

# UTCC VOICE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITED TAXIDRIVERS COMMUNITY COUNCIL

## CITY WINS LANDMARK CASE AGAINST DISPATCH!

COMPANY TO PAY \$16,000 IN FINES, \$3788 IN RESTITUTION TO CAB DRIVER

BY PETER ALI ENGER

**O**N FEB. 28, 2014, THE CITY ATTORNEY for the Dept. of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection argued against the legal counselor for Dispatch Cab Affiliation at 400 W. Superior. UTCC organizers played a crucial part in bringing this case to court, working with Mr. Domingo Carino for many months to gather his evidence and bring it to the City investigators. After two hours of wrangling over the details of Chicago cabdriver Domingo Carino's experiences at Dispatch, the City attorney won a settlement of \$3788 for Mr. Carino, and \$16,000 in fines for the company.

This case was a long time coming. According to FOIAs (Freedom of Information Act requests) filed by UTCC organizers, there have been up to twenty-five settlements for lease cap violations in the last two years. This was the first time a cab company decided to fight back in open court at the Administrative Hearing Department at 400 W. Superior. And they lost. Domingo Carino was a brand new driver



Domingo Carino

when he went to Dispatch Cab Company in January of 2012 to look for a 24-hour, weekly lease for a cab. He was also new to the United States, having immigrated here in 2007. He had heard Dispatch had taxis available, and many hybrids also, which are good on gas. He wanted a weekly lease so he wouldn't have commuting issues, and he would also only have to go in to pay his lease once a week.

When he showed up at the Dispatch Taxi garage, he found a parking lot full of taxis, which gave him hope that he could find what he needed. When he asked for a 24-hour, weekly lease, the personnel at the garage told him they don't have 24-hour, weekly leases. They told him he could lease a cab and keep it for 24 hours, and pay the lease weekly, but that he would have to sign fourteen (14!) 12-hour leases every week, at \$66 per lease, for a total of \$924 per week. As Domingo was a new driver, he did not realize this was a violation of the lease cap, which was \$473 per week at the time. In addition, it was

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### IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

**ON MARCH 28 A DELEGATION FROM THE NATIONAL TAXI WORKERS ALLIANCE (FROM THE NEW YORK TAXI UNION) WILL COME TO CHICAGO TO SIGN A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE NTA-AFLCIO AND THE UTCC REGARDING UNIONIZING IN CHICAGO AND AFFILIATION.**

Contact UTCC with any questions about this historic event:  
 UTCC: (773) 342-8822 or  
 (312) 427-8294

## Taxi drivers thrown under the bus in fight over elected school board

**L**AST YEAR, ALDERMAN BEALE, THE CHAIR of the Transportation Committee at City Council, introduced an advisory referendum on the ballot for the March 18<sup>th</sup> primary election stating:

#### TAXI FARE HIKE

*Should the City of Chicago increase taxi rates, which would be the first increase in eight years and bring Chicago's taxi fleet in line with other cities?*

The city council has the authority to raise the fares. An advisory referendum is not needed. Why then did Alderman Beale introduce it?

Based on a rule that only three citywide referenda can be on one ballot, the media reported that the taxi fare hike referenda and two others were placed on the ballot to prevent a referendum for an elected school board. We are disgusted that Alderman Beale would use taxi drivers as pawns in that fight.

The typical Chicago voter is smart enough to know that if prices are going up, probably rich people are profiting and not workers. We know from our own experience that when fares are raised, usually leases are raised too and owners benefit at the expense of drivers. That is what

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## Proposed Rideshare Ordinance Unfair to Taxi Drivers

*Nobody who works full-time should ever have to raise a family in poverty. That violates a basic sense of who we are. And that's why it's time to give America a raise. What every American wants is a paycheck that lets them support their families, know a little economic security, pass down some hope and optimism to their kids. And that's worth fighting for.*

—President Barack Obama

*American men and women work extremely hard every day to provide opportunity for their children, and it is essential that we create an environment in which they can support their families and achieve their dreams. Everyone has a right to be fairly compensated for their work and I encourage all elected officials to step forward and support the President in this effort.*

—Mayor Rahm Emanuel

### There is a Livable Wage Protection in the Taxi Ordinance But it goes Unenforced

A premise of the above two statements in support of raising the minimum wage is that government has a responsibility to set laws so that workers will not be exploited.

Chicago taxi drivers work long hours with take home pay below the minimum wage. The city through its regulation of fares, number of medallions, and lease rates, has almost total control over what a taxi driver can make. The very same arguments that compel President Obama and Mayor Emanuel to support raising the minimum wage should obligate the city to regulate the taxi industry so that drivers can make a livable wage.

Mayor Emanuel has acknowledged the city's responsibility towards taxi drivers in his 2011 revisions to the taxi code, which states that the Commissioner of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection is charged with regulating lease rates such that taxi drivers "have an opportunity to earn a fair and reasonable income."

Unfortunately, this provision of the code has never been enforced. And drivers continue to be exploited by the fleet owners and the city, through an unconscionably high lease rate, flagrant lease overcharges that go un-penalized, a fare rate that has not been increased for eight years, and non-enforcement of the code resulting in illegal competition from unlicensed rideshare companies.

### There is no Livable Wage Protection in the Proposed Rideshare Ordinance

Whereas the portion of the taxi ordinance that is supposed to insure the drivers can make a livable wage goes unenforced, Mayor Emanuel's proposed rideshare ordinance contains no regulation of the industry to insure that rideshare drivers can make a livable wage. The fares are allowed to be set by the companies without any

regulation. The number of drivers can be set by the companies without any regulation. Fees that the companies charge to the drivers can be set by the companies without any regulation. There is nothing in the ordinance to ensure that drivers won't be penalized for unsubscribing to one app and joining another, or joining more than one simultaneously, something that would be essential for the common good of maximizing the connections between customers and drivers.

As written, the ordinance is a recipe for unregulated exploitation of drivers by corporations. This is so, even though at present, taxi drivers are being wooed by the ride share companies to drive for them and many are understandably doing so because they are currently able to make more money as a ride share driver than a taxi driver. It is not that driving for a rideshare company is so good. It is that driving a taxi is so awful that even driving for a rideshare company is better.

But for how long? With potentially tens of thousands of drivers competing for customers, ride share fares will likely be driven to very low levels. The portion that drivers get will likely decrease over time as the companies claim a larger share, because how much the companies can take from the fares is unregulated. How long will it be before the choices available to drivers are two equally bad options? Drivers' choices will be limited to leasing a taxicab with a medallion at an exorbitant rate, and driving their own car for a rideshare company that keeps an exorbitant portion of the low fare.

### We Can Achieve a Livable Wage if We Organize

This dreary future can be avoided. Our challenge is to make the city honor its obligations to insure we can make a livable wage for the hard work we do. We can do this if we organize.

In New York, taxi drivers formed the New York Taxi Workers Alliance and through organizing themselves and in collaboration with strong community support they have achieved substantial increases in take home pay through a fare increase, enforcement of illegality of rideshares, a solid lease cap that did not go up when the fare went up, and strong enforcement against lease overcharges. We can do the same. We can organize for a formal voice in decisions that affect our livelihoods.

If they can do it in New York, we can do it in Chicago.

The UTCC is circulating a petition calling on the city to regulate lease rates, fare rates, and competition so that drivers can make a living wage. The city could do this at any time.

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## Introducing Brittany Harthan, UTCC staffer and organizer

**HELLO DRIVERS!** My name is Brittany Harthan and I am the newest addition to the United Taxidriver Community Council. I feel honored to be a part of the team as a labor organizer and secretary and help in whatever way possible. I grew up in the Chicagoland area and have been involved in various environmental and social justice issues in the past. Throughout the years, I have been inspired by local movements and the power that is created with unity and passion behind people fighting for what is right. You can find me in the office at 2040 N. Milwaukee Avenue on Mondays from 1-7 pm, Tuesdays from 1-5 pm, and Wednesdays from 1-6:30 pm. Some days, I use that time to go out in the field and talk to drivers, as well. I am here to help members of the

Chicago cab community with legal cases and tickets associated with 400 W. Superior, customer brutality, lease overcharges, and any other issues drivers have. I am most excited to help with labor organizing and assisting with empowering, you, the people who work hard to get commuters to and from their destinations in Chicago safely. Since I have started working with the UTCC, I have met many drivers who don't feel like they have been treated fairly behind the wheel, by the cab companies and the city of Chicago and for good reason. You all deserve to earn a living wage and be treated with the respect you ought to have and I am here to help in whatever way I can. I look forward to meeting with and working with you all. Solidarity, my friends.

# UTCC

## UNITED TAXIDRIVERS COMMUNITY COUNCIL

### OUR VISION

*To organize and unify all licensed chauffeurs in the Chicago area, so we can collectively overcome oppression and achieve economic and social justice.*

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**We welcome your contributions feedback and letters!**

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# UTCC Attends Hearing At City Hall

## Recent Changes in Taxi Industry Negatively Affect Cabdrivers

BY PETER ALI ENGER

**T**HE CHICAGO TAXI INDUSTRY HAS SEEN many changes in the past two years. We have seen the introduction of Uber and Hailo, E-Hail Aps that are changing the ways people can summon taxis and the ways that cabdrivers can confidently find passengers in the usually underserved neighborhoods of Chicago.

We have also seen the introduction of “rideshare” Aps, such as Lyft (pink moustache), Sidecar and UberX. These “rideshare” aps are completely unregulated, uninsured, and unsafe transportation options for unsuspecting passengers—the riding public—and feature drivers who are using their private cars. Since the transportation regulators of Chicago have neglected to enforce their own regulations, these “rideshare” Ap drivers have to comply with NO background checks, the vehicles have passed NO safety inspections, and passengers can expect that they carry NO insurance that will apply in the case of accidents.

In addition, there are no regulations or training that apply to the drivers. We have heard many horror stories of UberX drivers not knowing the geography of Chicago, going the wrong way, and mistreatment of passengers. And there is no place to go if a passenger has a complaint, because no rules apply.

The UTCC has duly reported our concerns to the Dept. of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (DBACP), and they have told us that the police will impound cars which are found to be transporting people for pay. The problem is, the Chicago Police Dept. has many more important things to do than look for cars with pink moustaches who are picking people up for money; and as for UberX and Sidecar drivers, there is no way to identify them.

### Aldermen Burke and Beale Join Forces to Call for Enforcement of Taxi Ordinance

We are not the only people in Chicago who have these concerns. Many of our passengers have expressed their concerns to us—about riding in cars with NO safety standards, driven by people with NO training, NO insurance and NO background checks on them. Every Aldermen we have met with so far—Aldermen have shared our concerns.

Recently, Alderman Ed Burke and Ald. Anthony Beale held a joint Hearing of the Finance and Transportation Committees to discuss and introduce a Resolution addressing the issues facing the Taxi Industry in Chicago. The main issue addressed was the introduction of the new technology of “rideshare” Ap companies to the transportation options of Chicago citizens. Members of the UTCC Steering Committee attended this hearing.

At the Hearing, held Feb. 24 at Chicago City Hall, we heard testimony from many people in the Taxi Industry. We heard from a Taxi Industry lobbyist, we heard from Crystal Abernathy, owner of King Drive Cab Affiliation, we heard from a representative of Hailo, we heard from the head of the International Association of Transportation Regulators (IATR). They all expressed their concerns about “rideshare” Ap technology companies disrupting the Taxi Industry, and what they were doing to the traditional economic model based on Medallions and strict regulations of the taxi and limo industry.

The main consensus among all the speakers seemed to be that E-Hail Aps, such as traditional Uber (which uses only taxis and limos, regulated by the City) and Hailo are acceptable, as they improve service to the riding public and

use only regulated vehicles. They also agreed that “rideshare” Aps, such as UberX, Lyft, and Sidecar, are disruptive and unregulated, and are unacceptable because they affect the investments of the Medallion owners, and Limo owners, and are potentially, if not inevitably, a danger to the riding public. In addition, these “Transportation Network Providers” (TNPs) introduce unlimited entry to the transportation options for passengers. This last argument is the one the UTCC is most concerned about. All Chicago cabdrivers should be concerned about the loss of business we are suffering from now. Every passenger who takes an unregulated “rideshare” car is taking business away from the taxi driver.

Ald. Burke opened up the Hearing by stating that he and Ald. Beale wanted to introduce this Resolution at City Council demanding that the City regulators (DBACP) enforce the Taxi Ordinance that they all voted for two years ago. Ald. Beale claimed he had been trying to get a meeting and a response from the Commissioner, Rosemary Krimbel, for over a year without any success. “Why did we vote for this Ordinance, if it’s not going to be enforced?”, was the main question asked at this hearing by the hearing leaders. The resolution being discussed was: “Call for enforcement of municipal code against any and all transportation network providers unlawfully operating as de facto taxicab and livery companies”.

### UTCC Chairman Faye Khozindar Speaks At Hearing

In researching the Taxi Ordinance passed by City Council in 2012, we discovered some inter-

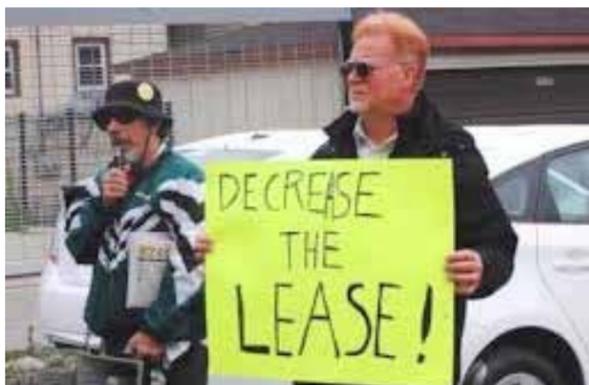
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## YAREEYA KIRADA GAWAADHIDA

*“Aad Ayaan u shaqeeyaa oo saacado badan ayaan shaqada ku jiraa , hase yeeshee wax badan kama helo oo kirda gaadhiga iyo gaaskaba kama badiyo “. Sidaa waxa yiri nin tagsiga magaalada Chicago in muddo ah wadey oo waayo aragnimo dheeraada u leh shaqada iyo isbadal - xilliyeedkeeda. Haddaba waxa is waydiin leh maxaa dheefta ka qaaday shaqada tagisga ee magaalada Chicago?”*

**I**N KASTA OO AY JIRAAN WAXA YAALO BADAN OO loo aa naynayo shaqa xumida magaalada , waxa la hubaa in ay sababeen wax yaalo is biir biir saday oo ay ka mid yihiin , kirda tagsiyada oo aad u kurodhay, dhaqaalaha Maraykaynka ee hoos u dhacay oo aad u saameeyaey guud ahaan shaqooyinka adeeg yada bixiya sida tagsiyada, hoteelda iwm, ganaax an cafis lahayn balse an qaanuun saxa salka ku hayn oo lala tiig sado shaqaalahani si magaaladu u samayso lacag badan oo ay miisaa-niyadeeda ku kabto, shaqaalaha tagsiiga wada oo ah kuwo aad u kala daad san oo an taageero ufidin ururada matala amma u ol oleeeye danahooda.

In muddo ah , waxa aad u soo kordhaayay lacagta laga qaado dirawaliinta. Iyaga oo mar marsiiyo ka dhiganaya gawaadhida loo yaqaan Haybrdhka oo waxoo ka gaas cun yar kiwii hore ee loo yaqaan crown Victoria. Shirkadaha tagsiyada laga kiraystaa waxa ay laban laabeen lacagtii ay gawaadhidooda ku kirayn jireen. Sida la og yahay, waxa ay hal mar si lama filaana u kor dhiyeen liiska oo ahaan jiray \$489- ilaa \$789 todobaadkii. Maanta gawaadhida qaar kooda waxa lagu wadaa \$ 900 waliba marka labo dirawal ay wadaagaan afar iyo labaatankii saacadood. Taasi waxa ay culays xad



dhaaf ah iyo dhaqqale xumo saartay dirawaliinta sabab too ah waxa kala badan gashiga iyo halaabada ay ka helayaan shaqda. Sidoo kale , waxa dhawaan magaalada ku soo kurdhay gawaadhi an aad loo xakamayn oo loo yaqaan UBER kuna shaqeeyo Apps oo adeeg tagsi bixiya balse cid kastaa wadi karto iyga oo an Shoofeer looga baahan.

Waxaa in taa dheer , sida ay cadaysay daraaso cilmiyeed ay soo saartay jaamacada illinois ee Chicago in ay Magaalada Chicago ka mid tahay magaalooyinka adduunka ugu tagsiga jaban sabab too ah mitirkeedu waxa u qoraa lacag aad u yar waxa nu xisasabiyaa mayl , meel kasta oo magaalada laga tagana waxa wayni kuma kordhaan. Waxa intaa raaca, duqayda magaalada xukunta iyo Maayarkuba in badan ayay dhagaha ka furaysteen cabashooyinka ka imanaya tagsi wada yaasha si loogu kordhiyo lacagta mitirku qoraayo si ay u awoodaan in ay shaqda sii wadaan.

In kasta oo ay ururada u ol oleeeya xuuuqda shaqalaha tagsigu(UTCC) oo u hogaamiyo nin aad ugu dagaalama xuquuqda iyo sharafta tagsiilayaasha oo laydhihdo Faye ay sameeyeen dadaallo badan , wali horumar lagama gaadhin in mitirka la kordhiyo.

Isku soo wada geeyoo , shaqda tagsiigu sidii hore maaha amana soo roo nanayso , illaa wax is badal ah lala yimaado mooyee.

Taasina waxa ay ku imaanaysaa in ay ba-hoobaan shaqaalaha tagsigaka ka shaqaystaa oo ay taageeraan ururka UTCC ee u dhaq- dhaqaaqa xuquug dooda si loo kordhiyo Metirka , loo joojiyo qaanuunda an sharciga ku fadhiyin ee lagu cadaadinayo dirwalada iyo in hoos loo dhimo lacagata liiska ee la kordhiyaya taasioo an waafaq sanayn sharciga magaalada , hase yeeshee la kordhiyo si an naxariis lahayn.

Ugu danbayn, lix iyo labaatanka bishani Masar-so waxa xarunta dawlada hoose ee Chicago (Chicago city Hall ) lagu qabanayaa , shir ay soo abaabuleen ururku (UTCC ee u hogaamiyo Faye kaasi oo loo gu hii linayo shaqaalaha tagsiga , markaa ha mooganaina ooh aka maqnaanina. Waayo waxa loo dagaalamayaa waa xaqiina si loo kordhiyo, mitirka.

Fadlan ka soo qayb gala oo muujiya taageeradiina. Waxa ad la xidhiidhi kartaan

Faye, 312-427-2533, or 312-343-5831

**UTCC will Hold Press Conference at city Hall on 3/26/2014, Please join us and show your support**

—IDRIS FARAH

## UTCC Continues Work on “Parking Tickets while Sleeping” Issue

BY PETER ALI ENGER

**T**HE UTCC HAS HEARD FOR MANY YEARS about the unjust and unfair “ticketing while sleeping” City parking restrictions on taxis parked on business streets between the hours of 2 AM to 7 AM for more than two hours at a time. This constitutes a de facto “tax on sleeping” for cabdrivers who live in the wards where this parking ban is enforced.

The nature of the taxi driving business in Chicago has it that many cabdrivers either lease a taxi 24 hours a day on a weekly basis, or share a 12-hour lease with another driver on a weekly basis. These drivers only visit the leasing garage once a week to pay their leases, and must park near their homes while they sleep, or park the cab in a mutually agreeable place on the city streets when they are done with their shifts. The second driver would then pick up the cab from that place. This practice results in drivers needing legal parking places near their homes so they can park without fear of getting tickets on the cabs they lease.

There are City parking ordinances that prohibit parking of taxis, or any other commercial vehicles, on residential streets. This means that cabdrivers must park their cabs when off-duty on streets zoned for business, commercial or industrial. The language in the parking ordinance is as follows:

**“It shall be unlawful to park any taxicab on any business street in the city for a period longer than two hours between the hours of 2:00 A.M. and 7:00 A.M.; provided that this prohibition shall not apply to taxicabs**

**parked on business streets in the 23rd Ward, 40th Ward, and only on the (north side) of North Lincoln Avenue, from North California Avenue to West Peterson Avenue, (south side) of North Lincoln Avenue, from North California Avenue to West Foster Avenue, (both sides) of North Western Avenue, from West Glenlake Avenue to West Peterson Avenue, (east side) of North Western Avenue, from West Balmoral Avenue to West Peterson Avenue, and (south side) of West Peterson Avenue, from North Lincoln Avenue to North California Avenue, 46th ward, 49th Ward and in the 50th Ward (on Devon Avenue and Western Avenue).”**

The UTCC was successful in 2009 and 2010 in meeting with Aldermen in the 49<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> Wards to ask the Aldermen to add their Wards to the list above in order to allow drivers to park overnight in on business streets in their wards without getting tickets. Last year, working with cabdriver Mounir Essat, we were also successful in adding the 40<sup>th</sup> Ward to the list above. The 40<sup>th</sup> Ward is centered on California and Lincoln Avenues. The appropriate areas Ald. O’Connor exempted from this Ordinance are highlighted in red above.

The UTCC encourages any cabdrivers getting overnight parking tickets between 2 AM and 7 AM on business streets in other areas of the city to call us and create a campaign to have your wards added to this exemption in the city Parking Ordinance. Please call (773) 342-8822. ■

### To my cab driver brothers,

*It’s time for you to unite and stand up for your rights. You do have rights. You represent Chicago every day. You don’t have to accept the abuse the city and the public gives you. You can fight back and, most importantly, you can win. Just because a lot of you come from another country makes no difference; you are here now. You are part of the American dynamic and a very important part. Fight fly tickets, unfair starters at the airports. Fight for your rights at 400 W. Superior, known to us as a “kangaroo court”; that’s not justice. It’s just you getting shafted every time you walk in the door. It is very easy for the city and the cab companies to screw over one driver but is a lot tougher for them to fight a united and strong union. Think about it. That which does not kill you makes you strong. Stay strong, stay united. It’s time you are respected, it’s time that you are treated with dignity. Chicago is not giving you anything. You are giving your time and labor to Chicago and you are not getting a fair return on your investment. Stand up and unite. Your cause is just. Fight to win.*

DAVID S.  
ACTIVE FORMER DRIVER  
ALWAYS STAND WITH YOU.

## Tips on Cabdriver Safety

**T**HIS IS A SMALL ARTICLE ABOUT preventing a robbery before or after your shift especially at night or when it is dark. First, the best prevention is to avoid a confrontation by being alert before you park your car. Look around you; if you see someone hanging around with no purpose, drive away and call the police. Tell them you see strange activity. If you see a car with strange occupants with no purpose get the plate number. Also, before you park: gather your things, stay off the phone, be alert. After you make sure no one is looking at you to harm you: exit quickly, lock the doors, pay attention, walk with your hands free and with confidence. Never linger at night; never let anyone get close to you if you see someone crossing the street. Never assume no one is looking. Do this every day; criminals do not take days off. These single things can prevent a robbery and to prevent is the best plan.

If you are approached and a robbery is declared, the first thing to do is to quickly notice every detail about the robber; the clothes, shoes, tattoos, voice, any small detail can help the police. How many of them are there? Which direction did they go? Never underestimate a

situation no matter who it is. A young kid can pull a trigger and kill you.

A few pointers: separate your money, put the big bills away, carry an old cell phone, just give it to them, try to end it quickly and report it.

Even if the police catch him, if you don’t report it the police can’t do anything without your report. Don’t let him or her go free. If you quickly report it, giving them detailed descriptions, they can be caught. These people generally stay in the same area. The police may also know them and you can prevent future crimes. Your best defense is to get the public to notice; make noise, jump safely in the street and someone will call the police. The robber wants it quick and quiet so any noise and he or she has to go.

A few things to remember: it is easy to lose a fight if you don’t know who you are fighting, how many or if they have weapons so be careful to how you approach things. It is ultimately best to avoid these situations. Stay very alert, never think it won’t happen to you. We are all human and should expect the unexpected. Just remember, always report a crime, take these suggestions and be safe.

—ALI BILAL

## Drivers Thrown Under Bus

Continued from Page 1

happened when the city made the surcharge permanent. The city also raised the lease rates to such high amounts that drivers now do worse. So it is no wonder that as we write this with over 99 percent of precincts reporting, over 117,287 people have voted against the fare hike referendum.

It is heartening however that over 73,725 people voted for it. We are confident that had the referendum been instead stated as “Many taxi drivers make less than minimum wage. Should taxi drivers earn a livable wage for the hard work they do?” a strong majority of people would have voted yes, especially if it was pointed out that a livable wage for taxi drivers can also happen through lowering the outrageously high lease rate. There were referenda placed in the ballot in some precincts asking voters if there should be a \$15 minimum wage and a strong majority of people voted for these referenda.

Taxi drivers have been betrayed, but not by normal Chicagoans, most of whom didn’t vote. We have been betrayed by an administration and city council which has refused to honor its legislative and regulatory obligation to insure that drivers have the opportunity to make a livable wage.

We can make the administration and city council honor its obligations if we organize. ■

**FOLLOW US ON TWITTER: @UTCCCHICAGO**

# Skycap who was fired after lawsuit awarded nearly \$1m

BY KATIE JOHNSTON, REPRINTED FROM THE BOSTON GLOBE



Attorney Shannon Liss-Riordan (center) meeting with UTCC Steering Committee members regarding potential legal actions in Chicago.

**J**OSEPH TRAVERS KNEW HE WAS TAKING A risk when he agreed to be the lead plaintiff in a class-action case against his employer, Flight Services & Systems Inc., for whom he worked as a skycap at Logan International Airport. He was certain his involvement was the reason he was fired two years later.

On Friday, Travers was awarded nearly \$1 million by a jury in US District Court in Boston. The final amount could be as much as \$3 million under Massachusetts law, which requires wage-related damages to be tripled.

“The verdict sends such a strong message to companies that you cannot fire employees who make

wage complaints,” said Travers’s lawyer, Shannon Liss-Riordan, who also represented Travers in the class-action case. “This verdict is very important to ensuring that the wage laws are enforced.”

Flight Services & Systems, an aviation services contractor based in Cleveland, did not return a call seeking comment.

It is not the first time the company has had legal trouble at Logan. Last year, the company was ordered by Massachusetts Attorney General Martha Coakley to pay a \$1,250 civil penalty and \$4,129 to wheelchair assistants and other passenger service agents who said they were paid less than minimum wage and not given meal breaks.

Travers, 49, of Everett, worked for Flight Services & Systems as a skycap, helping JetBlue Airways passengers check their bags at the curb, from 2004 to 2010. In 2008, he helped bring a case against Flight Services and JetBlue over a new \$2-per-bag fee.

Passengers, accustomed to paying only tips, assumed the fee was going to the workers. The skycaps took the companies to court for violating the Massachusetts tips law, which states that charges that appear to be gratuities must go to the workers.

The case was one of several class-action cases Liss-Riordan filed on behalf of skycaps at Logan, all of which were effectively thrown out after the federal appeals court in Boston ruled that the Airline Deregulation Act trumped state law. Liss-Riordan took two cases, against United Airlines and US Airways, to the US Supreme Court, arguing that Congress did not intend for the federal law to preempt state law in wage-related matters. The court has not acted on the cases.

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# The Work and Lives of Chicago's Taxi Drivers: Every Driver Has a Story

BY TRACY LUEDKE, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ANTHROPOLOGY, NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

**M**Y NAME IS TRACY LUEDKE, OF Northeastern Illinois University here in Chicago. I am a professor of cultural anthropology. As a cultural anthropologist, I am interested in all the people of the world and their ideas, activities, experiences, and relationships. I became interested in the lives and working conditions of Chicago taxi drivers when I met Peter Ali Enger, who was a student at Northeastern. Peter has been a cabdriver for eight years and was one of the founding members of UTCC (United Taxidivers Community Council).

The work of taxi drivers is very important to the transportation systems of all the major cities in the world, and cabdrivers’ work lives are good examples of labor conditions in a globalized workforce. However, taxi drivers’ experiences, opinions, and knowledge are usually hidden—the public does not know anything about what it is like to drive a taxi: the long hours, the difficulties of dealing with the taxi companies, the rules and regulations they have to follow, no health insurance, no vacation or sick pay, stress and increasing expenses, as well as the deep knowledge of the city, the interesting conversations with visitors from all over the world, and the skill it takes to be an effective driver. In addition, there have been many recent changes in the industry with the arrival of rideshare services, changes in taxi ridership resulting from a weak economy, and new policies enacted by the city. These issues are rarely studied from the perspective of drivers. Peter and I have been working on a research project that we hope will allow us to capture this information and these experiences. We plan to document the everyday lives of drivers, both in the



Prof. Tracy Luedke and UTCC Organizer Peter Ali Enger



Prof. Tracy Luedke and Alexander Ako, after an interview

work they do in their individual careers and when they come together as a community of workers.

Interviewing drivers about their experiences in the taxi industry is a central part of our research activities. We welcome the participation of a wide range of drivers with different experiences. Participation is entirely voluntary and we will schedule interviews when it is easy for the drivers. We will work around YOUR schedule.

The goal of this project is to produce a book that will be useful to all of the people, drivers and oth-

ers, who are involved. We hope it will be useful to drivers themselves, as a record of their work. We hope it will also be useful in ongoing efforts to organize drivers and defend drivers’ rights. And we hope it will be useful to other individuals and organizations who work in support of human rights for the global workforce. Finally, we hope it will help to positively change public opinions of taxi drivers, by giving a voice to their stories and humanizing their struggles. Please feel free to get in touch with any questions: t-luedke@neiu.edu. ■

# SOME HISTORY OF THE TAXI INDUSTRY

**M**ANY DECADES AGO, CHICAGO taxi drivers were able to collectively bargain with taxi companies for higher take home pay, benefits and job protections. They were employees of the taxi companies and had standard employee protections such as a guaranteed minimum wage. They were salesmen on commission. They negotiated the commission and kept up to 50% of the fares. This was not great but they did not pay to lease the cars or pay for gasoline or other expenses.

Then the companies, over the objection of the union, introduced the option for drivers to lease their cars and become independent contractors. At first this was done voluntarily. Many drivers might have thought it appealing to be independent small business owners. And perhaps, at first, some drivers could also do better leasing than they could as employees since the initial lease rates were not as high as they were later and a 50% commission, given the low fare, was not enough.

It wasn't long before the companies closed out the employee option and only leased cars to drivers. The companies declared the drivers independent contractors and renounced any obligation to recognize their union, bargain with them collectively or ensure they were making at least minimum wage. Through this means, almost everything that taxi drivers had gained through years of collective action was stripped from them. Today drivers take home pay is substantially less than the minimum wage and substantially less than 50% of the fares.

When the taxi companies declared that drivers were independent contractors instead of employees they were only able to do this because the city wrote its taxi code so work rules that would normally be the responsibility of the employer were instead placed in the taxicab ordinance for the city to enforce rather than the companies. The taxi union sued, but the courts agreed that the city had taken on the disciplinary function of an employer so the taxi companies were not the drivers' employers anymore.

Today, The International Association of Transportation Regulators, of which the Chicago regulator officials are members, holds conferences with sessions in which speakers explicitly make the case that government regulators help companies define drivers as independent contractors instead of employees by putting work rules into the regulations so the companies can implement them as regulatory mandates rather than employer mandates.

The law suit filed by Melissa Callahan would require the city, which has taken on the disciplinary functions of an employer, to also take on its employer responsibility to insure that Chicago taxi drivers should make at least the minimum wage for the hard work they do.

If the lawsuit is successful, the city will be obligated to insure that drivers make at least minimum wage. We encourage drivers to support the law suit. However, we must not rely on a legal strategy alone. The case will be decided by a human judge and so real justice is far from guaranteed. And even if drivers win, it would still be necessary to organize for a livable wage, fair benefits, and decent working condition as all employees must do. Organizing remains the

most important thing drivers can do.

## TWO POSSIBLE MODELS FOR A RE-ORGANIZATION OF THE TAXI INDUSTRY

### ONE: THE "SPLIT PERCENTAGE OF METER RECEIPTS" MODEL

Overview: Before the Taxi Industry went through a nationwide overhaul in the late-1970's, the most common model in the US was the Split-Percentage. Taxi Industry workers (cabdrivers) were employees of the cab companies, usually Yellow or Checker, with a handful of locally owned cab companies in different cities. The newest cabdriver would work on a split of the meter receipts with the cab company. As the driver gained seniority with the company (5 years, 10 years...etc.) his or her share of the receipts would increase. For instance, a 15 year veteran might end up with a 50% split. The split would not include tips, which are kept by the driver, and the company would be responsible for paying for the gas, sick pay, vacation pay, and any other such benefits that employees can come to expect. It might look like this:

- DRIVER WORKS 10 HOURS PER DAY FOR 7 DAYS: 70 HOURS WORKED
- METER RECEIPTS: \$1500
- 45-55% SPLIT \$675 TO DRIVER, \$825 TO COMPANY
- Gas paid for by company
- DRIVER APPROXIMATELY 15% TIPS: \$225 TO DRIVER
- DRIVER RECEIVES \$675+\$225=\$900 FOR 70 HOURS LABOR
- 50-50% SPLIT: \$750 TO DRIVER, \$750 TO COMPANY
- Gas paid for by company
- DRIVER APPROXIMATELY 15% TIPS: \$225 TO DRIVER
- VETERAN DRIVER RECEIVES \$750+\$225=\$975 FOR 70 HOURS LABOR

Under this model, driver will be responsible for their own tax reporting

### TWO: A GUARANTEED "HOURLY WAGE" MODEL

Overview: We are considering this model, because one of the arguments being made in court concerns the State and Federal wage laws which require that employees be compliant with Minimum Wage requirements, and workers have certain rights concerning their work environment and terms of work. For the sake of this argument, we will determine that drivers will be working for \$10 per hour.

- DRIVERS WORK FOR 12 HOURS PER DAY FOR 6 DAYS: 72 HOURS WORKED
- METER RECEIPTS: \$1650
- HOURLY WAGE DUE TO DRIVER FOR 40 X10 HOURS: \$400
- TIME AND A HALF FOR 32X15 HOURS: = \$480
- Gas paid for by company
- DRIVER APPROXIMATELY 15% TIPS: \$247.50

Driver will be paid \$880 in taxable wages by company and will receive additional tips, which she or he will be required to self-report. ■

## Unfair Rideshare Ordinance

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We hope to have at least a thousand signers by the end of the month.

On the weekend of March 28-31, New York Taxi Worker Alliance organizers will come to Chicago to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the UTCC. This will finally, formally and historically affiliate Chicago drivers with the National Taxi Workers Alliance and the AFL-CIO.

Also in April of 2014, the UTCC will have several general meetings with leaders from the New York Taxi Workers Alliance, to plan actions for a livable wage. We will be putting out flyers and notices to inform the drivers what the dates and times will be.

The general population has greater awareness of the crisis of poverty and income inequality in our society than has been the case for decades.

There is broad support for the role of government to protect low wage workers.

Every major religion calls for workers to be treated fairly.

In New York, taxi drivers formed the New York Taxi Workers Alliance and through organizing themselves and in collaboration with strong community support they have achieved substantial increases in take home pay through a fare increase, enforcement of illegality of rideshares, a solid lease cap that did not go up when the fare went up, and strong enforcement against lease overcharges. The NYTW tells us that many drivers in New York today now make more than the equivalent of the 50% commission on fares that employees used to make.

We can do the same. We can organize for a formal voice in decisions that affect our livelihoods.

If they can do it in New York, we can do it in Chicago. ■

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**Fired Boston Skycap**

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If the Supreme Court overturns the United and US Airways decisions, the JetBlue case could be renewed; it could also have an impact on Liss-Riordan's skycap suit against American Airlines, pending in US Bankruptcy Court in New York.

Many of the airlines did away with their curbside check-in fees after the lawsuits, Liss-Riordan said, although JetBlue still charges \$2 a bag.

Two and a half years into the tips lawsuit, Travers was fired for allegedly soliciting a tip by telling a passenger about the bag fee, according to the suit. Managers had been pressuring the skycaps to drop the suit, Travers said, and two of the plaintiffs eventually withdrew from the case.

"They saw me as the leader of the lawsuit," Travers said. "I think this was the way to get everybody to drop out."

Travers is currently working two jobs at the airport — as a customer service agent for JetBlue and as a skycap for Southwest Airlines, through the contractor G2 Secure Staff — although he said these two jobs do not add up to what he made as a Flight Services & Systems skycap working for JetBlue, Logan's largest carrier.

"Justice really came through," said Travers, who was planning to go out for a steak dinner with his family to celebrate. "This says, no more, you can't do this, it's not OK." ■

**Great news from Boston! Chicago cabdrivers stand in solidarity with Boston taxi workers!**

Read more here: [bostonglobe.com/metro/2013/06/20/judge-freezes-assets-city-taxi-king/](http://bostonglobe.com/metro/2013/06/20/judge-freezes-assets-city-taxi-king/)

**FIRE AND GASOLINE DO NOT MIX!**



On Friday, March 14, this cab's rooftop advertising caught on fire. By the time he realized it, he made the mistake of trying to drive into the carwash at Belmont and Western! CHICAGO CABDRIVERS! Please REMEMBER: FIRE and GASOLINE do not MIX! Luckily, the gas station did not blow up, but it was out of commission for several hours afterward.

**ANNOUNCEMENT:**

**Attorney Shannon Liss-Riordan will attend a UTCC Press Conference on Wed., March 26th at Chicago City Hall at 10 AM to make a very important announcement concerning the filing of a lawsuit in Chicago**



**UTCC: YOUR ORGANIZATION!**

a registered 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization

## City Wins Case

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also a violation of the old Taxi Ordinance which states that a lessor (cab company) cannot lease a cab for seven consecutive days in order to “get around” the weekly lease rate cap.

From January until September, 2012, Domingo continued to lease from Dispatch at these inflated rates, each week asking for a 24-hour, weekly lease, and each week being given fourteen 12-hour leases to sign. Occasionally they reduced the rates a little, and after the new lease rates started after July 1, 2012 Dispatch would occasionally require Domingo to sign two leases per week, but each time at inflated and allegedly fraudulent rates over the lease cap.

Shortly after September of 2012, Domingo stopped leasing from Dispatch. When he heard about the UTCC’s involvement in facilitating lease fraud complaints, and Sandra Videkic’s victory, he came to UTCC in March of 2013.

This is a landmark case, and we hope that there will be many more like it in the future.

### Update on Lease Overcharge Campaign

The UTCC began investigating lease overcharge complaints from drivers since we first formed, in 2008. We solicited drivers to bring us their leases, and attempted to interest the City’s Dept. of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (DBACP) to take a proactive stance on investigation and enforcement of their own lease caps and rules. The City told us then, and has continued to tell us that they are powerless to investigate our claims that companies are violating the Lease Caps contained in the Taxi Ordinance without physical evidence and signed complaints from cabdrivers. So in 2012, UTCC organizers began trying to convince cabdrivers to sign the complaints, and offered to help the drivers manage the details of language, examination of the leases, and submitting them to the City for investigation and prosecution.

We convinced twelve drivers that first year, and the victories started trickling in in 2013. The first victory was Sandra V., with a restitution of \$5370 from Dispatch, and we have reported on at least four more last year. And the drivers keep coming in. We have filed at least one or so per month for the last year, and they are being investigated and prosecuted at a snail’s pace through the Dept. of

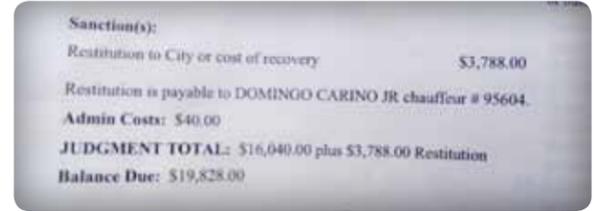
Business Affairs and Consumer Protection. But they are being prosecuted, and that is progress over what happened before, which was nothing.

As the drivers keep bringing us their leases, we have discovered more evidence of just how the companies are still cheating drivers. Former Commissioner of DBACP Rosemary Krimbel had stated in the newspapers that the new Taxi Ordinance gave the City “more teeth” to enforce the lease caps. But we have discovered that the city authorities don’t seem to have the political will to actually do anything about the continuing flagrant violations by the companies and medallion owners. When we mention that the lease cap violations are not just being done by some companies against a few drivers here and there, but that they are defrauding hundreds of drivers systematically, we were told that DBACP has “only five investigators”, and don’t have the manpower or the funds to protect us.

### Pending Cases at 400 W. Superior

The significance of Domingo Carino’s recent victory at 400 W. Superior cannot be overstated. Not only is this the first instance of a company defending their criminal behavior, and losing, but Mr. Carino’s case is not over yet. Due to his case straddling the implementation of the Taxi Ordinance in July of 2012, and the new tiered lease rates in the lease cap portion of the ordinance, Mr. Carino has two more cases against Dispatch coming up. The second one will hopefully prove that the Dispatch Cab Affiliation continued their deceptive practices after the new lease caps went into effect on July 1, 2012. They showed complete disdain for the city’s new ordinance and new lease rates, and continued to defraud Mr. Carino in exactly the same way. The third case will be for leases that Mr. Carino was not able to provide to the City investigators, but that they are being asked to acquire as evidence from the Dispatch Cab Affiliation using their powers under the Taxi Ordinance. The City has not to our knowledge been successful or willing to use these powers to protect the cabdrivers. So we are waiting to see if they will this time. There are many, many cabdrivers who don’t save their leases who could benefit from the city expressing their authority to retrieve this evidence of fraud perpetrated on the drivers by unscrupulous companies.

There are other pending cases that will also show that companies did not alter their fraudulent business practices after the new Taxi Ordinance went into effect. And several that will test



the willingness of the City to exert their authority to retrieve evidence on behalf of drivers who claim to have been cheated.

### Report on Recent Freedom of Information Act requests by UTCC

Recently the UTCC decided to file FOIA requests to obtain information about the state of the Lease Overcharge cases at 400 W. Superior. We found out the following information:

1. There have been 52 cases filed with the city claiming lease overcharges by drivers
2. Twenty of them were sponsored and assisted by UTCC
3. Thirty-two were by drivers who followed the lead established by the news that UTCC cases were successful in obtaining restitution for defrauded drivers
4. There have been settlements in 25 of the cases so far
5. Total settlements by UTCC-sponsored cases: \$27,000
6. Total settlements by other drivers not sponsored by UTCC: \$7000

What we believe this means is that drivers can benefit more if they come to the UTCC with their leases, so we can help them make a better case, and analyze the evidence better, before submission to the DBACP authorities. Ultimately, we believe we need to broaden this campaign to include the hundreds of drivers who have been cheated for many years out of their hard-earned money. We can do this either by finding an Attorney who will file a class-action lawsuit on our behalf, or an investigation by the State’s Attorney’s office, or even the Federal authorities.

We are calling on drivers to continue to come forward with your claims. We know the companies have been cheating us for at least six years now, and the statute of limitations for fraud in Illinois is ten years. Given the subpoena powers of the City, State and Federal governments, even if you don’t have your leases, you can still make a claim for lease overcharges, and the companies will have to provide copies of your leases to the authorities. ■

## We asked cabdrivers in the street:

### How do you feel about Mayor Emanuel’s proposal to legalize the rideshare companies in Chicago? (UberX, Lyft, Sidecar)



**IMRAN MIRZA:** “That will be very big no-no for the taxicab industry, because a lot of taxi drivers will go out of business and a lot of cab companies will go out of business, and Uber-X is going illegally doing business and if the city is allowing them to operate next to the taxis without any regulations will bring the industry down, and the city will be going against its own rule and regs. which include not adding any more medallions to the streets of Chicago.”



**FAYEZ KHOZINDAR:** “Mayor Emanuel proposed legalizing the ride share companies in the city of Chicago and by doing so he would cross three huge red lines: 1. He would violate the city’s own rules not to increase the numbers

of medallions in the city. 2. He would negate the city’s commitment to provide a living wage for the taxi drivers. 3. By doing that he would destroy the taxicab industry as we know it.”



**DAVID S.:** “This is “crap “! Ride shares are not fair to the drivers. This is not a level field--too easy you don’t have to do any testing and pay all the expenses drivers have to. This is like stealing money from the city taxi drivers.”



**SANDRA VIDEKIC:** “I understand that the city is trying to legalize/regulate the shared rides but only when they were pressured from the side of the cab drivers and cab owners. We were telling them that from the beginning but everything fell on deaf ears from the city, they ignored it until the lawsuits were filed. Now, all this proposed regulations are a joke and an insult to the cab drivers and owners. If they want to play this game (shared rides) they are supposed to respect the rules like the rest of us, meaning: go/pay for school, pass/pay the background checks, pass/pay the physical and all the other things that cabdrivers

are meant to do. As much as I am for the free enterprise, this is unfair way to compete.”



**PETER ALI ENGER:** “I feel it will take money out of my pocket. It will increase the number of unregulated “taxis” without any limit, and dismantle the Medallion system. Medallions will become worthless. It will also create a two-tier taxi system, with lower-income residents without smart phones, bank accounts or credit cards using more expensive taxis, and the middle and higher-income residents using cheaper, unregulated, uninsured vehicles. Except when they “surge price”, then they can charge more than 8 to 10 times what the going rates are, then they’ll be paying more expensive fares.



**ALEXANDER AKO:** “First of all, it’s a contradiction. It would contradict the prior city ordinance which regulates commercial vehicles like taxis and limos. It would affect the caliber of drivers to have drivers that are unlicensed by the city. This seems like an attempt by the city to destroy the taxi industry and the livelihoods of cabdrivers. “ ■

## UTCC City Hall

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esting portions of the ordinance, namely that the City has the requirement to regulate leases and rates of fare to guarantee taxi drivers **“have an opportunity to earn a fair and reasonable income.”** It is this portion of the Ordinance that the UTCC decided to address in our testimony at the Hearing. The Chairman of the UTCC, Faye Khozindar, gave the following speech to address these issues:

**The United Taxicab Community Council supports a resolution calling on the city to enforce the entire taxi ordinance including its obligatory reassessment of the lease rate so that drivers can make a fair and reasonable income.**

*“Good Morning. My name is Faye Khozindar. I am chair of the United Taxicab Community Council, a union of Chicago taxi drivers fighting for a living wage and dignified working conditions.*

*When I read the resolution being discussed today asking the city to enforce its own taxi ordinance, my first thoughts were: join the club.*

*We have been trying to get the city to enforce its taxi ordinances for years. Today I would like to focus on Section 9-112-220(a)(2), which requires that lease rates be set so that drivers can make a fair and reasonable income. It goes entirely unenforced.*

*The taxicab drivers of the city of Chicago perform an essential service for residents and visitors to our city. Yet, many of us work over 70 hours a week at less than minimum wage. A 2009 study showed our average wage was less than \$5.00 per hour.*

*And it has only gotten worse for us since then. The 2012 revisions to the taxi code increased the lease rate that owners can charge us to lease cars without raising the fares. The allowed rate for a Tier 1 car for one year is now \$36,764, which is more than it would cost to buy the car.*

*The 2012 revisions to the taxi ordinance states that the Commissioner of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection is charged with regulating lease rates such that taxi drivers “have an opportunity to earn a fair and reasonable income.”*

*The ordinance requires GPS and other equipment in the cabs so that drivers’ hours and fares data can be comprehensively gathered for the city. It also has access to the leases so it knows what drivers are being charged by owners.*

*That is, the city has over two years of comprehensive data which should be more than sufficient for the city to determine what the lease and fare rates should be so that we can make a fair and reasonable income.*

*This data could also be used to assess how Uber and other companies have drawn away customers from us that we desperately need just to pay our car*

*lease, which we must do before we can bring any money home to provide for our families.*

*Instead of doing that, we have learned through the media, that Alderman Beale has placed a taxi fare hike advisory referendum on the March 18, 2014 primary ballot to block a referendum for an elected school board. We are disgusted that taxi drivers living in poverty are being used as pawns in that fight.*

*The authority and obligation to carry out its own taxi ordinance to insure that drivers have the opportunity to make a fair and reasonable income rests with the Mayor and the city council, not a referendum. Alderman Beale, would you put your own salary up for a vote? Then why do it to taxi drivers who are making less than \$5.00 an hour?*

*It is not surprising that many taxi drivers are driving for UberX or other companies where they can make more money than the poverty income imposed on taxi drivers through the outrageous lease rates.*

*It would be cruel for this council to pass a resolution enforcing only one part of the ordinance, the part to prevent taxi drivers from taking some steps out of poverty by driving for UberX, if it doesn’t simultaneously enforce the part of the ordinance ensuring that drivers can make a reasonable living driving a taxi.*

*The United Taxicab Community Council supports a resolution calling on the city to enforce the entire ordinance including its obligatory reassessment of the lease rate so that drivers can make a fair and reasonable income.*

*I thank you for your attention.”*

### **The Next Steps: Organize!**

In summation, the Hearing was ended without passing the Resolution. We heard later that the Mayor’s Ordinance, which would have legalized and introduced regulations for Transportation Network Providers (TNPs, like UberX, Lyft, and Sidecar), was also not introduced in the Licensing Committee Hearing held the following Wed., Feb. 26. Our conclusions are that there are back room negotiations being held by the Mayor’s people, Aldermen concerned about a “level playing field” for all parties involved in transportation for hire in the city (mostly Medallion owners, and Limo owners), and Taxi Industry lobbyists. It all sounds familiar, in that everyone is talking about an industry where we cabdrivers are the only ones bringing money into the industry, and no one is asking our opinion.

This is why it is so important for cabdrivers to get together, to get organized. And the UTCC is the only organization that has been doing that for the last eight years. There has never been a time when the Taxi Industry has been in so much disorganization, and parties calling for a complete overhaul and reorganization of the industry! It is time for Chicago Cabdrivers to step up, join UTCC, and organize to have a voice and a fair share of the rights of workers in our industry! ■

## **CHICAGO CABDRIVERS!** Be alert and aware where and how you are driving! Here are the locations of: **Speeding Camera Locations throughout Chicago**

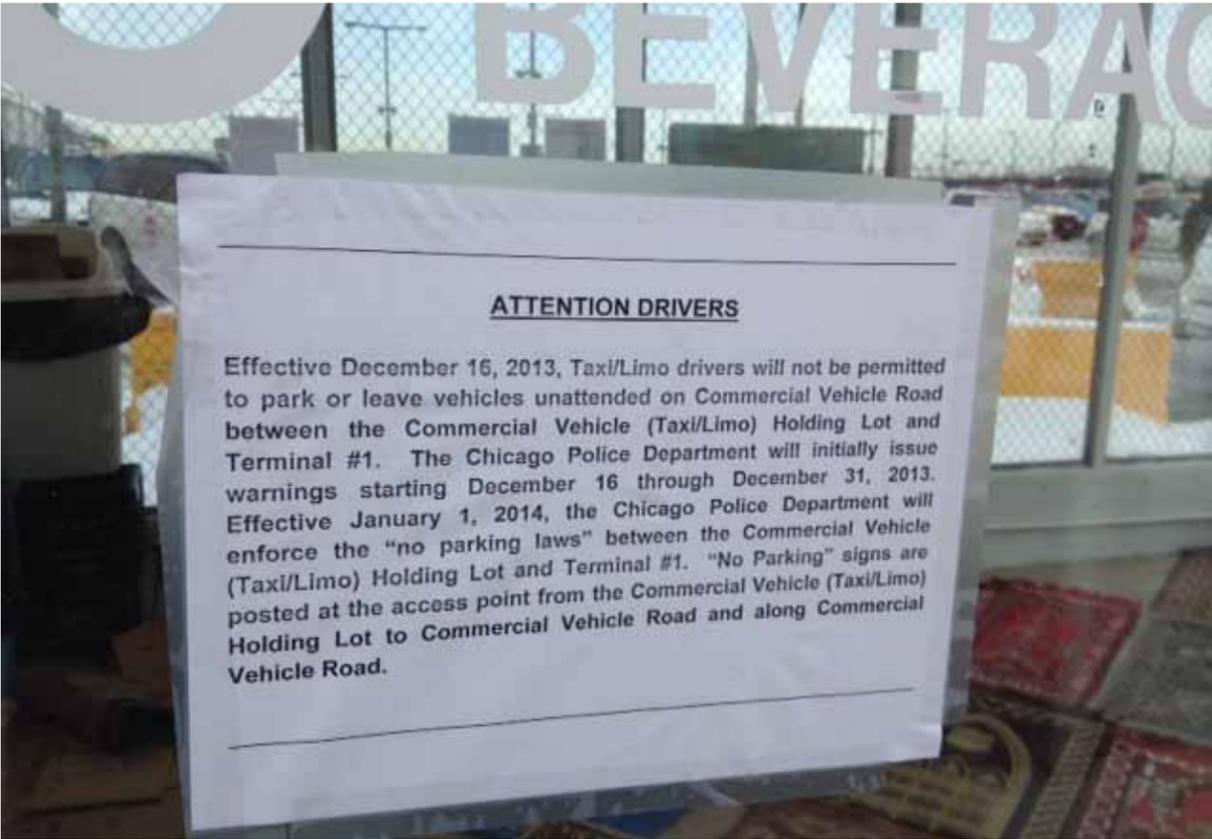
- Abbott Park, 49 E. 95th St.
- Bogan Tech High School, 3939 W. 79th St.
- Burr Elementary School, 1621 W. Wabansia Ave.
- Challenger Park, 1100 W. Irving Park Rd.
- Chicago Agricultural High School, 3807 W. 111th St.
- Christopher Elementary School, 5042 S. Artesian Ave.
- Columbus Park, 500 S. Central Ave.
- Curie High School, 4959 S. Archer Ave.
- Douglas Park, 1401 S. Sacramento Ave.
- Frances Xavier Warde School, 751 N. State St.
- Gage Park, 2415 W. 55th St.
- Garfield Park, 100 N. Central Park Dr.
- Gompers Park, 4222 W. Foster Ave.
- Hancock Elementary School, 4034 W. 56th St.
- Harvard Elementary School, 7525 S. Harvard Ave.
- Horan Park, 3035 W. Van Buren St.
- Horner Park, 2741 W. Montrose Ave.
- Humboldt Park, 1400 N. Humboldt Dr.
- Icci Academy, 6435 W. Belmont Ave.
- Jefferson Park, 4822 N. Long Ave.
- Jones High School, 606 S. State St.
- Lane Tech High School, 2501 W. Addison St.
- Legion Park, 3100 W. Bryn Mawr Ave.
- Lorca Elementary School, 3231 N. Springfield Ave.
- Major Taylor Park, 970 W. 115th St.
- Marquette Park, 6734 S. Kedzie Ave.
- McGuane Park, 2901 S. Poplar Ave.
- McKinley Park, 2210 W. Pershing Rd.
- Merrimac Park, 6343 W. Irving Park Rd.
- Morgan Park High School, 1744 W. Pryor Ave.
- Ogden Park, 429 N. Columbus Dr.
- Orr High School, 730 N. Pulaski Rd.
- Park 499, 3925 E. 104th St.
- Parsons Park, 4701 W. Belmont Ave.
- Pickard Elementary School, 2301 W. 21st Pl.
- Portage Park, 4100 N. Long Ave.
- Prosser Vocational High School, 2148 N. Long Ave.
- Riis Park, 6100 W. Fullerton Ave.
- Roberto Clemente High School, 1147 N. Western Ave.
- Rosenblum Park, 2000 E. 75th St.
- Sauganash Elementary School, 6040 N. Kilpatrick Ave.
- Schaefer Park, 2415 N. Marshfield Ave.
- Senn Park, 5887 N. Ridge Ave.
- Sherman Park, 1307 W. 52nd St.
- St. Genevieve School, 4854 W. Montana St.
- St. Rita High School, 7740 S. Western Ave.
- Union Park, 1501 W. Randolph St.
- Warren Elementary School, 9239 S. Jeffery Ave.
- Washington Park, 5531 S. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Dr.
- Welles Park, 2333 W. Sunnyside Ave.
- Broadway and Sunnyside (Target)

**GET INVOLVED IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST UNJUST FEES & TAXES!**

**Join the fight for rights, respect & human dignity!**

**CALL UTCC: 773-342-8822**

## Muslim Drivers' Issues concerning Parking While Praying at O'Hare



The UTCC is currently addressing the many issues drivers have with the facilities at both airports, O'Hare and Midway. From the state of the shelters, to the lack of accommodations for Muslim drivers who are required by their faith to pray five times per day, to mistreatment of drivers by airport personnel. The latest campaign has been sparked by the restriction on parking while praying, to the regular throwing out of prayer rugs by personnel at O'Hare. To get involved, please contact UTCC and bring us your stories. We are planning to meet with Airport officials, OSHA, and the Human Rights department of the City of Chicago.

## UTCC Announcement about Parking Ticket Payment Arrangements

The UTCC is looking for any and all drivers who made payment arrangements with the City of Chicago in order to keep their Chauffeur's Licenses in the last five (5) years. Especially if you feel the parking tickets were NOT yours and you want to join a campaign to discover how they got assigned to you. **Please contact us!**

**UTCC**

**UNITED TAXIDRIVERS COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

2040 N. MILWAUKEE, CHICAGO IL 60647  
 PHONE: (773) 342-UTCC (8822)  
 E-MAIL: INFO@GOUTCC.ORG  
 WWW.GOUTCC.ORG

Petition to Mayor Emanuel

We, the taxicab drivers of Chicago, work hard and long performing an essential service for residents and visitors to our city. We deserve a living wage for the work we do.

Mayor Emanuel, you have recently stated your desire for Chicago to be an "immigrant-friendly" city, and that you are in favor of raising the minimum wage.

Yet, many of us work over 70 hours a week. A 2009 University of Illinois study showed our average wage was \$4.38 per hour.

And it has only gotten worse for us since then.

Your 2012 revisions to the taxi code increased the lease rate which benefited the taxi companies at our expense.

Your non-enforcement of this same code has continued to allow flagrant lease overcharges.

You have allowed illegal and unsafe ride share companies to draw away customers from us that we desperately need just to pay our car lease.

To add insult to injury, the media has reported that the city council has placed a taxi fare hike advisory referendum on the March 18, 2014 primary ballot to block a referendum for an elected school board.

The obligation to insure that drivers have the opportunity to make a living wage rests with you, not a referendum.

Your 2012 revisions to the taxi code states that the Commissioner of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection, that you appoint, is charged with regulating lease rates such that taxi drivers "have an opportunity to earn a fair and reasonable income."

**Mayor Emanuel, we are calling on you and the city council to set the lease rates, the fare rates, and to make other necessary changes to the ordinance so that drivers can make a living wage.**

We would like to meet with you immediately to discuss implementation.

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 First Middle Last

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 No. Street City State Zip

Phone No.: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Leasing Garage: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Medallion#: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chauffeur's License No.: \_\_\_\_\_

**"Chicago Cabdrivers! Join the latest UTCC campaign for a Petition concerning a living wage to the Mayor! Look for our organizers in the field, come pick up petitions to join the campaign, JOIN UTCC, JOIN YOUR UNION!"**

BY JAVAID AHMED AND J.R. BHATTI

ٹیڈی ڈرائیور کمیونٹی  
بعد از سلام عرض ہے  
تمام ٹیکسی ڈرائیور حضرات اس بات سے بخوبی واقف ہیں کہ آج کل ٹیکسی کام  
بناہٹ مشعل حالات سے لڈر رہا ہے  
• گذشتہ تو سالوں سے ٹیکسی کے فیلڈ (میٹر) میں کوئی اضافہ نہیں کیا گیا ہے  
• لیس (میٹرول) کے پرائمر (قیمت) روز بروز بڑھ رہی ہیں  
• ٹیکسی کے کام کے مقابل کئی پرائیویٹ کمپنیوں نے ٹیکسی سروس  
کے طرز پر کام شروع کر دیا ہے جن نے ٹیکسی کے بزنس کو بری  
طرح متاثر کیا ہے۔ جبکہ یہ پرائیویٹ کمپنیاں بغیر (مدالین)  
اور بغیر سو فئر لائسنس حاصل کیے کام کر رہی ہیں۔ جو  
سٹی آف شیکاگو کے مختلف قوانین کے خلاف ورزی کے زمرے  
میں آتا اور اس سلسلے میں سٹی آف شیکاگو جیک اینڈ بلیٹس  
ماگ کوئی خاص نظام مقرر نہیں کیا۔  
اس لیے ضرورت اس بات کی محسوس کی جا رہی ہے کہ ہم ٹیکسی ڈرائیور حضرات  
متحد ہو کر ایک ٹیکسی ڈرائیور برنس کا قیام عمل میں آئیں اور اپنے حقوق کیلئے  
مسند و مقدمہ سکیں۔ اُنہیے بات تو ملائیں اور لوئین کے قیام کیلئے  
جدوجہد شروع کریں۔  
آکامیاتی  
J.R. Bhatti

# GET INVOLVED IN THE STRUGGLE!

Join the fight for rights, respect and human dignity!

Call UTCC Today!  
773-342-8822



**2040 N. MILWAUKEE, CHICAGO IL 60647**  
**PHONE: (773) 342-UTCC (8822)**  
**E-MAIL: INFO@GOUTCC.ORG**  
**WWW.GOUTCC.ORG**

**UNITED TAXIDRIVERS COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**CHAUFFEUR LICENSE HOLDERS**  
**General Membership Application**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Applicant Information</b>   |  |
| First Name:  | Last Name:   |
| Middle Name:   | Chauffeur No.:   |
| Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>  | Lease Driver: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Driver's License No.:  |  |
| Current Address:   |  |
| City:  | State:   |
| ZIP Code:  |  |
| Call Phone:  | Home/Other Phone:  |
| e-mail:  |  |
| <b>Statistical Information (optional)</b>  |  |
| U.S. Citizen: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>   | Date of Birth:   |
| Registered to Vote: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>   | Birthplace:  |
| Native Language:   |  |
| Are you a medallion owner? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If yes, what is the medallion number?  |  |
| How long have you driven a cab? _____ Years  |  |
| Do you have experience in any activities for human rights, or any activist history such as mentioned in our mission statement? If yes, please give a brief description of your experience:   |  |
| <b>Emergency Contact</b>   |  |
| Emergency Contact (relative or friend):  | Phone Number:  |
| <b>Summary of Mission Statement and code of conduct</b>  |  |
| <p>UTCC is a not-for-profit organization. Its mission is to increase the prestige of the taxi driving profession through community service, education, and awareness, and to work towards the economic progress and improved social welfare of taxi drivers, their families, and their communities by providing assistance in enforcing their rights, including civil, political, social, economic, legal, and human rights.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UTCC members will reflect the highest possible customer service standards without prejudice.</li> <li>• UTCC members will stand united behind its mission and promote membership for mutual benefit.</li> <li>• UTCC members will adhere to all laws of the nation and its democratic principles.</li> </ul> |  |
| <b>Signature</b>   |  |
| By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read and understand UTCC's Mission and Code of Conduct, and agree to uphold the principles and values of equality, justice, unity and honesty for the UTCC's mission.  |  |
| I authorize the verification of the information provided on this form and I hereby declare the foregoing information to be true. I have received a copy of this application: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>  |  |
| Signature of applicant:  | Date:  |
| I would like to enclose a tax deductible contribution of \$ <u>          </u> to the Taxi Drivers Legal Fund Account   |  |
| Yearly membership fee: \$120.00  |  |
| Payment Type: check <input type="checkbox"/> credit card <input type="checkbox"/> money order <input type="checkbox"/> cash <input type="checkbox"/>   |  |
| Received by: _____ Amount Received: \$ _____   | Verified by: _____ Receipt Number: _____                               |



**American Friends Service Committee, Community Ally**

# UTCC GENERAL MEETING

## SUNDAY MARCH 30, 2014

2 PM (DAY) AND 8PM (NIGHT)  
2040 N. MILWAUKEE AVENUE

**COME MEET** New York Taxi Union organizers and strategy discussions for next steps to unionize in Chicago!

WE'RE SIGNING UP LICENSED CHICAGO TAXI DRIVERS NOW!

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