that works so hard to live by TLC rules, which I realize is not easy, but it benefits the safety of all of us. We want to uphold the hard work that you do and crack down on the people that try to do their service illegally.

Another update: More recently, yesterday, we announced an enforcement effort that we completed and that was on accessible -- availability of accessible service in the FHV industry, primarily liveries and black cars. We did a comprehensive investigation, testing all of the bases to see if they provided wheelchair-accessible service, and unfortunately about 90 percent of them did not. So this exposed a real, you know, flaw in our system, in our current regulations in terms of providing wheelchair-accessible service to passengers

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who need it.

So, I look forward to it and I think the more important work is ahead of us, and the individual penalties that come out of this are one deterrent, but the greater project ahead of us is the long-term solution and working with the industry as well as with advocates to come up with a structure for that long-term solution, and an important part of that is going to be citywide-accessible dispatch, which would allow wheelchair passengers to connect throughout the city with wheelchair-accessible vehicles, not just in Manhattan, but our accessible dispatch program is running and running quite well today.

And with that, I just want to wish everybody a happy holiday season. We do have a short agenda today. We have some bases and we have a hearing on proposed rules, but I wish everybody a happy holiday season and best wishes for the new year.

Now we'll do base approvals. Sorry,

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we'll do the minutes first.

MR. WILSON: So, the minutes are in the Commissioner's minute books. All in favor of approving the minutes as written?

(Chorus of Ayes.)

MR. WILSON: So the minutes were approved unanimously. And next we will do base approvals, and Chris Tormey is here.

MR. TORMEY: Good morning. My name is Chris Tormey, Director of Applicant Licensing with the Taxi & Limousine Commission. We have seven approvals this month and two denials.

THE CHAIR: All in favor?

(Chorus of Ayes.)

THE CHAIR: Next on the agenda is a proposed rule package on education. Ed Murray from the Legal Division will be doing his first presentation at a Commission Meeting, so a warm welcome for Ed. And he'll doing a presentation on what the proposed rules would require, and Commissioner's are -- he's available for questions, too, if you have them at the end.

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MR. MURRAY: Thank you,
Commissioner. Good morning, Commissioners.
My name is Ed Murray. I'm an Assistant
General Counsel here at the Taxi &
Limousine Commission.

The proposed Driver Education Rules
introduce major changes in for-hire
industry. Although all of TLC drivers are
subject to some education requirements, the
target population for training has for
decades been taxi drivers. But today, taxi
drivers compose less than half of the
nearly 125,000 licensed drivers, while
drivers of FHV's, that is the livery cabs,
black cars and limousines, increasingly
predominate.

As these proposed rules make clear,
when it comes to safety and service, it
should not matter whether a passenger is
stepping into a yellow taxi, street hail
livery or FHV.

Let me begin with an overview of the
current training requirements. Here is a
chart showing the courses that taxi and FHV

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drivers are required to take in order to obtain a license. TLC rules require that commuter van and paratransit drivers be certified as a bus driver under state law, which imposes its own but similar training requirements. The three courses that are required of only taxi drivers are school taxi, a taxi refresher course, and wheelchair passenger assistance training.

Applicants for a new taxi driver's license must attend taxi school with one of four authorized providers. Most drivers take a 24-hour course which covers TLC and state traffic rules, geography, vehicle technology and customer service. Drivers must take this course and pass an exam on the course's content, as well as one showing English proficiency before the TLC will issue them a license.

Taxicab Training Refresher Course:
While driver license terms are typically two years, the first term is one year. In order to renew this one-year probationary license, taxi drivers must take a four-hour

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refresher course, which includes an update on rule changes and a review of driver responsibilities. After obtaining their first renewal license, drivers are no longer required to take any refresher courses for subsequent renewals.

Wheelchair passenger assistance training is required in order to drive an accessible yellow or green taxi. And under the current rules, it is also required for new applicants, for a renewal for a new taxi driver's license, and beginning in 2016, will be required for applicants for a renewal taxi driver's license. The three-hour course includes sensitivity training, an overview of the laws that apply to transporting persons with disabilities and hands-on demonstrations.

There are two courses that are currently required of both taxi and FHV drivers: The defensive driving course, which is a part of the DMV's Point & Insurance Reduction Program, is an accident prevention course that covers driver

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attitude and behavior and defensive driving techniques. New applicants must take the course no more than six months prior to submitting an application, and renewal applicants must take the course every three years.

Sex Trafficking Awareness Training: Finally, local law requires that all applicants, new and renewals, take sex trafficking awareness training, which can be done online at the TLC website.

Briefly, while licensed, drivers may take one of three courses, a Distracted Driving Course is required of all drivers who violate TLC rules regarding the use of a cell phone or other electronic communications device; the remedial course for persistent violators is required of any taxi or FHV driver who is guilty of three or more TLC violations within a 15-month period and whose license has not been revoked; finally, drivers can voluntarily take a point reduction course and try to avoid license suspension or revocation

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under the Critical Drivers Program or
Persistent Violators Program.

The proposed rules introduce several
important changes to the driver education
requirements. First, applicants for a new
FHV driver's license would need to take a
comprehensive introductory education course
and pass an exam in order to obtain a
license, just like new taxi drivers do
today. There are now more than 70,000
licensed FHV drivers and roughly 50,000
for-hire vehicles on the road, transporting
nearly as many passengers each day as do
yellow taxis. And so with the de Blasio
Administration's focus on eliminating
traffic fatalities and broader commitment
to borough equity, it makes little sense to
require so little training of a very large
and growing group of TLC drivers, and ones
that predominantly serve the outer
boroughs.

The TLC intends to implement this
requirement in a way that aligns with
existing conditions in the industry.

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Unlike taxi drivers, FHV drivers are not required to be proficient in English, nor will they be under the proposed rules, as they often serve distinct ethnic communities.

So with this requirement, new FHV applicants would be able to take the introductory course and related exam in one of several languages.

Second, no longer would a short refresher course be required only after the first year of driving. Under the proposed rules, taxi and FHV drivers would take a refresher course every two years when they seek to renew their license.

Because of initiatives like Vision Zero, ongoing and often rapid changes are taking place in the transportation sector. New street designs, technology, markings and signals are improving the ways that this City moves people, and new laws are giving the TLC important tools to crack down on bad drivers and deter reckless driving.

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While drivers who have been on the road for years have developed many critical skills for maneuvering through chaotic city streets, without some continuing education, their skill set and knowledge base will be incomplete.

Third, wheelchair passenger assistance training would be required of both taxi and FHV drivers. In its current rules and in its Disability Accessibility Plan, the TLC has put forward a solid commitment to establishing a large fleet of around 17,000 accessible vehicles. But to get these vehicles on the road and meet an essential TLC goal of providing all with access to for-hire service, drivers must be trained to properly and competently serve this population.

Finally, the rules enable the TLC to transition to a single education provider. As mentioned, drivers and applicants currently take courses from one of several authorized providers. Should the TLC decide to transition to a single provider,

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the agent will work with the provider to develop a consistent and efficient training program. With the additional requirements, the TLC is mindful of the costs of the under-employed and unemployed applicants who seek to enter the market and will strive to maintain costs that take into account the financial constraints of these applicants.

This is taxi driver Frederick Amofo. In the past five years, he has driven 190,000 miles and 50,000 passengers without getting into an accident or even receiving a traffic violation. He was one of several hundred drivers that the TLC honored in its 2014 Safety Honor Roll. He was also recognized by an international transportation organization for his safe driving record.

The proposed rules will not just generate stiffer competition for the distinction, "Safest Taxi Driver in New York City", although I'm sure Frederick is up to the challenge, rather, they will have

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a dramatic positive effect on the for-hire industry, and thus the City as a whole. There are tens of thousands of TLC-licensed vehicles on the road each day, and having more and better trained drivers in these vehicles will go a long way toward realizing Vision Zero goals and providing New Yorkers in all five boroughs with a high level of service that they deserve.

Thank you, and I'll be happy to answer any questions.

COMM. MARINO: I just have one. What's the total amount of time that will be required up front?

MR. MURRAY: Well, at the moment, the courses aren't consolidated, so a new applicant will need to take several different courses. The traditional taxi school is 24 hours and it will likely stay at that level, the New York passenger assistance training is three hours, the defensive driving course is six hours and the sex trafficking awareness training is ten minutes.

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COMM. MARINO: That's like 30 hours about.

THE CHAIR: Yeah. And some of that is subject to negotiation, but things like the defensive driving is a state-accredited course and that has to be six hours, I believe.

COMM. POLANCO: And now the for-hire vehicle drivers, is this new that they're going to take their training course, the education course? This is totally new, never before?

THE CHAIR: The for-hire vehicle drivers take the defensive driving course, the six-hour course, but they don't currently take the rest, sort of the safety wheelchair accessibility and that curriculum.

COMM. POLANCO: What about this education course?

THE CHAIR: Yes, that would be wrapped into the education course. So it's safety, wheelchair accessibility, as well as TLC rules and regulations.

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MR. WILSON: So we'll commence the public hearing.

These rules were published in The City Record on November 18th with the comment deadline of today. So far, over 50 different comments have been received. Based on feedback so far, the staff has recommended that the rule be amended to add certain definitions, including a point reduction course for wheelchair passenger assistance training.

To clarify, the responsibility for payment for all the courses rests with the driver applicant. To clarify that, new applicants for FHV driver licenses must in addition to take a course -- taking the course, take and pass an exam. Amending the rules to clarify that there's not currently a sole source training provider, existing providers will continue to provide training until there is a sole provider. And finally, to clarify that the wheelchair passenger assistance training requirement is a one time requirement.

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As local law requires, the rules in this form were posted on the TLC's website on December 15th and sent to the Commissioners on that date.

We're now ready for speakers, and our first speaker is Victor Calise.

MR. CALISE: Hello, everyone. Hello, Commissioner's. Thank you for having me here to hear my testimony today. I just want to say thank you for --

THE CHAIR: I will just mention, Victor is Commissioner of the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities.

MR. CALISE: Thank you, Nora. Yes, I am.

I want to thank you for what happened here in April, when we passed a 50 percent accessibility ruling. I never had a chance to publicly say thank you. It's really making a difference for people with disabilities and we're happy about that. And we're happy about the rule changes that are happening here, or possibly happening here, just because it

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helps so much for people with disabilities to really have parity across the board. People -- there's a statement around disability: People don't want to be disabled, and unfortunately, in somebody's life, you'll either become disabled, become temporarily disabled or know someone that's disabled. So it will effect you at some point in time.

And having people drive you from one point to another is important, but making sure that they're driving you and that they understand how to deal with you on a personal level, to talk to you like a person, to be able to strap you down properly and most of all, just so you can feel like a person is important. And right now, Medallion Owners are the only ones that are getting the training for accessibility and we want to see that spread. And spreading this to for-hire vehicles really makes sense. It brings parity across everything and, most importantly, it builds acceptance and

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tolerance, and once we build that acceptance and tolerance, it makes a difference. And that's what my office is fighting for every day.

I have attended a training, and Jessie (phonetic), behind me, who is here now, and I have watched some of the training to make sure that they're really doing the right thing for people with disabilities, and I see that. And we look forward to this going across the for-hire vehicles. And I want to thank you for hearing me today and -- any questions or?

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

COMM. CARONE: Thank you, Commissioner. I agree with everything you said, especially the part regarding acceptance and tolerance, and perhaps changing the way communities and drivers in those communities think is very important to achieving your goal and certainly the goal of the City, which is making the accessibility more available to those in need.

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And I just want to note to my fellow Commissioners here that Commissioner Calise, all through his tenure under Mayor Bloomberg and now Mayor de Blasio, has been a real friend and an incredible resource to me personally from the education point of view and just from an individual, always available to exchange ideas and brainstorm together. So I thank you for that and wish you all the best.

(Applause.)

MR. WILSON: The next speaker is Erhan Tuncel from LOMTO.

MR. TUNCEL: I have no testimony today. Sorry. Thank you.

MR. WILSON: Okay. Thank you.

The next speaker is Peter Mazer from Metropolitan Taxicab Board of Training.

MR. MAZER: Good morning, Chair and Members of the Commission. I'm handing out written testimony which I'm going to just summarize because it's probably longer than the three minutes that I have. My name is Peter Mazer. I'm General Counsel to the

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Metropolitan Taxicab Board of Trade, New York's oldest and largest yellow taxicab association, representing the owners and operators. We have 5,500 medallion taxicabs and have at least more than 20,000 drivers. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in the proposed amendments this morning.

Maintaining a professional, safe, knowledgeable and courteous yellow taxicab driving pool is essential. It helps to make New York's yellow taxi industry the envy of the world when it comes to providing affordable, reliable, world class taxi service. MTBOT has long been a supporter of comprehensive training programs for both new drivers, and we support additional training for licensees as a condition of continued licensure.

Too often I've heard drivers say, "But I didn't know there was a rule that prohibited that." The TLC rules are complex. They're hard enough for lawyers to decipher and impossible for licensees to

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fathom without proper training. The rules change all the time and drivers need to be informed of these changes.

We believe that every passenger in the city is entitled to the same high quality standard of service that yellow taxis have been providing. With that, all New Yorkers are entitled to transportation with a trained driver who is familiar with the rules of the road, geography, and therefore we support the change to provide this type of service now to the for-hire industry.

Right now, there are too many yellow drivers who are asking, is it worth it to get our license? Is it worth investing in a yellow taxi license if it takes months to get a license, if I have to pay for and complete the taxi school, if I have to pass a taxi exam, if I have to pass an English exam, if I'm a big yellow target for enforcement, not only by agents but by police officers, by cameras and by mandated technology, if I can only charge a metered

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rate of fare while unregulated drivers are price gauging--they call it surge pricing, but that's what it is--and if I have to drive a wheelchair-accessible taxicab and participate in a program when as we've learned yesterday, many other segments in the industry simply do not participate?

The question for passengers, on the other hand, is, why should standards be lower for a for-hire vehicle driver? Why should I, if I take a for-hire vehicle, not have the same reliable, courteous service that a taxi driver provides? Why shouldn't my driver be trained as well as a yellow driver? Why shouldn't my driver speak English? Why shouldn't my driver be held to the same enforcement standards? Why shouldn't I know that when I get into the cab what the rate of fare is and have a consistent rate of fare? And why shouldn't all passengers who are disabled have access to the same transportation all over? The yellow taxicab industry embraced technology, credit cards, GPS systems, and

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we have worked with the City to ensure that e-hailing is permitted, allowed more opportunities for yellow drivers and more opportunities for yellow medallion owners and passengers.

The TLC, on the other hand, has not changed the way that the for-hire industry has operated, and we still see that there are consistently the problems that we have seen in the for-hire industry, and we're glad that this is going to be a necessary first step to address that issue.

A couple of ideas that we have: First of all, we believe that an English test should be required for for-hire vehicle drivers. If the TLC has made the decision that having a strong command of English language is important for yellow taxicab passengers, then surely it should be the same for for-hire passengers who should be entitled to the same level of English proficiency.

Again, our emphasis is on fairness and our emphasis is on an equalized playing

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field. We need to streamline licensing so that it becomes much easier to get any type of license, a yellow taxicab license. The question was asked earlier how long does it take. Twenty-four hours of school is true. Three to four months to get a license is the norm we are seeing today from the time that the person walks in with the application to the time that they walk out with a license, three months, four months, five months, not unheard of.

We have -- finally, we have reservations concerning the potential for a sole source provider for all training. While initial training needs to be closely monitored by the TLC, there are many entities that could provide defensive driving certifications. I mentioned earlier that's a state-mandated program, so it's a state certification for that. There are many entities that could do the sex awareness training, which is now online, the wheelchair training, which I understand will be online, and the refresher courses,

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using the curriculum developed by the
Taxi & Limousine Commission.

We are concerned about fees. Our
drivers don't have a lot of money. We ask
that the fees be controlled, and there may
be an opportunity for certification of
multiple education providers. Competition
among providers would be a good thing.
That concludes my testimony and I'm free to
answer any questions that you may have.

MR. WILSON: Thank you, Mr. Mazer.
The next speaker is Dana Lerner.

MS. LERNER: Good morning. My name
is Dana learner. Some of you might
remember me. I've been here before. My
son, Cooper Stock, was killed by a TLC taxi
driver on January 10th, 2014. When I found
out soon after Cooper was killed that the
TLC does not require drivers to take road
tests in New York City, I was in a state of
complete disbelief. Clearly this man who
killed my son did not know the first thing
about safety. He plowed into the
crosswalk, he hit my husband and he ran

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over my son. Even the cab driver behind him testified that he clearly saw him in the crosswalk.

I support the rules which are being proposed today, however, I'm stunned to see that the new proposed rules will still not require drivers to take a taxi-specific road test. I truly cannot understand how such an oversight is possible. What happened to Cooper is a perfect example of how this is a huge failure in the system. It is a disservice to the drivers, the passengers and the pedestrians.

Taxi drivers set the tone for the City. They should be the most skilled and capable people on the road. Isn't it logical that they have the most comprehensive, rigorous training? Learning to drive in a classroom does not take the place of navigating on the hectic, crowded streets of the city. Taxicabs are weapons when they are driven by incompetent drivers. Vision Zero will not be achieved if the TLC does not do their part to ensure

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driver excellence.

Just yesterday afternoon, I got into a cab on Madison Avenue. The driver started speeding to make the light to make a left turn onto 5th Avenue. I asked him nicely to slow down and he yelled at me, "Time is money." He knew -- he proceeded to complain about the traffic, et cetera. When I asked him if he knew what the speed limit was, he actually did. So why was he speeding? A person who does not have the patience and skill to navigate the city streets has no right to be on this job. Lives are at stake every moment.

I have had the good fortune to be in many cabs with excellent drivers, but it only takes one bad driver to ruin a family's life. I know it because it happened to me.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much for your comments.

Does anybody have questions?

MS. LERNER: Could you respond to why there's not a test for cab drivers in

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New York City, why you can go and get a license in Upstate New York and then just drive in New York City, having never driven in the City before?

THE CHAIR: It's not part of our current curriculum. There's several suggestions that have come through the Vision Zero Task Force as how to improve the safety components of our curriculum, some of which we're working on, some of which have some practical obstacles to. So it's something we're going to look into, but it's not part of our current curriculum.

MS. LERNER: Well, I implore you to look into it so other people aren't killed.

MR. WILSON: The next speaker is Randy Kornfeld from Kornfeld and Associates.

MR. KORNFELD: Good morning, Commissioners. My name is Randy Kornfeld. I'm here as a representative of Master Cabbie. Master Cabbie, as you may know, is the largest and one of the oldest training

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facilities in the City.

On behalf of Master Cabbie, we're objecting to the rules, inasmuch as they seek to change multiple providers into a single provider of educational services. We don't believe this is in the best interest of the cab drivers or the ridership.

As an initial matter of housekeeping, I would respectfully request that Ms. Joshi recuse herself from the voting on this -- these regulations as it pertains to the single provider aspect. To the best of my knowledge, and you can correct me if I'm wrong, while Counsel to the TLC, Ms. Joshi was a promoter and a drafter of these rules insofar as they relate to the single provider aspect, and there is currently litigation between Master Cabbie and the TLC, technically Ms. Joshi, currently pending in the State Supreme Court over this very issue. So therefore, we think that there is an inherent bias on Ms. Joshi's part, again,

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respectfully, and that she shouldn't be casting a vote on this limited issue of these rules insofar as they relate to the single provider.

Now, with respect to the single provider, what this change does is seek to create a monopoly. A monopoly isn't good for anybody other than the monopolizer. It's in the best interest of the drivers and the ridership to have multiple schools where they can obtain licensure at a reasonable cost. In fact, the cost charged by Master Cabbie, we believe, would be less than what would be charged ultimately by LaGuardia, who, although it's not stated in the rules, is anticipated to be the sole provider.

So what we're ostensibly saying here today is what the TLC has been unable to get through the judicial system, they are attempting to get by fiat today through this Commission. We don't think that's appropriate. We think that inasmuch as the rules provide for a single provider, they

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should be struck down. The balance of the regulations, of course we think are excellent and we have no objection to. But what these rules are doing is they're putting these people out of business, they're putting people out of work who have worked for the company for years, their sole source of income; they're terminating their livelihoods in the industry by creating this monopoly.

Again, to reiterate, a monopoly isn't good for anybody. It obviously stifles free market. There's no reason for the government to step in and destroy private enterprise. Master Cabbie has been in business almost 20 years. As far as I know, as long as I've been involved in them and throughout this litigation, there's never been a single allegation that they did anything but be an exemplary and qualified provider of these exact services. Why they should now be terminated after 20 years, for me, is something that I just -- I can't understand.

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Again, I don't believe it's in anybody's best interest. Monopoly's foster corruption; they foster incompetence. It seems incomprehensible to me that a government "by the People and for the People" should want to put the people out of business. When you create a monopoly, it's just by some people and for some people. people; it's not for everyone. This clearly isn't in the best interest of the City. It's not in the best interest of the cab drivers. It's not in the best interest of private enterprise.

COMM. MARINO: Can we just get a little background?

COMM. JIHA: Yes. I was going to ask the same thing.

COMM. MARINO: Who -- I mean, either from the Chair or from the speakers, just some background on this company, who they are and how they fit into all of this.

MR. KORNFELD: Well, Mr. Gelber is here. He's the owner of the company. He was on the list to speak.

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THE CHAIR: Madame Chair, whatever you think is appropriate.

THE CHAIR: I mean, I think the speaker gave a good summary of the background. You've been in the business for over 20 years, teaching taxi school, taught hundreds and hundreds and thousands of drivers --

MR. KORNFELD: In fact, I think Fred, the poster boy this morning, went to Manhattan Cabbie.

MR. JIHA: Can I --

COMM. MARINO: Are there other companies in addition --

THE CHAIR: Yes. There are other companies that provide taxi schools. The proposed rules allow authorized providers to continue to provide taxi school education. It also provides that if there comes a time when there's one authorized provider, that one authorized provider would provide, but currently and until there's any further notice, every authorized provider can provide taxi

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school.

COMM. MARINO: So what's the monopoly then?

THE CHAIR: What the speaker is referring to is the potential that if there was one authorized provider selected, that that person would have the ability to -- the sole ability to provide education. And that -- the rules leave that open. They leave that as a possibility. They don't say that today there can be only one sole provider.

Second, what the rules do, which I think would be one of the bigger changes, these rules were originally published --

MR. WILSON: This version was published on November 18th.

THE CHAIR: An earlier version was published over --

MR. WILSON: Maybe in January.

THE CHAIR: -- in January that this Commission decided not to act on. The change between the version that was published then and today is that the

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version today requires schooling for FHV drivers and for taxi drivers. So I'd be interested to get your opinion on the ability of current providers to provide that extended education requirement as well as the multiple language component that might be necessary in teaching that.

COMM. JIHA: Can you give us a little background in terms of the rationale for trying to consolidate into one provider?

THE CHAIR: It's a process that I believe started almost two Commissioners others ago, under Matt Daus.

There was an RFI that was put out to explore the possibility and gather information on whether using a sole source provider would be the best way to go. Under David Yassky, there was an RFP put out to select that provider, and there was a contract that was drawn up under David Yassky and CUNY won that contract and that contract was between the City and CUNY.

That contract has not -- sort of the

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services have not begun under that contract, and we're in what I would term as sort of a limbo period, trying to negotiate the best way forward, considering that we want an additional requirement -- an additional universe of drivers to get schooling, and we have very stringent requirements on what we want for schooling now that are focused on Vision Zero, wheelchair accessibility, as well as drivers understanding the rules of TLC so they can navigate the process, but also extreme concerns about the cost because the cost cannot be prohibitive for drivers to enter the industry.

So that's the position we're in right now, which is very helpful to have this hearing to hear the points of views from individual providers, especially how they would react to a broader world of candidates that need schooling.

COMM. JIHA: Thank you.

MR. KORNFELD: If I may address some of the points raised by Ms. Joshi. In terms of what we've been told in sworn documents

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throughout the state court litigation between Master Cabbie and the TLC, the single provider aspect is a done deal. It's happening. The fact that it hasn't been rolled out formally is merely logistics. But while in Court, in sworn affidavits, and affirmations and representations made in open court to judges on this case, that is, as I said, a done deal. It's a single provider.

Now, the rules that we've been looking at today on the website and what we had on paper don't hedge that at all. In fact, they refer repeatedly to the term, "the authorized driver education service provider," not providers, and there is no footnote or qualification in any page of any of these documents --

MR. WILSON: Have you read the current version that's on the website that was posted on November -- on December 15th?

MR. KORNFELD: As far as I know, I did. If it's been changed in the last --

COMM. MARINO: That's two days ago.

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MR. KORNFELD: -- two days --

COMM. CARONE: Can I interject for a moment?

THE CHAIR: Yes.

MR. CARONE: I'm sorry. What was your name?

MR. KORNFELD: Randy Kornfeld.

COMM. CARONE: Randy, it's certainly your right to come here and testify before this Commission and express your concerns, but I have to say it's a little bit disheartening for me personally since I have never heard of you. Most stakeholders that feel the passion you do write letters to us, inform us. They don't really come here and pick out sentences in litigation that may or may not have any bearing on the hearing before us.

We're here to hear testimony on a new rule. The new rule doesn't have affidavits attached to it; they don't have statements and litigation attached to it. Except for your comment concerning the potential for abuse in a monopoly, I don't

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know if I agree with one word you said.
Quite frankly, your accusations against the
Chair as well, recusing herself, we all
work on rules, does that mean we're all
recused if we voted a certain way in the
past? What is the basis for that?

MR. KORNFELD: The basis is --

MR. CARONE: It's just your own
self-serving statement.

MR. KORNFELD: No, it's not a --

COMM. CARONE: Yes, it is.

MR KORNFELD: Well, that's your
opinion.

COMM. CARONE: It is my opinion and
fortunately I have a vote here. So I
think my opinion counts.

MR. KORNFELD: It absolutely does
and I wasn't trying to stifle your opinion.
It's my position and it's my --

COMM. CARONE: I know what you were
trying to do; you were trying to bully the
Commission. You were going to start on
your statement about recusing. It was not
helpful and I'd ask you to withdraw it.

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MR. KORNFELD: I apologize to the Commission. I said it respectfully. It's a legal position, that's all it is. I'm not casting aspersions on Ms. Joshi or her character. I'm just saying as someone who is involved on the other side --

COMM. CARONE: The facts that you set forth have the basis for recusal. It's the same we all encounter on a monthly basis. And I haven't seen you here, so I don't know if you've ever been here before.

MR. KORNFELD: No, I have not.

So, I apologize. I did not mean to offend anyone. I'll withdraw the comment.

But what I -- the heart of what I was arguing about was the monopolistic aspect of this. I'm just saying, Commissioner, that in the course of the litigation, we've never been told that there will remain to be multiple providers. We've been told the opposite. If that's changed, nobody's happier to hear that than us. My client has been in business 20 years and wants to stay in business.

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Thank you. If you have any other questions, I'm happy to answer them. If you want any written submissions from me, I'm happy to provide them.

THE CHAIR: Actually, if you wouldn't mind answering the question that I posed earlier, the ability to provide education for a broader group of drivers, one that would include livery and black car, and how to tackle some of the obstacles in multiple languages.

MR. KORNFELD: Honestly, I believe that would be better addressed by Mr. Gelber, who's the owner of the business.

THE CHAIR: Okay. And actually, Chris smartly pointed out to me that he's the next speaker.

MR. KORNFELD: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

MR. WILSON: And the next speaker is Terrence Gelber from Master Cabbie.

MR. GELBER: Good morning. I'm Terrence Gelber, owner of Master Cabbie,

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President of the Master Cabbie Corporation.
I came with much different notes written today than what we're talking about now because it was our understanding as we approached today's hearing that limiting school to one provider was the vote today.

So I'm excited beyond words that you want to hear this, what you just asked, Commissioner Joshi. A couple of years ago, there was an RFP for exactly what you're talking about, and all the experts in the field that I spoke with all came up with one conclusion before we proceeded with writing our proposal, which was that it wasn't written for us. That it was -- it had been written with certainly a large, large, large educational organization in mind, whereas, we're a small company.

THE CHAIR: I hate to cut you off but we do have three minutes so.

MR. GELBER: Well, anyway, they gave us 20 days to write that proposal.

THE CHAIR: Let's not rehash the RFP process. Let's get to the substance.

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MR. GELBER: I'm not rehashing the RFP, ma'am.

It was a simple task to locate real estate, to hire instructors and staff and provide what was necessary. Our timeframe was about 90 to 120 days to do that and deliver it as required in the RFP. So assuming that what we're looking at today, Master Cabbie has done it before. Nobody has built as many taxi schools as us; nobody's trained as many drivers as us --

COMM. MARINO: The Chair just -- I mean, I'm not trying to take over at all, but I just want to understand this. Can you expand your company to accommodate the requirements?

MR. GELBER: Absolutely, and it can be done in --

COMM. MARINO: I have my answer that you can do that. That's, I think, what Madame Chair wants to know and we all want to know that. Can you accommodate the rules as proposed?

MR. GELBER: Yes.

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COMM. JIHA: Can it be done in a way that is affordable?

MR. GELBER: Absolutely. I believe that private industry can always do it less expensively than the private sector, especially if there was a competitive aspect to it.

Thanks for having us here today.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

MR. WILSON: The next speaker is Fatima Ais from Master Cabbie.

We have a number of Master Cabbie people. If --

MS. AIS: No, I'm not going to speak. Thank you,

MR. WILSON: If they don't need to speak, that would --

THE CHAIR: If I can waive it for all Master Cabbie employees. We're content with the way the hearing has gone so far. Thank you very much.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

MR. WILSON: So, the next speaker is Michael O'Laughlin from Cab Riders United.

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MR. O'LAUGHLIN: Good morning again, Commissioners. Michael O'Laughlin, Cab Riders United. We strongly support increasing the taxis and we strongly support Vision Zero, which is obviously a priority of both the Mayor and City Council elected leaders in New York City. It's a priority for the TLC at well.

It's great to see steps towards improving safety and more Taxis of Tomorrow with built-in safety features are on the streets, safer drivers are being honored, data collection and enforcement is improving. In the age of Vision Zero, improving education and certification standards for TLC licensed drivers should be a no-brainer. In an era when hundreds of New Yorkers continue to die in preventable crashes and thousands and thousands continue to be injured, it should be a no-brainer that we improve the education certification standards. It's the right thing to do for the passengers who pay for taxi and for-hire vehicle

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service. It's the right thing to do for the pedestrians who share our streets with so many thousands and thousands of taxis and for-hire vehicles. It's the right thing to do for the drivers who deserve to be as well educated as possible for the important responsibility that we entrust them with.

Cab Riders United strongly supports the proposed changes, including rigorous taxi school requirements, regular refresher course and wheelchair passenger assistance training. We also strongly urge the Commission to further improve the safety and professionalism of New York City's for-hire drivers. Specifically, we urge you to require an industry-specific taxi and for-hire driver defensive driving course, not a generic off-the-shelf course that somebody can take somewhere else. It's a very specific job that drivers do and you should make sure that they are as well educated and prepared to do that as possible.

Secondly, we also would urge you to

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consider a road test for drivers.

Regarding the rules proposed today, all New Yorkers deserve the same standards of safety and the same quality of service. The drivers licensed by the TLC provide crucial public service and must be well trained for their job no matter what color car they drive, no matter what neighborhood they serve.

Particular points of emphasis we would urge you to stress in the training: Those violations that cause the greatest harm; speeding, failure to yield, dooring.

I want to share with you a couple of voices of passengers that we've heard in the last 24 to 48 hours on these topics. Kate from Manhattan: "The issue really concerns me because I was in a cab accident last year, head-on crash with a limo. I've also taken many cab rides with drivers who do not know the most basic routes for getting across town.

Urugos (phonetic), who I think is from Queens: "My profession, general

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contractor, requires me to drive for hours every day into the City. The bad and dangerous driving habits that I see every day from taxi and limo drivers are indescribable. The frustration and road rage that their driving behavior is causing is very dangerous."

David from Brooklyn: "TLC drivers must be able to safely navigate our dense urban landscape filled with people of all ages who are walking, biking, strolling or extremely vulnerable to injury or death if struck by a driver. As such, all for-hire drivers in the City must be held to high standards and instructed through rigorous taxi-specific training programs."

I can go on with additional voices. I think -- oh, wait. Do I have some more time?

THE CHAIR: No, you don't, actually.

MR. O'LAUGHLIN: I'm over time.

Okay. Well, in that case --

THE CHAIR: Good self-monitoring though.

MR. O'LAUGHLIN: Practice, practice,

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practice.

When passengers pay for taxi or car service, yellow taxi, green cab, borough cab, livery black car, Uber, Lyft, anything else, we need to know the driver has been properly educated to provide safe, courteous and professional service.

Thank you for your time this morning. Happy holidays and best wishes for a safe and prosperous new year.

MR. WILSON: Thank you. The next speaker is Edith Prentis.

MS. PRENTIS: Hi. My name is Edith Prentis and I'd like to say first, three speakers ago mentioned online training. I would hope you never put wheelchairs in that group.

THE CHAIR: I think that was -- I heard that, too, and we'll shut it. No, we will not do online wheelchair training.

MS. PRENTIS: Thank you. Unless you give everyone little models of the different securement areas.

Wheelchairs are very problematic,

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but more so than wheelchairs are other mobility equipment. The other mobility equipment includes things like walkers, rolaters, rehab rollers, et cetera. All of those individuals have greater problems with taxis than wheelchairs. Wheelchairs, it's got a ramp, it doesn't; we can get in, we can't get out. It's a really simpler issue. These other individuals need assistance from the driver, which they're not getting.

I remember a trip in which I was in a manual chair and a driver refused to even fold my chair after I had transferred into the car, much less put the chair into the vehicle. Luckily, there was a pedestrian, the person who had hailed the cab for me, because as you know in the days when we were using regular vehicles more, no driver would stop for us. I think it's really important and we applaud the TLC for the rules that would train all drivers. And, all the drivers also need to be trained for for other things.

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All drivers need better customer service. All drivers need sensitivity. All drivers need better direction finding. Relying on a GPS does not help it.

I dread it to say, how about the London taxi training program, I mean, years, years, but you've never had a London driver say to you, How do we get there?

I mean, I live on the corner of Audubon. How many times do you think -- I mean, I'm overlooked. I get delivered to Audubon. Are Audubon and Overlook next door to each other? I guess in their mind. Rather, they're on far sides of upper Manhattan.

Driver education is a crucial and indispensable factor in providing equivalent services as well. When we call -- when we hail a cab, we basically got ignored. Whether they're an accessible vehicle, an inaccessible vehicle, we're getting ignored, and we're not just wheelchairs. People with service animals, people were long canes, people with other

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apparent disabilities regularly get ignored by passing taxis. This is unacceptable.

For the true equivalent service required by the for-hire vehicle rule, which we all heard about yesterday's findings, we know that we're not getting equivalent service. The fact of the number of vehicles that they are allowed to pick up for other bases is miniscule. The for-hire vehicle rule had never any hopes of serving, but training every driver is very important.

A friend called Uber. Uber sent out a green taxi, the driver had no idea. Driver was trained, driver had no idea. Driver put in the four securement devices, not tied down, and then expected the wheelchair user to ride into the vehicle over or around these securements.

I think that the concept of a single training program might actually be a much better training program because we know there's a level field, unless you can promulgate rules that strengthen the curriculum of the individual schools. It's

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very apparent that many drivers either do not understand what they've been trained, do not use it enough to retain the memory, or just, option three, don't care. Thank you very much.

MR. WILSON: Thank you.

And the next speaker is and Andrew Volo.

MR. VOLO: Thank you, Commissioners. My name is Andrew Volo. I'm the founder of Total Compliance Solution. Currently, I'm an industry representative at OATH and I'm on the advisory board for the members of -- a board member of Cab Riders United.

I have been driving taxis and limousines on and off for over 40 years, and until recently, I ran the New York City taxi driver FHV Driver Institute for the last 16 years. I know firsthand the importance of improving the education standards for our professional drivers and the opportunity for New York to set the gold standard for taxi training nationwide.

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I applaud the TLC for proposing the rules that elevate driver training and certification standards. I believe this is essential and I support some additional changes in order to reach Mayor de Blasio's Vision Zero goal of eliminating traffic-related injuries and death.

I strongly urge the TLC to implement the following changes to improve the safety and professionalism of all TLC drivers:

Requiring all new and renewing TLC driver to take a comprehensive TLC authorized license renewal course before they can renew their license, their TLC license, especially those that are renewing their probationary license the first year. It's very important to get them in the first year, not after three years.

Require all new and renewing TLC drivers to take an industry-specific taxi and for-hire defensive driving course with added time and -- with added time to cover topics professional drivers need to know.

You may like to know that there is a

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taxi-specific defensive driving course already approved at the DMV up in Albany that is New York State certified.

Require behind-the-wheel driving instructions for all new drivers, and not just for drivers involved in crashes or with reckless driving convictions. It makes little sense to wait for drivers to be involved in frequent crashes or serious driving instances, as Vision Zero sets forth.

Frankly, we owe better to passengers and pedestrians alike, as well as to the drivers. It's simply not right to license drivers and allow them to have their first New York City driving experience piloting tons of steel, not unlike commercial drivers through densely crowded streets with vulnerable New Yorkers inside and outside the vehicle for a grueling 12-hour shift.

We do demand excessive instructions and certification including road testing for other transportation professionals, such as commercial drivers who are required

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to hold a commercial driver's license or CDL. There are to be similar standards for TLC drivers.

Taxi and FHV drivers do important work. They ought to be compensated and in an industry which ought to enjoy a level playing field. We all benefit when the work of these hard-working drivers are treated as such.

It's time to require truly professional standards for the City's taxi and FHV vehicle drivers, the gold standard for safety and customer service, whether via TLC regulations, the city or state law, if necessary.

Thank you for your time and I'd be happy to take any questions.

MR. WILSON: Thank you.

The next speaker is Tweeps Phillips from the Committee for Taxi Safety.

MS. PHILLIPS: Good morning. My name is Tweeps Phillips and I'm the Executive Director of the Committee for Taxi Safety and I want to thank you for having this hearing today.

On behalf of the members of the

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Committee for Taxi Safety, I wish to express our strong support for the rules set before you.

We agree that all drivers no matter what type of vehicle they drive should provide service -- a high standard of of service, and we agree with what's set before you and hope that this passes.

We have just a few, I guess, issues in regards to the rule. We think that -- we appreciate the effort with regards to this rule. We expect further accommodations to be made with respect to drivers needs. The English writing and reading proficiency has posed a strenuous barrier to thousands of potential drivers who would provide excellent service as a yellow taxi driver. The English language written requirement should be amended and we'd like to see sort of further explanation on what those requirements would be.

In addition to those applicants who have completed the fingerprinting, the drug testing and driving school requirements,

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they should be allowed to be sponsored by a fleet, a medallion owner or a licensed agent as to begin driving with a temporary license. Sponsorship in the past is how many drivers became successful and had long careers in the industry, safe careers in the industry. Connecting operators with new drivers in a mutually productive effort will result in safer drivers committed to serving our city's passengers. Sponsorship of driver applicants will help the city retain professional drivers for years to come.

So on behalf of the Committee, we'd like to thank you for this opportunity to speak to you today on the rules and wish you a very happy holidays and a happy New Year. And if you have any questions, I can answer them.

COMM. CARONE: Good morning, Tweeps. Thank you for your testimony. Just one quick question concerning the English language reading and writing proficiency. In your written testimony that was given to

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us, it seems to suggest that you are suggesting, and I have to say I'm sympathetic to this suggestion, that the English language written be removed, but the English speaking remain.

Is that what you're saying?

MS. PHILLIPS: That's right, yes. I think, you know, obviously, for a lot of non-English speakers, the writing requirement is actually very difficult. I think they actually have the ability to speak English well, but, you know, writing in English when your native language is something else is actually very difficult, and I think that poses a big barrier.

COMM. CARONE: I think writing in English is difficult for everyone at this table right here, let alone --

MS. PHILLIPS: I would agree. I could barely read my testimony, so yeah.

Any other questions?

(No response.)

MR. WILSON: Okay. Thank you.

MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you.

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MR. WILSON: And the next speaker is Jesse Lore from Easter Seals.

MR. LORE: Good morning, Members of the Commission. I'm Jesse Lore from Easter Seals. I've been working with Easter Seals since 2008, since the beginning of accessible dispatch to provide wheelchair-accessible taxi driver training. I've trained over thousands of drivers here in New York City and we've been really ecstatic with the success of expanding accessibility with the work that you have done on the Taxi & Limousine Commission over the past couple of years.

I've spent my entire career working with people with disabilities and I see the impact that this has on their quality of life, and I'm here to endorse these rule changes as written, especially the rule changes that allow several providers to provide an approved curriculum on wheelchair passenger assistance for people with disabilities.

Easter Seals, as an operator of

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wheelchair-accessible transportation nationally, knows the importance of well-trained drivers. In fact, we've seen the potential dangers of untrained drivers. It can be a matter of life and death for people with disabilities. At Easter Seals, we, in fact, train our drivers regularly and recertify them regularly, even if they transport people with disabilities every day, to ensure that their skills are up to par. As you know, taxi drivers do not transport people in wheelchairs every day, even if they drive a wheelchair accessible taxi every day. So we would encourage that recertification requirement for drivers of wheelchair-accessible taxis.

We're also proud partners with some of the largest medallion operators of wheelchair-accessible taxis that provide regular training and refresher courses in their garages. It's been my pleasure to work with them and they've really set a high standard for wheelchair-accessible taxi service in New York, and I hope the TLC

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continues to look to them and look to the providers of these trainings as you continue to move forward.

I've been honored to work with the staff at the TLC that has on many occasions reached out to us and other stakeholders to build on the accessibility options and to learn from us as you write these rules. So I have to commend your staff and everybody who works for you, Commissioner; I think they've really done a fantastic job in ensuring that passengers with disabilities have great service in wheelchair-accessible taxis.

I'm here to thank you for your work, thank you for your time, and applaud your efforts to expand the training requirements, especially as they pertain to wheelchair accessibility. Thank you.

MR. WILSON: Thank you.

The next speaker is Osman Chowdhury of the United Taxi Drivers' Association.

MR. CHOWDHURY: Hello. Good afternoon, everybody. My name is Osman

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Chowdhury, and I'm from the United Taxi Drivers' Association. First of all, with regards to the whole training things, that's fine; everybody needs those things, but besides, some elderly old man have a serious back condition, they cannot heavy lifting. They probably have to make some things change there if somebody doing a taxi driver. Like I'm driving 18 years, I have serious back pain, high blood pressure. The doctor make a note, don't carry the heavy things. I do, but I need a living.

Another thing, I will say that we need a steady income because sometimes I don't discuss the salary. But I would need to make income enough because wheelchair, when it goes, it takes more time to push it, to drop off and pick up; there's more time they're spending. You have to look at that. (Inaudible). They need a steady income, they'll need more money (inaudible).

Through the City's high competition.

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If I want somebody behind the (inaudible),
I want to know what I can do (inaudible).
That's my problem. Find out real things.
And also, there a lot of things that's
coming from the driver, the instructions, I
attend the training in 2009.

One morning I finished my shift like
20 drivers, like it's winter season and in
the street, they're making training.
Because 20 drivers, I can't finish my
shift. On the streets they're making
training. And also the different --
there's three kinds of cars. Different
kinds of training. One car has different
training than the other. I want to know to
make fix this problem. Instructions here,
I'm am advocate. I can't show you them. I
don't know that kind of training. That
particular training, they don't know
(inaudible).

And also, there's a lot of things
come here -- I'm talking about I'm driving
18 years. I'm not getting any lobbyists or
anybody talks. I don't hear the things.

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If I'm going to take the passenger,
(inaudible). They say to me make a left,
right, go on the side, on the shoulder.
There's the traffic law. This is the
passenger pushing us to break the law. And
also to the (inaudible), some people make
you open the door and go their way. This
is not what a driver is for. Putting all
the problems on the driver.

When often sometimes what's
happening, sometimes, you know, the
passenger is going to JFK, when going on
the way, before we don't take yellow cab,
maybe someone say, Oh, we're missing the
flight, pushing me to go fast, go fast.
You know, some new driver cannot please
them. I'm the old driver, I know these
things. I follow the traffic law. But the
new guy is going to come and complain that
they're scary. They're only pushing the
taxi driver to get nervous, that's what
happened in this thing. Thank you very
much.

MR. WILSON: And the next speaker is

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John Kaiteris from HANAC.

MR. KAITERIS: Good morning. I'm John Kaiteris, the Executive Director of HANAC, Inc. We are a non-profit community service organization that's been providing services to the New York community since 1973. HANAC has a 40-year history of providing adult education and literacy classes to immigrants with funding provided by the state and city and over 20 years of experience in providing taxi driver education as a TLC-authorized entity.

We are in agreement and support the driver training courses proposed by the TLC, and we are ready and prepared to provide those courses. Many years ago we included actual field driving throughout New York City for our candidates, which may be worth revisiting as a training requirement. We can accommodate the additional requirements that may be needed to provide those classes indicated in the amendment.

In addition, we have a language capacity in Spanish, Urdu, Punjabi and

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Bangladeshi. We disagree with the proposed authorization of a single entity to provide those courses. The existing authorized entities provide quality education services for those seeking TLC driver education courses, and we feel the diversity and competition between the existing entities creates incentive for each training school to provide the highest quality of instructors and instruction, as well as amenities.

We opened a new location recently and entered into a lease, with TLC's approval. We have graduated thousands of students who have gone on to become TLC licensees and drivers in the taxi industry. We urge you vote for the proposed driver education courses and against the authorization for a single authorized entity to provide driver education courses. Thank you.

COMM. POLANCO: I have a comment. Thank you. I just want to say that I could tell you, I'm speaking on behalf of myself,

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that I will not support a single provider. So I can assure you that I will not vote for a single provider just to provide training programs. I know that it's not for a vote today, but I think all the years of service that you have provided, all of you, it's commendable. So that's what I wanted to say.

MR. KAITERIS: We appreciate that.
(Applause.)

COMM. MARINO: What was the company of this last speaker?

MR. KAITERIS: HANAC.

COMM. MARINO: What is it?

MR. WILSON: HANAC.

COMM. MARINO: And does that company provide the same services as the other gentleman?

MR. KAITERIS: Yes.

COMM. MARINO: These are all the private entities, so their interests are essentially in line. And I have to say, I agree with my colleague. I kind of understand the fear of losing a small

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business. I mean, I'm a small business owner. So that's a very valid and terrifying thought. So I can sympathize with these concerns as well.

(Applause.)

MR. WILSON: And the next speaker is Bill Lindauer from NYTWA.

MR. LINDAUER: I'm Bill Lindauer from the New York Taxi Workers Alliance, the AFL-CIO union of yellow cab drivers. Of course we offer education, but I'm not sure that a single provider would be a good idea. The fact that it was dreamed up by Matthew Daus is a mark against it in my book. He didn't come up with any good ideas.

Now, the idea to put it in CUNY, I understand. CUNY used to be free.

THE CHAIR: Excuse me. Bill, do you mind just keeping to the subject instead of character assassination? That's not for this Commission.

MR. LINDAUER: No. That's truth telling.

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THE CHAIR: No. That's character assassination.

MR. LINDAUER: All right. Call it what you will.

CUNY, why would CUNY provide better service than these private companies? You know, why? Could they accommodate all the drivers, especially with FHV requirements? I doubt it. Who would teach these people at CUNY? And CUNY used to be free, right? Now it's like \$5,000 a year. If they impose a fee, what would make it so that the fee would remain constant or not be raised every two years or so?

And I haven't heard any compelling arguments against the quality of education of these private companies. I mean, I trust their supervision by the TLC over the training that these gentlemen offer and I trust it's fine; I haven't heard any arguments against the quality of their training. And it's dubious, the quality of the training that maybe CUNY or some other company or college would provide. And the

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idea is it to keep costs low for the driver. We're burdened with all kinds of fees, of course we're targeted by the law, targeted by the police, the TLC inspectors, everything, right? So keep costs low for the drivers and provide good training and I don't think the potential for a single provider is a good idea. Thank you.

MR. WILSON: Thank you. That was the last speaker.

THE CHAIR: Okay. And with that, we'll end our meeting at 11:28. Thank you.

(Time noted: 11:29 a.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF NEW YORK)
) ss.:
COUNTY OF RICHMOND)

I, JENNIFER CASSELLA, a Notary Public
within and for the State of New York, do hereby
certify:

I reported the proceedings in the
within-entitled matter, and that the within
transcript is a true record of such proceedings
to the best of my ability.

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 26th day of December, 2014.

JENNIFER CASSELLA

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