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UTCC VOICE

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Under Pressure

The Newsletter of Chicago Transportation Industry Since 2008

New York Caps Uber and Lyft Cars

By Emma G. Fitzsimmons

New York Times

New York became the first major American city on Wednesday to halt new vehicle licenses for ride-hail services, dealing a significant setback to Uber in its largest market in the United States.

The legislation passed overwhelmingly by the City Council will cap the number of for-hire vehicles for a year while the city studies the booming industry. The bills also allow New York to set a minimum pay rate for drivers.

Uber has become one of Silicon Valley's biggest success stories and changed the way people across the globe get around. But it has faced increased scrutiny from government regulators and struggled to overcome its image as a company determined to grow at all costs with little regard for its impact on cities. [See Page 6](#)



Victory for the New York Taxi Workers Alliance (See page 6)

Rideshare's Traffic Mayhem at O'Hare Shows Need for Chicago Cap

By Rocky Orok

In the past year, some traveling customers have had to miss their flights due to the heavy traffic congestion en-route into the O'Hare airport terminals. Previously, most traveling customers from Chicago downtown to O'Hare airport always set aside at least an hour for the commute due to normal traffic, however, that is no more the case. Depending on the day and time, you may need an extra 30 to 45mins to get to the terminals from I-190W, to board your flight. [See Page 4](#)



UTCC Calls For Rideshare Limit

New York is the first city in the country to place a cap on new ride share hires for a year. The New York City Council imposed the ban on August 7th, after an intensive campaign of demonstrations and lobbying by our friends the New York Taxi Workers Alliance. The one year ban will "stop the influx of cars contributing to the congestion grinding our streets to a halt," said Mayor Bill deBlasio. A second ordinance calls for paying ride share drivers more than the minimum wage. A recent study showed they were making less. After the measures were passed, Uber executive director Dara Khosrowshahi flew to Chicago and met with the editorial boards of the Sun Times and the Tribune, urging them to oppose such measures here. The strategy backfired at the Sun-Times, which editorialized on August 10th that Chicago should follow New York's lead on the minimum wage issue, and chastised Uber as a multi billion dollar company cheating it's drivers.

The UTCC responded to the editorial with a letter to the editor which the Sun Times published August 14.

"We very much appreciate your Friday editorial about the pay for Uber drivers, "Take a Cue from New York." It's clear that ride share companies like Uber and Lyft must be regulated, as more than 100,000 of their cars now flood are streets. You support making sure these drivers make a living wage.

We hope you also will support a one-year moratorium on their hiring new drivers, as the New York City Council did last week. We are demanding such a suspension here so that we can carefully assess what must be done bring some rationality to our traffic problems. We hope you will join us in that effort.

Fayez Khozindar, Executive Director

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COMMON SENSE CORNER

THE MAYOR'S TAXICAB DRIVER FAIRNESS TASK FORCE HAS BECOME USELESS!

Fayez Khozindar

On December 2014, Mayor Rahm Emanuel appointed a group of experienced City of Chicago taxicab drivers and representatives from the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) to the Taxicab Driver Fairness Task Force.

The goal was to review the current laws that regulate taxicab drivers and discuss the possibilities of introducing new laws, regulation, policies, and procedures to insure fairness to the drivers and the owners alike.

Since UTCC has a representative (Javaid Ahmed) to this Task Force, we made it a religious habit to attend its meetings whenever the City decided to hear from the drivers or whenever the City's officials don't know what to do when facing a dilemma in the transportation industry.

On Wednesday, August 6th, 2018, at 11:00 AM. I have attended such a meeting at the BACP office on Ogden Avenue, where seven out of the original twelve drivers were at hand for the meeting.

When I arrived at the meeting room, I passed to the attendees a copy of UTCC VOICE and I told them to open it on page 3, where we published our eight-point platform to discuss as an agenda for the meeting to reform the transportation industry. At that point I heard Peter Enger and Karen Chamberlain saying that those point are within an agenda Peter Enger is presenting to the meeting. I was taken for a little bit and confused for a moment... I know that our Chris Chandler has started this process, and I know that Chris has started with ten points and after he was talking to Peter about such a reform, Chris decided to reduce it to eight points. It's a fact that UTCC is the one who started this process, and I thought that no matter who would present it to the City for consideration, it is okay with us, as long as we would have a positive outcome.

The City of Chicago was represented by Rupal Babit, and the Commissioner Rosa Escareno who chose to be on the phone listening and more often talking and lecturing the attendees with unclear voice over a squeaky phone speaker.

Peter started to read his first point, and since the Commissioner was on the speaker phone, Rupal asked him to move closer to the table so Ms. Escareno can hear him clearly. He continued reading and the Commissioner continue to lecture the group with boring unclear comment, dumping all kind of obstacles in front of any and all meaningful reform drivers asked for.

By the end of the meeting, a member of the Task Force asked Rupal this question: why is no one from the City is taking minutes during these meetings? Rupal replied; why don't you.

Imagine! The Mayor's Taxicab Driver Fairness Task Force comes and goes, and no one is taking official minutes!

We know that the City is doing what the Mayor want them to do, and the officials take whatever good ideas the drivers give them and dump the rest of a meaningful reform that would regulate the Transportation network Providers (TNP).

THIS IS NO LONGER A "FAIRNESS" TASK FORCE!

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September - October Volume 11, Issue 5

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'S UPDDATED PLATFORM TO LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD FOR TAXIS AND RIDESHARES

1) Impose an immediate one year cap on rideshare vehicles such as Uber and Lyft.

(The New York City Council approved such a hiring freeze there last week. There are some 150,000 ride share drivers licensed by the City of Chicago. The companies continue to recruit, flooding the streets with vehicles and causing less and less income for cab drivers and ride share drivers alike. New York is taking a pause to study the problem, and so should we.)

2) Conduct an immediate audit of the city's taxi and rideshare businesses.

(The basic facts are hard to learn. How many cab medallions are currently in use, how many in court, and how many held by the city? How many rideshare drivers are currently licensed, and how many are driving over 20 hours a week? The audits should be conducted every three months, to determine trends and effects.)

3) Require rideshare drivers to have current Illinois licenses and drive cars registered in Illinois.

(If you look at the cars of ride share drivers waiting at O'Hare you will see that many of their licenses are from out of state: Indiana, Wisconsin, even Kentucky and Iowa. Their fees and taxes do not benefit Chicago. Ride share vehicles should be registered in Illinois, and ride share drivers should have a current Illinois license.)

4) Require rideshare drivers to pay the Airport Departure Tax. (All vehicles serving the public at the airports must pay the \$4 Airport Departure Tax, except for the rideshares.

Taxis. Suburban cabs, limos, shuttle buses, everyone except Uber and Lyft. Why? The City's Finance Department notified the ride share companies they would have to pay the fee when the City Council opened the airports to them in 2015. But then Mayor Rahm Emanuel was illegally lobbied by Uber (according to the Better Government Association) and exempted rideshares from the tax. The new revenue should be dedicated to a fund to compensate medallion owners who have suffered huge losses in their value due to City policies, and then to a fund for the health and welfare of cab and rideshare drivers. The city should pass an ordinance to require the payments, and state law should be amended to provide for the medallion owners and cab drivers.)

5) Increase the City tax on rideshare trips to \$1.

(Alderman Anthony Beale, City Council Transportation Committee chairman, argued for a \$1 tax on all rideshare fares last year, but the current rate is only 55 cents. This will more than compensate the City for any lost income from other items here.)

6) Reduce all of the City's special fees for cabs to \$1 each for the next three years.

(Cab companies are going bankrupt, and the number of taxis on the street has shrunk to about half of what it was five years ago. This is a direct result of City policies. It makes no sense to keep fees that make the situation even worse.)

7) All cabdriver's traffic offenses should be assigned to Cook County Circuit Court, unless a driver specifically asks for a municipal hearing.

(Cabdrivers, mostly immigrants, are treated like second class citizens at what is commonly called the "Kangaroo Court" at 400 W. Superior. Their cases are heard by part time lawyers serving as judges. These "judges" side with the city in virtually every case. It's a disgrace. Cabdrivers should have the same rights as everyone else. Uber and Lyft drivers are not sent to this so-called "court.")

8) The cab companies agree to share the direct savings from item 6 with the drivers, and to provide free car washes for their vehicles. (The direct savings come to some \$2,000 a year.

Owner operators will gain the whole sum. Clean cabs benefit the business, and affiliations can provide their own washes or get volume discounts from car wash companies.)

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Continued from page 1

RIDESHARE CAUSES TRAFFIC M

Shows Need for Chicago Cap

By Rocky Orok

In the past, the passenger bottleneck used to be inside the terminals, however, due to the technological innovation, resulting in extended traffic congestion at the airport, we now have overcrowding inside the airport and outside on the curbside. Too many cars heading to the airport at peak hours have worsened the problems for the commuters. We now have thousands of rideshare drivers heading to and out of the airport arrival terminals creating traffic bottlenecks on the inbound and outbound lanes of the airport in addition to blocking traffic access to the arrival terminals.



access to the arrival terminals.

Most airports like O'Hare were initially built to handle a certain amount of passenger traffic with possible 50-80 percent projected increase in the future. However, Chicago O'Hare airport like most other big airports have seen between 300-500 percent increases in passenger traffic within the last 5 years. The recent increase of curbside passengers at O'Hare airport is mostly due to the number of passengers being dropped off and picked

up at the terminals by the rideshare companies like Uber and Lyft. The arrangement by the City of Chicago and the Department of Aviation to allow the rideshare companies to pick up and drop off at the departure terminal in our opinion is a wrong decision that has resulted in traffic gridlock and passenger bottleneck at the terminal.

This decision has also defeated the idea of previously alleviating the traffic and passenger congestion in the past that resulted in the creation of the cell phone lot, the remote parking, the automated people mover and the rental car shuttles. It is like recreating the past problem in a new way.

Safety Concerns

The inexperience of the rideshare drivers has created more gridlock around the airport terminals as more people are choosing not to drive their cars to the airport parking lot or to use the public transit system.

Unlike the taxis, shuttles and bus drivers, most of the rideshare drivers are untrained and unprofessional in their driving habits thereby causing more confusion and commotion around the terminals. Some of them drop passengers off right in the middle of moving traffic lanes creating a safety hazard for the passengers, the drivers behind and the traffic control aide. Sometimes, passengers running late for their flight would suddenly open up the car door and drag their luggage across several lanes of traffic while avoiding being hit by other drivers trying to maneuver around them. This situation increases the anger and frustration between the pedestrians and the motorist competing for the same space thereby compromising the safety of all. More often than not, sometimes the terminals are so congested that the traffic control aides are unable to perform their duties due to traffic gridlock. At anytime that you have pedestrians and drivers' competing for the same space, safety becomes a top concern that cannot be overlooked.



In addition, the consistent gridlock of vehicles moving slowly on the arrival level of the terminals is a concern for the sustainable durability and service life of the terminal infrastructures. The construction design and structure of the arrival level was to accommodate constantly moving vehicles with some vehicles intermittently stopping to drop off passengers at the entrances. The construction was not meant to hold that many stationary vehicles at the same time as this will ultimately affect the service life of the terminal.

MAYHEM AT O'HARE AIRPORT

Financial implication

It may take some time to find out the financial effect of rideshare on the economy of the airport. One thing is obvious, parking which is normally the number one revenue source for most airports is down and the fee from rideshare passenger would hardly offset the loss from parking revenue. Some airports are already reporting significant losses from parking revenue due to more people opting to take rideshare than drive themselves to the airport and pay for parking

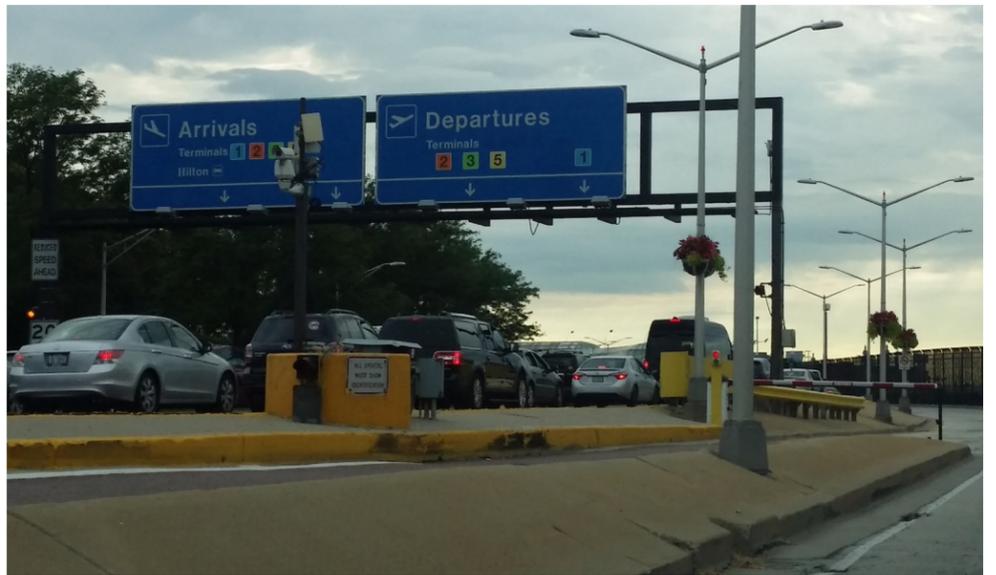
Solving the Problem

It is now apparent that the introduction of rideshare pickup and drop-off at the departure terminal has culminated in the extensive traffic congestion around the airport. The same traffic congestion was experienced on Bessie Coleman drive when the rideshare lot was located there before they were moved to the new staging location.

One way of reducing the traffic congestion would be to move the rideshare pickup or drop off away from the terminals to a remote location and have the passengers move via a shuttle, bus or train to that location as have been done in other airport locations with similar problems.

Another way is to cap number of ride share vehicles, as New York City has done so they can study the congestion problem. And in any case, the City should insist that rideshare drivers have Illinois licenses and their vehicles have Illinois license plates. A good percentage of the Uber and Lyft cars at O'Hare are from out of state.

The whole idea of most airports use of parking, shuttles, taxis, limousine and people movers was to decongest the airport for easy access of passengers Now the concern is will the city or the Mayor have the courage to do the right thing for the traveling public? ■





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Court Update

Late Ismail Abdulle's court date is on August 28, 2018 at 9:00 Am at Markham Court House, Markham, IL.

Continued from page 1

Uber Hit With Cap as New York City Takes Lead in Crackdown

By Emma G. Fitzsimmons

New York's move to restrict the number of ride-hail vehicles and to establish pay rules for drivers — another step no other major city has taken — could provide a model for other governments that want to rein in the industry. New York's aggressive stance also raises questions over how fast Uber can continue to grow as the company, which has been valued at \$62 billion, plans to move toward an initial public offering next year.

The company's new chief executive, Dara Khosrowshahi, has embarked on a global charm offensive to repair the company's image after a series of controversies, including complaints among workers over gender discrimination and harassment.

Uber criticized the Council's decision to approve the cap, but said the company would work to keep up with the increasing appeal of its service despite the limit on new vehicles. "The City's 12-month pause on new vehicle licenses will threaten one of the few reliable transportation options while doing nothing to fix the subways or ease congestion," Josh Gold, a spokesman for Uber, said in a statement.

Anand Sanwal, chief executive of CB Insights, a software company that examines technology trends, said the cap could impact Uber's public offering if it reduces revenues and emboldens other cities to take similar action.

"If it changes their growth trajectory, that could have an impact on their valuation and the narrative around the company," Mr. Sanwal said.

Uber said the company would immediately reach out to tens of thousands of for-hire vehicle owners who are already licensed but work for other local car services and try to recruit them to work for Uber. The company said it would also continue to press for another solution, known as congestion pricing — a proposal to toll drivers entering Manhattan's busiest neighborhoods and that would require approval from state lawmakers.

Many experts believe congestion pricing is the best way for New York City to fix congestion and secure the funds needed to fix the subway. Mr. Johnson supports the idea, but Mr. de Blasio has opposed it. Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo, who controls the subway, has said he will push for congestion pricing during the next state legislative session to help pay for an ambitious, multibillion dollar overhaul plan for the subway.

The City Council approved the cap in a 39-to-6 vote. Councilman Eric Ulrich, a Republican from Queens, said he opposed the cap, arguing that limiting Uber to help yellow taxis was similar to regulating Netflix, the streaming service, to help Blockbuster, the video rental chain.

The legislation allows for the city's taxi commission to add more licenses if there is a clear need for more vehicles in some neighborhoods. In New York, many Uber drivers work full time and the city regulates Uber vehicles as part of the for-hire vehicle industry, which is different than other cities. ■

Read more at nytimes.com

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New NYC regulations on Uber and Lyft a Victory for Union Organizing

By Skanda Kadirgamar

The New York City Taxi Workers Alliance achieved a crucial victory on Aug. 8 when the City Council passed key regulations on ride-hailing companies like Uber and Lyft. Organizers from the drivers' union have long opposed the free hand New York's leaders have given Uber and its peers to inundate the streets with for-hire vehicles, which has added to congestion and suppressed wages. A 12-month freeze on the addition of new ride-hailing vehicles, with an exception for wheelchair accessible cars, and authorization for the city's Taxi and Limousine Commission to guarantee ride-hail drivers a \$15 living wage are among the key measures that passed. After the City Council hearing, Taxi Workers Alliance executive director Bhairavi Desai told reporters it was the "dawning of a new day for a workforce of a hundred thousand men and women."

For the union, which brought both ride hail and traditional drivers together in support of capping the number of ride-hailing vehicles, this decision marks a stunning reversal in political terms. Three years ago Uber bested attempts at regulation. The company had friends in high places, including Gov. Andrew Cuomo, and over the years remained unchecked as it rolled out more and



From left, Taxi Workers Alliance executive director Bhairavi Desai and organizer M. Tippu Sultan after the City Council hearing on Aug. 8. (WNV/Skanda Kadirgama)

more cars. This has contributed to a scenario in which traditional cabs are now outnumbered by app-based cars. The glut of new vehicles decreased the number of available fares for each driver, contributing to a major reduction in income.

This helped create dire working conditions. Over the course of six months, six professional drivers committed suicide, some of whom directly cited changes in the industry as motivation. Sixty-one-year-old driver Douglas Schifter, who penned a manifesto against the current state of the industry before shooting himself in front of City Hall, claimed to have been working 120 hours a week. Schifter named Uber, Gov. Cuomo and former Mayor Michael Bloomberg as complicit in creating the harsh conditions pushing him to end his life. He was soon joined by Nichanor Ochisor, who also found his livelihood compromised by ride-hailing apps, and Kenny Chow, who threw himself into the East River to escape mounting debt. Fifty-nine-year-old Yemeni immigrant Abdul Saleh became the sixth driver to commit suicide in June. All of Saleh's earnings had gone into leasing his car.

The Taxi Workers Alliance and their supporters now believe that the city can move in a safer direction for drivers. As she spoke with the press, Desai was joined by George Schifter and Richard Chow, both brothers of the deceased. Schifter said that the City Council decision would allow drivers and their families to "be able to put food on the table, keep a roof above their head and pay the electric bill." Schifter traveled from Florida to attend the hearing. In the wake of his brother's death, he has been indirectly involved with the Taxi Workers Alliance campaign to regulate ride-hailing companies. "My goal is to have a halt to the loss of life... and to bring fairness," he said. "If they made adjustments in the industry, maybe other people won't suffer the same."

Richard Chow, a driver of 13 years and owner of a taxi medallion, lauded the measures and spoke to some of the hardships he experienced after being forced to compete with Uber. Chow criticized Uber and other ride-hailing services' exemption from purchasing medallions, which essentially function as permits for yellow cabs. Medallions were once valued at \$1.3 million, but then sank to \$300,000, making them financially burdensome for owners like Nichanor Ochisor and Kenny and Richard Chow. Uber and Lyft's success is intrinsically tied to this col-

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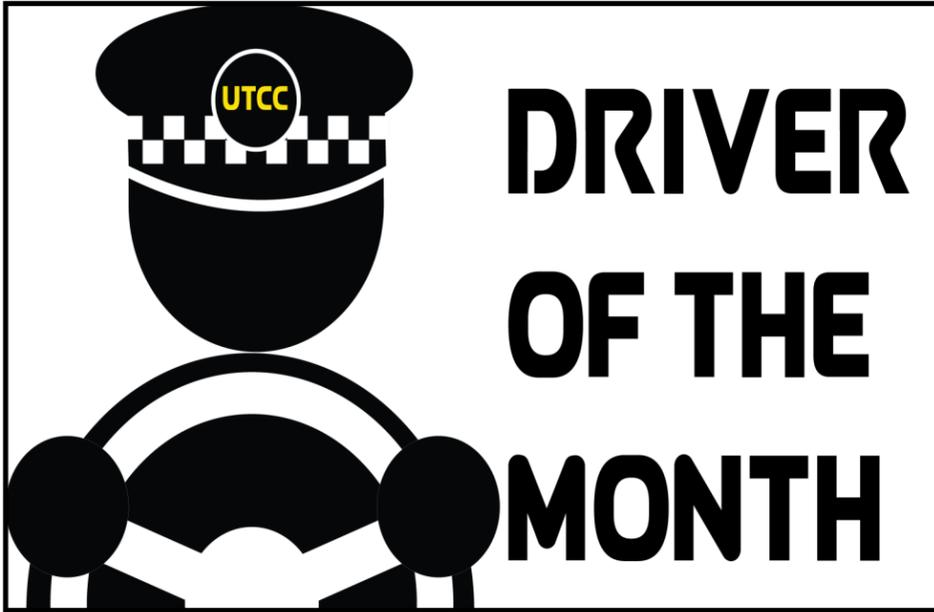
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October

A priest visited the United Taxi driver Community Council (UTCC) office one day and ask to see the Executive Director. That time I was not in the office, and the priest was able to talk to our Community Organizer, Mr. Michael Nwanah who sat an appointment for me to see him.

Days later, I had a chance to meet with Mr. Kwaku “Nana” Kwakye the Priest. A humble man in his fifties, with a nice smile on his face and slow and clear voice. He introduced himself as a priest of the “Prophet’s Ministry”.

During and after our brief encounter, I found out that he was a medallion owner and a taxi cab driver also.

After he introduced himself, he started to talk about the current situation of the transportation industry and the cause of its decline and what should we do about it. He

said: “If we do nothing, then we are the reason”.

He went back to the history of the way TNP first move into the City of Chicago, using our professional taxi drivers to invade our streets and cause traffic James and pollution when they started using private cars instead of taxies, and the devastating effect on the living wages and the industry in general.

Apparently, Mr. “Nana” has a detailed and deep knowledge of the issue he was talking about and was talking passionately about how we must confront this evil to correct the situation and bring about justice and dignity to our profession.

Mr. “Nana” wrote in his hand out: “Uber has fomented a calculated lie and deception using the “mobile phone technology and business model” as a screen to avoid the government’s public vehicle or car for hire regulation applied to the taxicab industry.”

He also wrote: “The technology claim by Uber is a sham, neither Uber nor any of the so-called ride-hailing companies did invent the mobile phone technology or the GPS so as to earn the “technology” title.”

Mr. “Nana” struck a comparison to the current situation and the past by saying; “If it were not the norms of civilization which requires the government to regulate commerce and industry from day one, there would be no taxicab industry as we know it, but a “Wild West” private cars and drivers running around picking up passengers without any rules or regulation.”

He finally wrote; “When man’s justice and fairness has failed the taxicab industry... only God’s truth and divine justice can save and redeem them.”

At the end, Mr. “Nana” told me that he will meet with all leaders in the driving community to advocate for his plan and to bring about the needed support to insure its success. So, he started with the owner and managers of Yellow taxicab Company. The following day I personally arranged for him to meet with the managers of Flash taxicab company.

Stay tuned to know what Mr. “Nana” want you to do to stand up and fight back for your future.



Nana Kwakye

September

On the last issue of *UTCC Voice* we have published on page five the news of our driver of the month and we miswrote the name of our July driver of the month which as follows,

Mohammed Rafi, a Flash driver his taxi number is 1513TX. And today, we want to share with you another story to tell:

Mr. Rafi told us that while he was driving one day, he noticed an old lady at the sidewalk waving and trying to hall a taxi and none is stopping to pick her up because she was disable.

When Mr. Rafi realized what’s going on, he decided to drive around the block and slowly, he stopped in front of that old woman and opened the door for her and helped her to get in his taxicab. In t6he way she started to talk to him and tell him that she was trying to hall a taxi for the last 45 minutes and no one would stop for her to go home.

Mr. Rafi kept apologizing for her and told her may be the drivers were occupied or something, but she refused to except that reason for not picking her up. Any way it was a short conversation, because Mr. Rafi soon to find out that her home was just couple of blocks down from where he picked her up.

The fare was \$4. And the lady payed her fare using her credit card. I think if that was you, you would be awful mad and angry about this situation, however, Mr. Rafi was

not, considering what happened to him.

The lady rewarded him by charging \$50.00 tip for his kindness and respect for the handicap and disabled. And that what make Mr. Rafi a candidate for the driver of the month for two months in a row.



Mohammed Rafi

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September - October Volume 11, Issue 5

How New York Taxi Workers Took On Uber and Won

By Chris Brooks

Labor Notes

This summer, the scrappy union representing 21,000 taxi and for-hire vehicle drivers in New York City scored two groundbreaking victories against the world's most valuable start-up company.

If Uber was looking for a fight, it found one in the Taxi Workers Alliance.

The state's Unemployment Insurance Appeal Board ruled against Uber in July, stipulating that its drivers are employees eligible for unemployment insurance. Misclassifying drivers as independent contractors has allowed Uber and Lyft to evade payroll taxes for hundreds of thousands of drivers across the country and to cheat those drivers of overtime and minimum wage protections—not to mention the right to organize a union.

The unemployment ruling has particular significance because there's such a glut of app-based vehicles in the city—the number swelled from 25,000 in 2015 to 80,000 in 2018, with an average of 1,700 more cars added every month. Uber drivers can now demand unemployment when there aren't enough passengers to go around, and the state is gearing up to audit Uber to determine how much it owes the unemployment fund.

Weeks later, the Taxi Workers and their allies won legislation making New York the first city to mandate a cap on app-based, for-hire vehicles, and the first to mandate a minimum wage for Uber and Lyft drivers.

The one-year cap will hit the pause button on adding any more drivers while the city's Taxi and Limousine Commission studies the number of vehicles on the road and the glut's impact on traffic, drivers' livelihoods, and taxi availability in different areas of the city. After the year is up, the TLC may pursue further regulations.



The city council has mandated that Uber and Lyft drivers should earn a minimum of \$17.22 an hour—the independent-contractor equivalent of \$15 an hour, after taxes and expenses. Just how that gets implemented will be hammered out in TLC rulemaking. The TLC is also authorized to regulate minimum fares, which could level the playing field to stop app companies from manipulating prices to undercut taxis.

Vehicles with wheelchair access are exempt from the cap, since fewer than 1 percent of for-hire vehicles in New York City are wheelchair-accessible. The Taxi Workers Alliance worked hand in glove with Taxis for All, a coalition of disability rights groups.

“So many people in the labor world said, ‘You can’t organize these workers and you can’t beat back these companies,’” said Taxi Workers Executive Director Bhairavi Desai. “But here we are, a motley crew, a grassroots, worker-led movement, and we defeated them because we never gave up.”

The employer-funded Independent Drivers Guild, which was created in a secret agreement between Uber and the Machinists union, also claimed victory—though initially it opposed the cap.

UNDERWATER LOANS

Many major cities issue set numbers of taxi medallions, which authorize vehicles to pick up passengers. By constraining the number of taxis on the road, cities can reduce congestion and add to city revenue through the sale of medallions.

Then came Uber and Lyft. As the number of app-based vehicles skyrocketed, the value of medallions plummeted. The same thing has happened in San Francisco, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Boston.”

A lot of owner-operators borrow money to buy the medallion,” said Sonam Sherpa, who has driven a New York taxi for 20 years. “Four or five years ago the medallions were worth \$1 million. Today they are worth \$200,000. That shows you the impact that Uber has had on taxis.”

Among New York taxi drivers who own their medallions, 80 percent are underwater—meaning their medallions are worth only a fraction of their outstanding debt.

Read more at www.labornotes.org

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Convention	Venues	Start Date	End Date	Attendance
2018 National Labor Management Conference	Hilton Chicago	8/20/2018	8/22/2018	500
IMTS 2018 International Manufacturing Technology Show	Lakeside Center at McCormick Place, McCormick Place North, McCormick Place South, McCormick Place West	9/10/2018	9/15/2018	115000
National Black McDonald's Operators Association 46th Biennial Symposium 2018	Chicago Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile	9/15/2018	9/20/2018	350
AREMA 2018 Annual Conference & Exposition	Hilton Chicago	9/16/2018	9/19/2018	3200
KidMin Conference 2018	Hyatt Regency O'Hare	9/20/2018	9/24/2018	1500
Plastic Surgery 2018	McCormick Place West	9/29/2018	10/2/2018	7500
PRINT® 18	McCormick Place South	9/30/2018	10/2/2018	21000
Bank of America Chicago Marathon and Abbott Health & Fitness 2018	Lakeside Center at McCormick Place	10/5/2018	10/6/2018	151300
American Association of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeons - Annual Meeting	McCormick Place West	10/8/2018	10/13/2018	6000
PACK EXPO/Healthcare Packaging EXPO 2018	Lakeside Center at McCormick Place, McCormick Place North, McCormick Place South, McCormick Place West	10/14/2018	10/17/2018	65000
National Investment Center - 28th Annual NIC Conference	Sheraton Grand Chicago	10/15/2018	10/19/2018	2000
American College of Rheumatology - 2018 ACR/ARHP Annual Scientific Meeting	McCormick Place West	10/19/2018	10/24/2018	15000
American Academy of Ophthalmology - 2018 Annual Meeting	McCormick Place North	10/27/2018	10/30/2018	27000
CCDA 2018 30th Anniversary CHICAGO National Conference	Hyatt Regency McCormick Place	10/31/2018	11/2/2018	5000
AFP Annual Conference	McCormick Place West	11/4/2018	11/6/2018	6000
University of Washington - November 2018 CHS SCM *	Chicago Marriott O'Hare Hotel	11/5/2018	11/7/2018	33
AHA 2018 Scientific Sessions	Lakeside Center at McCormick Place, McCormick Place North, McCormick Place South	11/11/2018	11/14/2018	22000
IASB-IASA-IASBO 2018 Joint Annual Conference	Hyatt Regency Chicago	11/16/2018	11/18/2018	11340
RSNA 2018 Annual Meeting	Lakeside Center at McCormick Place, McCormick Place North, McCormick Place South	11/25/2018	11/30/2018	55000
98th NCSS Annual Conference	Hyatt Regency Chicago	11/30/2018	12/2/2018	4500
CIMUN 2018 MUNDO December	Hilton Chicago	12/4/2018	12/9/2018	1500
American Seed Trade Association 2018 CSS & Seed Expo	Hyatt Regency Chicago	12/5/2018	12/7/2018	2000
MAS 2018 Annual National Convention	McCormick Place North, McCormick Place South	12/27/2018	12/29/2018	12000

Palestine: A Long and Winding Road

By Kari Lydersen

One of the many striking things I learned when visiting Palestine for the first time this summer was that the concept of distance as I've usually understood it doesn't apply there. It's just one of many ways that Palestine feels to an outsider like a house of mirrors, where there are endless layers of complexity and history, poignancy and pain, below even the most mundane aspects of everyday living.

I didn't realize before visiting how relatively small Israel and the West Bank actually are – just a little bigger than the state of New Jersey. But I learned that the invisible, and in some cases very visible, boundaries and borders and rules within that area create a sort of wrinkle-in-time effect wherein there is often no straight answer to the question of how long it will take someone to get from point A to point B or whether they could ever get there at all.

The limitations on mobility in their ancestral land – a desert that seems inherently meant for people to roam and wander



– is one of the many large and small indignities and injustices that has come to define life for Palestinians in the West Bank, Israel and Gaza. I can't begin to describe all the convoluted restrictions and systems governing how Palestinians can or cannot move between cities and towns in their homeland and beyond.

But suffice it to say that I heard numerous first-hand stories of surreal situations that all seemingly come down to Israeli authorities' attempts to control, contain, suppress and displace a population inconveniently rooted in the land that this summer was officially declared a Jewish state.

West Bank residents with families and houses in Jerusalem – just a 20-minute drive away – who were allowed to visit but not sleep overnight there...families split between the West Bank and Gaza who could not visit each other at all...journalists for international outlets who could not leave the West Bank to cover a breaking news story...a son who could not see a father before his death because the one border checkpoint he was allowed to cross was closed for the night...an acclaimed musician who was not allowed into his own homeland to play a concert...countless West Bank residents who can't even visit the famous beaches just a short drive away...

There is no shortage of documentation of horrific human rights abuses and violence suffered by Palestinians at the hands of Israeli military who are themselves often just out of their teenage years, seemingly without the experience, knowledge or maturity to understand the conflict and historical context they've been deposited into.

So hearing stories of the violence, raids and incarceration that many Palestinians experience was deeply disturbing but not surprising to me. What was more unexpected and confusing were the countless and arbitrary ways Palestinians are limited and blocked as they just try to live their lives, love their families and achieve their goals.

And the difficulty or impossibility of traveling from one

place to another is a big part of that. Under the 1993 Oslo Accords, the West Bank was essentially supposed to be for Palestinians, a relatively tiny refuge for people forced off their land elsewhere in what became Israel in 1948.

But throughout the West Bank, there are well-paved, direct highways for Israelis only, while Palestinians must use smaller and often decrepit back roads. Then there's the looming wall, a towering concrete apparition that snakes through the desert and doesn't even faithfully track the border of the West Bank but cuts Palestinians off from portions of the land that is supposed to be their own.

And the check points between the West Bank and Israel, with coils of barbed wire and angry red signs in English, Arabic and Hebrew warning Israelis that entering the West Bank may be dangerous to their lives. The signs don't say anything about the impact on Palestinian lives of being barred from their forebears' homes and olive groves.

As Palestinian filmmakers and journalists have documented, Palestinians who have permission to cross each day into Israel to work in construction or other menial jobs spend hours waiting in lines to pass through ramshackle turnstiles controlled by the military. They assemble before dawn for the ordeal and return home exhausted long after dark. It's not a headline-grabbing atrocity, but it's one of those grinding indignities that someone learns to endure only to realize how much of their life has trickled away in such limbo, as poignantly documented in the short documentary "The Living of the Pigeons" by Baha Abu Shanab.

I've met Palestinian cab drivers in Chicago, and now in Palestine too. Regardless of one's ethnicity I can see that driving a cab anywhere requires the quiet strength, dignity and perseverance to keep going through long grueling hours, tapping creativity and resilience to make a living and try to realize your potential in a system that seems designed to grind you down. In Palestine, it seems that everyone -- engineers, doctors, cab drivers, construction workers, journalists, teachers, cooks – faces an exponentially amplified version of this reality.

And just like I always admire cab drivers in the U.S. and treasure the laughs and insight I get from them during rides, I was amazed and inspired to meet Palestinians who in the face of illogical and inhumane rules and restrictions, push forth with humor, warmth, dignity and resilience. Palestinians in the West Bank and around the world still dream of the right to return to their historic land. It's hard for an outsider to even know what this means exactly in the current context, but it's clearly a powerful and concrete vision for many.

No matter how long and arduous the journey, literally or symbolically, it is beautiful to see people confident in the long view that they will reach the destination.

Kari Lydersen is Journalist and Professor at Northwestern University

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Realizing the need for honest and accurate communication in the taxi industry, and our industry currently having no other reliable communication network, to assist in that effort, our affiliations have agreed to collect membership dues on behalf of the UTCC.

While we realize that we will not always agree on our needs, we do agree that we will concur on most decisions. Accurate information is a must and we commend UTCC on its efforts to disseminate information to both drivers and owners.

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