

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND
TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC UTILITIES

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Friday, March 20, 2015
1:35 p.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR., CO-CHAIR
COUNCILMAN WILLIAM K. GREENLEE
COUNCILMAN DENNIS O'BRIEN
COUNCILMAN BRIAN J. O'NEILL
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA

RESOLUTION 140922 - Resolution authorizing joint hearings by the Committees on Public Safety and Transportation and Public Utilities to conduct joint hearings to investigate issues of public safety for approximately 129,000 transit commuters who have an ambulatory disability as well as the policies and procedures for the training and ongoing worker safety of paratransit workers in the City of Philadelphia.

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COUNCILMAN JONES: Good
afternoon, everyone. We're going to get
started, and sorry for the delay. We
were running late with one hearing and
then we took a brief intermission and are
ready to start again.

This is a joint Committee on
Public Safety and Transportation and
Public Utilities.

Will the Clerk please read the
title of the resolution.

THE CLERK: Resolution 140922,
authorizing the joint hearings by the
Committees on Public Safety and
Transportation and Public Utilities to
conduct joint hearings to investigate
issues of public safety for approximately
129,000 transit commuters who have an
ambulatory disability as well as the
policies and procedures for the training
and ongoing worker safety of paratransit
workers in the City of Philadelphia.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Mass
transportation, public transportation,

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2 affordable transportation is a vital
3 component to any healthy city. It is
4 critical for the people who use that
5 system. It is vital for the businesses
6 that benefit from that system, and it is
7 essential if we are going to invite
8 visitors from as far away with the Pope's
9 visit and the Democratic National
10 Convention. That healthy system is an
11 indicator of a healthy city. So what we
12 want to examine is the health of the CCT
13 component of mass transportation in the
14 City of Philadelphia.

15 Joining me are, to my left,
16 Councilman Greenlee and Councilman
17 O'Brien, and they are here with me.

18 And will you now read -- are we
19 going to see a video first? I believe
20 we're seeing a video first.

21 THE CLERK: That's right.

22 (Video played.)

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you.

24 I understand we have some written
25 testimony from an individual who cannot

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2 be here. Can you please read that and
3 submit it in the record.

4 THE CLERK: Written testimony
5 for paratransit hearing on March 20th,
6 2015, Saba Hanna, CCT patron.

7 I am submitting written
8 testimony to request that Councilman
9 Jones put pressure on CCT. Although the
10 drivers are nice, the schedulers for the
11 company is horrible. Monday, Wednesday,
12 and Friday I am on the dialysis machine
13 for four hours. Yesterday my ride was an
14 hour and a half late, and this is a
15 common occurrence. The stress and strain
16 of waiting hours and hours for a ride is
17 a problem for my health because I cannot
18 eat or take my medications at the
19 medically prescribed times when I am
20 waiting for several hours at the dialysis
21 center. Yesterday I ended up going
22 nearly eight hours without eating, and it
23 affects my mobility and my mental state
24 because I feel weak and sometimes
25 disoriented. I haven't had my

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2 medication. I know I'm more of a burden
3 to the CCT driver, but it's not my fault.

4 Thank you, Councilman Jones,
5 for your genuine and sincere care
6 regarding the seniors and disabled.

7 Thank you to all of City
8 Council for making this issue a priority.

9 Saba Hanna.

10 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you so
11 much. Would you please read the first
12 panel to testify.

13 THE CLERK: Cassandra West,
14 SEPTA Regulatory Coordinator,
15 paratransit; Henry Davis, Jr., Chief
16 Officer, CCT.

17 (Witness approached witness
18 table.)

19 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you.
20 Please be seated. Thank you for your
21 patience. If you will bring the mike
22 close to you, state your name for the
23 record and begin your testimony.

24 MS. WEST: My name is Cassandra
25 West.

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2 COUNCILMAN JONES: You got to
3 bring it a little closer.

4 MS. WEST: My name is Cassandra
5 West.

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: Got it.

7 MS. WEST: Good afternoon,
8 Councilman Jones, Chair of Public Safety,
9 and Councilman Johnson, Chair of
10 Transportation and Public Utilities,
11 Councilman Greenlee, and Councilman
12 O'Brien. My name is Cassandra West and I
13 am Regulatory Coordinator-Paratransit at
14 the Southeastern Pennsylvania
15 Transportation Authority, SEPTA. I am
16 here today to provide testimony on
17 Resolution No. 140922.

18 SEPTA serves over 750,000
19 passengers in Philadelphia and the
20 surrounding counties each weekday. We
21 are the nation's sixth largest public
22 transportation system. SEPTA's bus fleet
23 has been 100 percent ADA accessible since
24 July 2004. Ridership by wheelchair users
25 has grown steadily since then. We

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2 currently transport more than 80,000
3 people who use wheelchairs every year.
4 SEPTA is committed to building a fully
5 accessible transit system. Just two
6 years ago, the City celebrated the
7 reopening of Girard and Spring Garden
8 Stations, the 100th and 101st stations to
9 be made fully ADA compliant. Most
10 recently with the completion of Dilworth
11 Park, new accessibility to 15th Street
12 Station on the Market-Frankford Line has
13 been achieved, and we anticipate
14 completing several more stations in the
15 near future.

16 For individuals unable to use
17 accessible SEPTA for some or all of their
18 trips, SEPTA operates the CCT Connect ADA
19 paratransit service. SEPTA does not
20 directly operate the service, but
21 contracts with five service providers
22 which employ the drivers who transport
23 our customers. SEPTA is obligated by
24 federal procurement regulations to award
25 contracts to the lowest responsible

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2 bidders. SEPTA's paratransit contractors
3 currently employ a total of 555 full-time
4 drivers and ten part-time drivers. The
5 average per hour wage of a CCT Connect
6 driver is \$11.51. By contract, SEPTA
7 cannot dictate or define the pay rate of
8 our contractors' employees.

9 As a prerequisite, drivers must
10 be able to lift 50 pounds, the maximum
11 weight of a package a customer may bring
12 when traveling. Contractors provide
13 training that includes proper passenger
14 assistance and all aspects of safety,
15 including vehicle operation. From door
16 to door, paratransit drivers provide arm
17 assistance only to ambulatory customers,
18 and like our regular fixed-route drivers,
19 they are required to assist passengers
20 who use manual wheelchairs to the maximum
21 extent they are able without injuring
22 themselves. While not a direct or
23 co-employer, SEPTA devotes 32 hours of
24 training to every new contracted CCT
25 driver before they enter into any

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2 SEPTA-related service. SEPTA's standard
3 for service provision exceeds what is
4 required by the federal regulations
5 governing paratransit operations.

6 Each day, SEPTA CCT Connect
7 provides approximately 8,000 paratransit
8 trips. Each day, our contractors ensure
9 that all vehicles are staffed with
10 trained drivers. In addition to
11 supervision by contractors, SEPTA's field
12 service officers monitor contractor
13 performance and ensure all safety
14 standards are met. We remain committed
15 to safe, reliable service for all of our
16 passengers and safe working conditions
17 for our contracted drivers.

18 Thank you for this opportunity
19 to testify.

20 COUNCILMAN JONES: And thank
21 you in this weather for coming out.

22 Can you ask the additional folk
23 to come up, please.

24 THE CLERK: Mr. Henry Davis,
25 could you please approach the witness

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2 table for questions.

3 (Witness approached witness
4 table.)

5 COUNCILMAN JONES: And I say
6 that because I've been in the situation
7 on the other side of this where someone
8 is asked to read a statement. It's like
9 you put them up and they got to take the
10 brunt of it. But I want you to know, I'm
11 appreciative of you coming today, and we
12 just want to get to the facts. We
13 invited the current, one of at least, the
14 current operators of your CCT Connection
15 bidder, and they refused to come. So we
16 have the people responsible for dealing
17 with them here.

18 Would you like to say anything?

19 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: I just
20 had some questions, but if you want to
21 start.

22 COUNCILMAN JONES: Let me
23 start.

24 Can you, for the record, tell
25 us the history of how we arrived at

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2 having CCT services in the City of
3 Philadelphia.

4 MS. WEST: ADA paratransit was
5 mandated as part of the Americans with
6 Disabilities Act of 1990. Transit
7 properties were required to make their
8 transit systems accessible for
9 individuals who were unable to use
10 regular fixed-route buses or light rail.
11 Transit agencies were required to provide
12 a transit service to those individuals.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: And what is
14 the source of funding for this particular
15 subcomponent of SEPTA? Is it the same or
16 different?

17 MS. WEST: There is -- ADA
18 paratransit is actually an unfunded
19 mandate.

20 COUNCILMAN JONES: It's an
21 unfunded mandate.

22 MS. WEST: Yes.

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: So when the
24 lottery, for example, for seniors, does
25 any of those persons go towards that

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2 particular service?

3 MS. WEST: That actually is a
4 different service. We have two separate
5 services on CCT Connect, ADA paratransit
6 being the unfunded mandate required by
7 the ADA law. The other is the
8 Shared-Ride program, which is funded from
9 the state.

10 COUNCILMAN JONES: So for CCT
11 Connections, they have both of those
12 particular pieces. And so the unfunded
13 mandate I get. We have plenty of them
14 issued by the state. But for the portion
15 that is funded through lottery proceeds,
16 how much does that represent by way of
17 revenue to SEPTA?

18 MR. DAVIS: The overall dollar
19 amount I can't give you, but they
20 reimburse us 85 percent for each
21 particular ride. The passenger will pay
22 \$4 and then the state will pay the
23 balance of that overall fee.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: So the
25 subsidy to the individual rider is 85

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2 percent of the cost of the ride?

3 MR. DAVIS: Yes. They
4 subsidize 85 percent of the ride.

5 COUNCILMAN JONES: And you
6 don't know what percentage that
7 represents of the total CCT contract?

8 MR. DAVIS: No.

9 MS. WEST: No, we don't. I'm
10 sorry.

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: So if you
12 would, that's the first question that we
13 will require an answer for that would be
14 helpful to us. Our partners at the state
15 level have shown interest in this. And
16 we know we only give a pro rata
17 contribution to you guys, but they are
18 equally concerned about this issue.

19 Do you divide your ride -- how
20 many rides do you provide on average a
21 day?

22 MR. DAVIS: On average, it's a
23 little over 7,000. On Wednesdays and
24 Fridays, it's close to 8,000.

25 COUNCILMAN JONES: So between

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2 7,000 and 8,000 trips a day?

3 MR. DAVIS: Yes.

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: Okay. And

5 do you know the percentage of seniors

6 versus people who require assistance

7 through wheelchairs and other?

8 MR. DAVIS: The majority of our

9 riders are seniors. I can't give you a

10 specific percentage, but the majority --

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: So that's

12 the second thing I think would be helpful

13 by way of a followup and a response.

14 Of that, how many employees

15 under your subcontractors do they have?

16 MR. DAVIS: Drivers?

17 COUNCILMAN JONES: Employees.

18 MR. DAVIS: Well, they have

19 approximately 555 full-time operators.

20 COUNCILMAN JONES: So those are

21 classified as drivers?

22 MR. DAVIS: Yes.

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: That do the

24 7,000 to 8,000 trips?

25 MR. DAVIS: Yes; the folks you

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2 saw in the video, yes.

3 COUNCILMAN JONES: How many
4 trips do these 500 drivers do on average
5 a day?

6 MR. DAVIS: It depends by
7 carrier and how the tour is scheduled.

8 COUNCILMAN JONES: On average.
9 Can you come to the microphone
10 a little bit.

11 So do you keep track of the
12 individual trips?

13 MR. DAVIS: Yes, but it varies
14 by carrier. So if you have a specific
15 carrier in mind, we can get you the
16 information with respect to their tour
17 average.

18 COUNCILMAN JONES: And how do
19 you base the routing of the trips by way
20 of how many this rider gets versus the
21 next driver?

22 MR. DAVIS: Could you repeat
23 that question? I didn't hear.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: So if you
25 have ten drivers, what is your process by

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2 which you determine this driver will get
3 one trip, this driver will get ten trips,
4 or how is that process determined?

5 MR. DAVIS: The work is
6 scheduled by tours. You may have tours
7 100 to 150, 200 to 250, and each tour has
8 a certain number of trips. We have a
9 scheduling software called Route Max that
10 actually does the scheduling for us.
11 Once the scheduling department determines
12 the schedule for the next day, that
13 information is sent out to the individual
14 carriers, and then they assign that work
15 to their individual drivers.

16 COUNCILMAN JONES: What was the
17 decision tree to decide to not have this
18 as a main component of SEPTA versus
19 subcontracting this portion of the work
20 out?

21 MS. WEST: I don't know.

22 MR. DAVIS: That I can't give
23 you. I don't know the history on that.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: So has it
25 always been subcontracted out as opposed

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2 to regular SEPTA employees?

3 MR. DAVIS: To my knowledge, as
4 long as we've had the service, we've had
5 contractors performing this part of the
6 work.

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: So your
8 answer is that you have never had direct
9 employees of SEPTA be drivers for SEPTA
10 in this component, CCT?

11 MR. DAVIS: I'm not aware of us
12 ever having drivers do it internally,
13 that's correct.

14 COUNCILMAN JONES: Okay. And
15 do you have any rationalization as to why
16 we wouldn't have regular SEPTA employees
17 do this?

18 MR. DAVIS: That I can't
19 answer.

20 COUNCILMAN JONES: Okay. And
21 would you take back to SEPTA -- I'd like
22 a written response. Now, I'm asking you
23 guys. I can ask the Board of Directors,
24 but I'd rather get it from you guys. So,
25 I mean, that's a question. Is it cost?

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2 Is it safety? What is the rationale as
3 to something so -- how many trips does
4 SEPTA have on its regular routes and
5 buses a day?

6 MR. DAVIS: Thousands of trips.

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thousands.

8 But 8,000, 10,000?

9 Frances Jones I see in the
10 audience. Do you know how many trips we
11 take in our various routes a day?

12 MS. JONES: No, I don't know
13 how many trips.

14 COUNCILMAN JONES: Could you
15 come up. See, I knew I was going to get
16 you up here one way or another.

17 (Witness approached witness
18 table.)

19 COUNCILMAN JONES: Could you
20 state your name for the record.

21 MS. JONES: Sure. My name is
22 Frances Jones. I am the Assistant
23 General Manager of Government Affairs at
24 SEPTA.

25 And right off the top of my

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2 head, I don't know how many trips we --
3 on the various routes throughout the City
4 of Philadelphia which would be specific
5 to this body here today versus the
6 five-county region. I don't know that
7 number, but we carry over a million point
8 five customers a day on public transit.

9 COUNCILMAN JONES: So in
10 determining a route, SEPTA maps out a
11 route designed to be as safe and as
12 efficient as possible.

13 MR. DAVIS: Yes.

14 MS. JONES: Yes.

15 COUNCILMAN JONES: And for
16 that, you have highly trained drivers
17 that have to pass a written and physical
18 test, right?

19 MR. DAVIS: Yes.

20 COUNCILMAN JONES: And are held
21 to very high standards, correct?

22 MR. DAVIS: Yes.

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: Yet we have
24 a system that traverses through streets
25 that we don't know the conditions of,

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2 because you can't. Your routes you can
3 pretty much predict where you're going
4 because they are predictable, but each
5 and every time when you route out one of
6 these, it could be a different address.
7 So it's kind of unique on a day-to-day
8 basis; is that right?

9 MR. DAVIS: Yes. That's
10 correct.

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: So I would
12 think that is, if nothing else, as
13 dangerous as or as difficult as what
14 SEPTA drivers who are transporting
15 citizens, customers as well. I don't
16 understand why there wouldn't be an equal
17 level of training required and,
18 therefore, a safety element given to
19 them. Do you have an answer generally
20 for that? Because it seems to be more
21 difficult to do what they do as opposed
22 to SEPTA drivers. Not to put their work
23 down, but if I know my route, my route
24 pretty much doesn't change unless there
25 is an obstacle that makes it change. But

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2 this is kind of -- you have to kind of
3 navigate by the seat of your pants and
4 through your navigation system on a daily
5 basis to deliver senior citizens and
6 people in wheelchairs.

7 MR. DAVIS: It's unique work.
8 There's no disputing that.

9 COUNCILMAN JONES: Okay. I'm
10 going to pass to my colleague for a
11 moment. I'll come back to the questions.

12 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
13 you, Mr. Chairman.

14 Good afternoon, everybody. I
15 just want to stay on the scheduling thing
16 for a little bit because -- and I think
17 probably all of our offices, that may be
18 the biggest complaint that we receive
19 about paratransit. And you heard the
20 written testimony read into the record,
21 and it seems like we hear this a lot. So
22 I guess my question is, how much
23 monitoring do you do of the scheduling
24 and how active or how involved can SEPTA
25 directly be in that?

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2 MR. DAVIS: We monitor the
3 schedule on a daily basis. Every day I
4 sit down with my staff, which includes
5 our manager of scheduling, and we review
6 the prior day's performance of all of our
7 trips for all the carriers. We recently
8 engaged a third party to give us some
9 software upgrades to help eliminate some
10 of the scheduling issues. But to answer
11 your question, we review every trip every
12 day, and when improvements can be made,
13 we employ those improvements right away.

14 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Do you
15 feel that what was said here, is that an
16 anomaly or do you think that's something
17 that still happens a lot, where a person
18 has to wait numerous hours and in this
19 case the woman wasn't able to eat and --
20 you heard what was said. So I mean --
21 and to be honest with you, we hear that
22 sometimes. So I'm just wondering, is
23 that something you still hear? What
24 changes have you been able to make with
25 it? I would think if it's a

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2 scheduling -- if they can't get to people
3 quickly enough, they have to hire more
4 people or something, right?

5 MR. DAVIS: Well, her
6 particular circumstance I don't know what
7 the particulars are. I did write her
8 name down, and when I get back, I'll have
9 my folks look into that. But in general,
10 I review every customer complaint. We
11 have a system, a veritized system
12 which --

13 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: I must be
14 getting old, because I'm having trouble
15 hearing.

16 COUNCILMAN JONES: No. It's
17 those filters.

18 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: It's the
19 filters? And maybe it's that thing too.

20 MR. DAVIS: We have a system
21 that monitors our customer complaints,
22 which I review all complaints that come
23 in involving our service.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: How many did
25 you get last year?

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2 MR. DAVIS: Complaints?

3 About --

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: No; exactly.

5 MR. DAVIS: Approximately 5,000
6 complaints for the entire year,
7 approximately.

8 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: That
9 sounds like a lot off the top of my head.
10 Is that considered a lot?

11 MR. DAVIS: Well, if you look
12 at the number of trips, because you're
13 doing 8,000 trips a day, so it's not
14 quite as bad as it appears. But when we
15 get these complaints, we investigate each
16 one of them, and on occasions, we find
17 that there are scheduling issues and we
18 make those adjustments. Sometimes
19 there's issues beyond the control of the
20 Authority. Sometimes they're weather
21 related. Sometimes someone made a
22 mistake. But each individual complaint
23 is addressed and according to what we
24 find during our investigation.

25 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Again,

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2 that seems to be the main thing that we
3 hear a lot, is those complaints.

4 Now, you talk about you
5 contract with five service providers.
6 Have they been the same providers all the
7 time or have there been changes?

8 MR. DAVIS: Well, they've been
9 pretty much the same for the last few
10 years.

11 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Can you
12 tell us the names of them? It's a little
13 disturbing to hear that they wouldn't
14 come.

15 MR. DAVIS: Well, for the City
16 of Philadelphia, the primary providers
17 are MV Transit and Edens Corporation.
18 They handle Philadelphia. The other
19 carriers handle the suburbs.

20 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: So
21 there's only two that actually handle the
22 City?

23 MR. DAVIS: Primarily it's MV
24 and Edens that handle the City, yes.

25 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: And have

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2 they been consistent through the times?

3 How many years -- I'm sorry. How many
4 years has this program been in effect
5 again?

6 MR. DAVIS: CCT?

7 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Yes.

8 MR. DAVIS: Since the '80s.

9 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: I figured
10 it was a long time. Have these two
11 companies been there quite a while; do
12 you know?

13 MR. DAVIS: Well, over the
14 years we've had changes, but MV has been
15 with us for quite some time and Edens has
16 been with us for quite some time.

17 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: And you
18 say or Ms. West said that you devote 32
19 hours of training to every new driver.
20 How is that training program devised? Is
21 it based on something?

22 MR. DAVIS: We have -- that
23 training that Ms. West referred to is the
24 training that we provide the drivers.
25 That's on top of what the carriers

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2 provide. And that's performed by members
3 of my staff at 1234 Market Street, and
4 that's based upon the service
5 requirements of the job that these folks
6 perform and it's also based upon what
7 we've learned over the years providing
8 the service.

9 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay.

10 COUNCILMAN JONES: Can you tell
11 us what that 32 hours consists of, the
12 type of training specifically.

13 MR. DAVIS: It's how to handle
14 passengers, safe driving, defensive
15 driving --

16 COUNCILMAN JONES: What do you
17 mean how to handle -- what does that
18 mean?

19 MR. DAVIS: How to escort a
20 passenger from door-to-door service.

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: Can you
22 describe what that training is.

23 MS. WEST: I can. The training
24 is specific to working with a person with
25 a disability. For example, if a rider is

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2 blind or visually impaired, the proper
3 way to provide assistance to that person
4 while walking, the proper way to secure a
5 wheelchair on a vehicle. So anything --
6 it's more specifically related to
7 handling a person with a disability.

8 COUNCILMAN JONES: And what
9 other training happens in that 32 hours?

10 MR. DAVIS: They get defensive
11 driving training. They get some
12 behind-the-wheel instruction. They get
13 rules training. They get training on the
14 devices that are on board the vehicle,
15 OrbStar or in some cases tablets. They
16 get training on the manifests and how to
17 perform --

18 COUNCILMAN JONES: Where is
19 that training provided?

20 MR. DAVIS: 1234 Market Street,
21 the concourse level. We have a training
22 room.

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: In the
24 concourse?

25 MR. DAVIS: No. It's in the

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2 concourse level of 1234 Market Street
3 inside of our main building.

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: Inside of
5 your main building.

6 MR. DAVIS: Yes.

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: What other
8 training do they receive?

9 MR. DAVIS: That pretty much
10 covers it.

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: Do they get
12 CPR training?

13 MS. WEST: Paratransit is
14 considered public transportation and the
15 drivers are not expected to provide
16 medical transportation. Under federal
17 regulations, they are not expected to
18 provide attendant type services. So this
19 is merely a complement to public
20 transportation.

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: So they are
22 not trained on how to provide --

23 MS. WEST: No; no more than a
24 regular fixed-route SEPTA operator would
25 be.

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2 COUNCILMAN JONES: What is the
3 average weight -- no. I won't ask that.
4 I take that back.

5 Is there a weight restriction
6 on individuals escorting people in
7 wheelchairs or that can walk? Is there a
8 weight restriction?

9 MS. WEST: Federal regulations
10 currently require that we accommodate to
11 the design load of a vehicle, meaning if
12 a lift can accommodate an 800-pound
13 person, including their device, that we
14 must accommodate an 800-pound person.
15 The minimum requirement is that we
16 accommodate 600 pounds, the person and
17 device included. The minimum specs would
18 be a wheelchair or wheel device 48 inches
19 long from front to back, 30 inches wide
20 from side to side. If we have equipment
21 that can accommodate something larger,
22 federal regulations require that we
23 accommodate something larger.

24 In terms of assistance, the
25 requirement remains the same whether on

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2 fixed route or on paratransit. That
3 assistance is required to the maximum
4 extent possible.

5 COUNCILMAN JONES: What are the
6 physical requirements for a driver and
7 escort for that system? Are there?

8 MS. WEST: When you're
9 referring to an escort, I believe
10 you're --

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: I mean, if
12 you're a fireman, you have to pass a
13 physical. If you're a policeman, you
14 have a rigorous physical standard. When
15 you talk about 800 pounds, I know I
16 couldn't do it. Maybe they could, but I
17 couldn't. But is there training on how
18 to distribute weight in that regard if
19 you are required to be able to have a
20 load up to 800 pounds? Is there any
21 training in that 32 hours that says lift
22 with your knees or whatever that training
23 would consist of? Because I asked you
24 what you were training them on. I didn't
25 hear anything specifically that would

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2 address an 800-pound load.

3 MS. WEST: Again, our
4 requirement would be what the federal
5 regulations mandate, is to the maximum
6 extent possible, so if a person -- what a
7 person is physically able to do.

8 Paratransit being public transportation
9 requires that a person be able to
10 navigate independently. If a person
11 needed that type -- such significant
12 assistance, the federal regulations also
13 permit them to travel with a personal
14 care attendant who is able to provide
15 that type of service.

16 COUNCILMAN JONES: So let's say
17 that we're not talking about an 800-pound
18 passenger. Let's say we're talking
19 about -- so somewhere between 100 pounds
20 and that 400 pounds, which is reasonable.
21 Is there a restriction on a person or a
22 physical requirement of a person to be
23 able to do that?

24 MS. WEST: There is no
25 requirement if the -- the person can

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2 assist to the maximum extent that they
3 are able. If a person requires more
4 assistance than we can safely provide,
5 they would need to travel with a personal
6 care attendant of their choosing.

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: Who makes
8 that determination? If I pull up to a
9 house and I'm a driver and I see someone
10 who if I'm a frail person, since there
11 are no physical requirements to be a
12 driver, I'm not assuming everyone is big
13 and buff, at what point -- who makes the
14 call as to say that person is not
15 transportable?

16 MS. WEST: If a driver informs
17 us that they're unable to provide
18 adequate assistance, a supervisor may be
19 dispatched to the location to confirm or
20 possibly provide that additional
21 assistance.

22 COUNCILMAN JONES: Are there
23 always two people on the --

24 MS. WEST: No. The video that
25 was showing the two people actually is a

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2 very different program. That's not one
3 of our regular ADA paratransit programs
4 or a part of the Shared-Ride program.
5 That was an Attendant Services program,
6 which is provided by Philadelphia
7 Corporation for Aging.

8 COUNCILMAN JONES: So your
9 normal drivers are only one person?

10 MS. WEST: Yes.

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: So what
12 happens if the one person -- so how many
13 customers do they pick up at a time?

14 MS. WEST: It can vary.

15 COUNCILMAN JONES: In a route,
16 on average.

17 MS. WEST: It can vary from day
18 to day.

19 COUNCILMAN JONES: So let's say
20 I have to go to a second floor, third
21 floor to pick up someone. Do you do
22 that?

23 MS. WEST: We don't provide
24 that type of service. Paratransit is a
25 door-to-door service, not a

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2 door-through-door service. The Attendant
3 Services program provided through
4 Philadelphia Corporation does provide
5 door-through-door service with an
6 additional person to help.

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: And are you
8 working with them on that?

9 MS. WEST: We are contracted to
10 provide that.

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: So if I come
12 to a door and there is a person of large
13 size, I have to make a call as to whether
14 or not I can physically handle it, and I
15 don't have training to do that per se,
16 but...

17 MS. WEST: We have had such
18 instances where an operator has informed
19 us that a person is too large for them to
20 assist. We will send a supervisor to
21 investigate. In one situation it was
22 someone who was part of the Attendant
23 Services program and we did inform
24 Philadelphia Corporation that we could
25 not provide that service to that person.

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2 COUNCILMAN JONES: So when I'm
3 going up the steps to get the individual
4 rider, who is watching the other people
5 in the van?

6 MS. WEST: No one. One of the
7 requirements is that the vehicle remain
8 in sight at all times. If a driver is
9 going to a door to escort someone to or
10 from, the vehicle should be in sight.

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: Has there
12 ever been occasion when some passengers
13 get into a conflict?

14 MS. WEST: Yes.

15 COUNCILMAN JONES: And they're
16 left unattended?

17 I understand in sight, but in
18 sight can mean -- I may miss it. I'm
19 picking up somebody. Why is it that it's
20 only one person per vehicle?

21 MS. WEST: Again, it is public
22 transportation. We are a complement of
23 bus service. So there's one operator
24 transporting people who are unable to use
25 the regular bus.

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2 COUNCILMAN JONES: For the
3 record, Councilman Squilla has joined us.
4 Councilman Greenlee.

5 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: On the
6 training of the drivers, I think you said
7 the majority of the passengers are senior
8 citizens, but we also saw that there are
9 some mentally challenged individuals, and
10 I know I have a neighbor who is in that
11 category that gets paratransit. Is there
12 different training -- I guess the way I
13 want to say, do drivers get different
14 training for that and are they
15 concentrated on just maybe transporting
16 the mentally challenged or is it
17 oftentimes mixed?

18 MR. DAVIS: No. They're
19 trained in general on how to handle our
20 passengers.

21 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: So the
22 mentally challenged passenger may be with
23 just a senior handicapped disabled
24 person, right?

25 MR. DAVIS: Yes, could be.

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2 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: All
3 right. And I guess just one basic
4 question on the scheduling. And not to
5 just pound on one subject, but would you
6 say, in your opinion right now, the
7 scheduling that is being done by
8 paratransit is adequate?

9 MR. DAVIS: Right now -- we
10 just had a meeting earlier today, and for
11 our --

12 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Sir, a
13 little closer. I don't know. It must be
14 me. A little closer to the microphone.

15 MR. DAVIS: We had a discussion
16 about our on-time performance this
17 morning, and for the City carriers, on
18 average we're averaging about 83 to 84
19 percent on-time performance.

20 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE:
21 Eighty-three or 84 percent on time?

22 MR. DAVIS: Eighty-three to 84
23 percent on-time performance in the City.
24 Suburbs it's a little bit higher because
25 the demographics are different.

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2 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: I
3 understand. And, again, I know
4 percentage -- people don't call us to say
5 things are going well. They call us when
6 things aren't, but we do get -- it does
7 seem like we get a lot of scheduling
8 complaints. But, again, I haven't looked
9 at the total figure, so I understand
10 that.

11 Right now, Mr. Chairman, that's
12 it. Thank you.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
14 Councilman.

15 A couple other questions. How
16 many accidents has CCT had and what is
17 the average accident rate for the
18 subcontractors?

19 MR. DAVIS: We measure our
20 averages by hundred thousand miles, and
21 we reviewed that this morning as well,
22 but I don't recall specific numbers,
23 because, again, it was by carrier.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: So that's
25 another question I'm going to -- and what

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2 we'll probably do is at the end of this
3 recess to the call of the Chair, thus
4 allowing you to get answers to our
5 questions and we will reconvene this
6 hearing. Because we get departments that
7 tell us we don't know, but we're real
8 patient. We want to find out.

9 A couple other questions. Has
10 there ever been a stolen vehicle when the
11 individual goes to pick up the person at
12 the door or have there ever been stolen
13 vehicles either by outside pedestrians or
14 inside folk that were in the car? I'm
15 just curious. Has that ever happened?

16 MS. WEST: I've been with SEPTA
17 for eight years. In my recollection, I
18 do not know of one --

19 COUNCILMAN JONES: When the
20 driver went away to pick up a passenger,
21 were customers ever assaulted?

22 MS. WEST: I'm sorry?

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: When a
24 driver went to pick up an additional
25 client, have there been occasions when

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2 the people left in the van were
3 assaulted?

4 MS. WEST: Yes.

5 COUNCILMAN JONES: And so in
6 what -- how do I ask? In what way were
7 they assaulted?

8 MS. WEST: I recall one
9 specifically where there was -- it
10 started with throwing things, spitting,
11 kicking.

12 COUNCILMAN JONES: Who was
13 throwing?

14 MS. WEST: One passenger was --

15 COUNCILMAN JONES: To another?

16 MS. WEST: To another, yes.

17 COUNCILMAN JONES: And how many
18 instances annually does that assault
19 happen?

20 MS. WEST: I actually handle
21 those, and that number actually has gone
22 down in the last year.

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: What is the
24 number?

25 MS. WEST: With assaults, I

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2 would probably say less -- I can say less
3 than 20. I don't know the exact number.

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: So I'm not
5 good at probably's.

6 MS. WEST: I would say --

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: I'm going to
8 let you put that on your list of things
9 that I need definitive answers to.

10 MS. WEST: Okay.

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: So how many
12 accidents, how many assaults.

13 Has there ever been any sexual
14 assaults on your vehicles?

15 MR. DAVIS: There have been
16 claims of sexual assaults.

17 COUNCILMAN JONES: How many?

18 MR. DAVIS: That would be a
19 part of the overall number when we get
20 you the assaults.

21 MS. WEST: I recall two in the
22 last year, and they were claims not
23 substantiated.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: And so the
25 year before how many were there?

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2 MS. WEST: I don't recall any
3 the year before.

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: Okay. So,
5 again, I would assume that these sexual
6 assaults or physical assaults happened
7 when the driver was not in the vehicle?

8 MS. WEST: The claims can
9 happen while a driver is on the vehicle.

10 COUNCILMAN JONES: Because he
11 has to drive and he can't watch what's
12 going on.

13 MS. WEST: Right.

14 COUNCILMAN JONES: Have there
15 been claims of theft, not assault, not
16 sexual assault, but just somebody took
17 something from me, a wallet or whatever,
18 from passengers riding CCT vehicles?

19 MS. WEST: I recall one in the
20 last year.

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: I need exact
22 numbers, because I would imagine there
23 would be police reports for these things,
24 correct?

25 MS. WEST: If the person

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2 chooses to file a police report. Some
3 people do. Not everyone does.

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: So you will
5 get us the exact figures for that.

6 MS. WEST: Yes.

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: Do you have
8 any questions, Councilman?

9 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Aren't
10 there cameras on the vehicles?

11 MR. DAVIS: That's what I was
12 going to mention. As a result of the
13 issues you're talking about now, we just
14 started installing interior cameras and
15 exterior cameras on all of our vehicles.
16 Currently we have 71 vehicles equipped
17 with cameras, and as we get new vehicles,
18 each new vehicle that comes in will have
19 this camera equipment on it.

20 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: And the
21 cameras are both interior and exterior
22 you say?

23 MR. DAVIS: Yes.

24 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: So if
25 there is an accident, you would have a

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2 tape of what happened?

3 MR. DAVIS: Yes. There's a
4 forward-facing camera that's mounted near
5 the windshield. There's a camera on the
6 exterior of the non-driving side, and
7 then there's at least three to four
8 cameras positioned internally to catch
9 different angles of the inside of the
10 vehicle.

11 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: I mean,
12 that would help tremendously. And I know
13 there were some incidents where there
14 were accidents and supposedly some of
15 those vehicles were equipped with
16 cameras, yet for some reason weren't able
17 to get any evidence from there. And I
18 don't know why that is, but I think
19 that's something too that if we make sure
20 that if we have them, that they work and
21 that we could then be able to get data,
22 because it's not only a way to catch
23 people from doing something wrong, but
24 it's a preventative measure too. If
25 people know it's there, they will think

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2 twice before they do something that's not
3 proper.

4 MR. DAVIS: And it also in a
5 lot of cases exonerates the operator,
6 because you'd be surprised how many
7 claims we get of inappropriate behavior
8 of an operator. We review the video and
9 the accusations were false. So it works
10 both ways.

11 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you.

12 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
13 Councilman.

14 How often do you evaluate your
15 subcontractors by way of performance?

16 MR. DAVIS: Every month. I
17 meet with every contractor every month.

18 COUNCILMAN JONES: And on
19 occasion, have you ever found your
20 subcontractors to fall below a standard?

21 MR. DAVIS: Yes.

22 COUNCILMAN JONES: And in what
23 ways would they fall below that standard?

24 MR. DAVIS: Generally speaking,
25 it's with their overall performance or

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2 with the number of customer-driven
3 complaints based upon driver operation or
4 just driver complaints in general.

5 COUNCILMAN JONES: And what is
6 your recourse when they fall below that
7 standard?

8 MR. DAVIS: Generally we try to
9 work with them to resolve the issues.
10 And then if that does not work, there are
11 contractual remedies we can employ.

12 COUNCILMAN JONES: Okay. I
13 guess we will wait. If you could stick
14 around, we're going to call the next
15 panel up. And thank you for your
16 testimony, guys.

17 Oh, one other thing. How many
18 hours are SEPTA drivers trained versus --
19 I know you said 32 hours.

20 MR. DAVIS: That's the training
21 that we provide, is 32 hours, yes.

22 COUNCILMAN JONES: What is the
23 training required for a SEPTA operator,
24 the number of hours?

25 MS. JONES: I'll find that out

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2 for you, Councilman.

3 COUNCILMAN JONES: All right.

4 Okay. Thank you.

5 Will you call the next group to
6 testify.

7 THE CLERK: Willie Brown,
8 President TWU 234; Chuck White, President
9 Teamsters 830.

10 (Witnesses approached witness
11 table.)

12 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you
13 for coming, gentlemen. Please be seated
14 at the table. Thank you for your
15 patience.

16 MR. BROWN: Thanks for having
17 us.

18 COUNCILMAN JONES: Pull that
19 mike close to you, because Councilman
20 needs to hear it.

21 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thanks.

22 COUNCILMAN JONES: And state
23 your name for the record and please begin
24 your testimony.

25 MR. BROWN: Willie Brown,

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2 President Local 234.

3 COUNCILMAN JONES: He hears you
4 fine.

5 MR. WHITE: Chuck White,
6 Teamsters Local 830.

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: Please
8 proceed.

9 MR. BROWN: I don't have a
10 prepared speech, but I'd like to speak on
11 a few things here.

12 We heard testimony a few
13 minutes ago from SEPTA, but one of the
14 problems is that SEPTA is running sort of
15 a sweat shop. They know what's going on.
16 If this were another country, we wouldn't
17 do business with them because of human
18 and civil rights violations.

19 When you stop and consider what
20 they pay the drivers, that's why we're
21 trying to get some type of prevailing
22 wage rate. I saw the paper that was sent
23 to the Council of what the drivers made,
24 and it just wasn't true. If you want to
25 average it out, they average about \$10 an

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2 hour.

3 The training, they have no
4 training when it comes to any kind of
5 medical treatment or assistance they
6 could give to people on the vehicle.

7 One of the main problems is
8 that we run mass transit. Mass transit,
9 I think we do an excellent job with that,
10 but when you separate mass transit from
11 paratransit, you create a stepchild, and
12 that's the main problem that we have.

13 To give you some example of how
14 bad this industry is, if you go back
15 eight months, just from MV alone, MV has
16 roughly 330 people working there. They
17 have 342 people come through in the last
18 eight months that employment was severed
19 for one reason or another. It's a very,
20 very high turnover.

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: Do you know
22 the rate of turnover?

23 MR. BROWN: Last eight months
24 was 342 people.

25 MR. WHITE: That's what I have.

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2 That information comes from the
3 contractor. I'm not asking the drivers.
4 It's a very high turnover.

5 MR. BROWN: When you talk about
6 the wage rates, when they tell you
7 there's \$11 an hour, 11.50 an hour being
8 the average, it takes six years at MV to
9 get to 11.25, six years. You have aides
10 on there. It take them three years to
11 top out at \$9 an hour. When you look and
12 go into a little further, you have 184
13 drivers making \$9 or less. This is the
14 numbers that come from the company.

15 COUNCILMAN JONES: Can you
16 repeat that.

17 MR. BROWN: A hundred
18 eighty-four employees making \$9 or less.
19 You have another 75 making more than 9,
20 but not more than 10. It will be 9.75,
21 9.65.

22 We have situations where people
23 will testify when it comes to having one
24 person on the vehicle, the driver is
25 expected to operate the vehicle safely

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2 and at the same time monitor the vehicle.

3 We have situations where people pick up
4 people and at the end of the line the
5 person was deceased.

6 You have someone here who will
7 testify that the door-to-door service,
8 that when they pick people up, you get a
9 manifest, which gives you your job
10 assignment. It may say 9 o'clock in the
11 morning -- I'm making this up -- 9
12 o'clock in the morning you pick somebody
13 up at 13th Street, and it may say to you
14 do not leave unattended. Your next
15 pickup may be at 19th Street, said 9:10.
16 Well, the person just told you not to
17 leave unattended. You have to get off
18 the vehicle to go to the door to get your
19 next patron and bring them back.
20 Meanwhile, the person just told you not
21 to leave unattended that's on the vehicle
22 unattended.

23 You have people here to testify
24 that while riding down 95, people with
25 mental problems, a person stood up,

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2 walked through the vehicle, tapped the
3 driver on the shoulder while he's driving
4 down 95.

5 There's all kind of horror
6 stories here. SEPTA sits back and they
7 pretend they don't know what's going on.
8 But they're responsible for this. They
9 pretend they don't know what's going on.

10 We heard people say just now
11 that it's mass transit. If it's mass
12 transit, it should not be treated as a
13 stepchild. At one time -- I'll dig the
14 paperwork up for you -- SEPTA did do
15 paratransit. It was in the '90s. They
16 decided that it was cheaper to
17 subcontract it out and they subcontracted
18 it out. There was a lawsuit the union
19 filed back then, because 234 at the time
20 represented the drivers. There was a
21 settlement where the people who were let
22 go, they brought them in to SEPTA.

23 Now, as far as the training, a
24 bus driver or trolley operator coming off
25 the street, you get 30 days training. At

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2 Midvale depot, (unintelligible) depot,
3 you get 45 days training.

4 MR. WHITE: First, I want to
5 say again thank you for being here to at
6 least hear, and I want to thank Local TWU
7 234 for involving me, because this is
8 something that we would have liked to
9 have had this discussion a long time ago.
10 I think Willie has been around it longer
11 than I have. This is only the second
12 contract I've had. This one is with
13 Edens. The last one was with a
14 conglomerate from Britain called First
15 Transit.

16 Basically I agree with Willie,
17 what he said about we have created a
18 subculture of poverty-level wages right
19 here in our City. I'm a resident of the
20 City. You come in the door and you
21 train, you're getting \$9 an hour. After
22 119 days, you will get 9 and a quarter an
23 hour; 120th day you're at 9.50 an hour,
24 and it will take you another year to get
25 to 9.75 an hour. Out of the 250 people

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2 that I represent up on Tacony Street, the
3 majority of them are earning 9.75 an
4 hour. If they're getting 40 hours a
5 week -- and a lot of them do work 10, 12
6 hours a day, especially at those wages so
7 they can take home more -- 9.75 an hour
8 buys you about \$390 gross a week. I
9 don't know how many people can afford to
10 pay their mortgage and the rest of their
11 bills on probably somewhere around \$280,
12 \$290 in a paycheck a week, unless you're
13 working overtime.

14 As far as I know, poverty level
15 for a family of four is about \$23,850.
16 We're making \$3,570 less in wages than
17 the poverty level.

18 The training, I've seen the
19 training up there. It's a good training.
20 It's not very extensive. The company
21 holds the people to the training. SEPTA
22 absolutely holds the people to the
23 training. Part of the problem is -- I
24 heard the cams came up in that last
25 discussion. The minute somebody hits a

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2 pothole, the cam comes on. Next thing
3 you know, you got a cam hit and it goes
4 on your record. You're made to look like
5 you're a bad driver. Now, I'm not saying
6 that's in all cases, but you get, I think
7 it's, five or six incidents where it's on
8 your record, SEPTA is taking --

9 COUNCILMAN JONES: When you say
10 cam hit, help us out.

11 MR. WHITE: The drive camera.

12 COUNCILMAN JONES: So it
13 activates on impact?

14 MR. WHITE: Yes. And I think
15 it goes back -- I think it's 8 to 10
16 seconds. SEPTA can -- 15 seconds I'm
17 hearing.

18 (Audience member talking.)

19 MR. WHITE: Thank you.

20 COUNCILMAN JONES: For the
21 record, because that was from outside the
22 rail. The cam hits 15 seconds before and
23 then 15 seconds after the impact.

24 MR. WHITE: That's what I just
25 heard him say, yeah.

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2 COUNCILMAN JONES: I just
3 wanted to get it on the record.

4 MR. WHITE: In a lot of cases,
5 I heard somebody testify to the fact that
6 there's a recourse. I can tell you and I
7 just had a recent case, a U.S. veteran of
8 the Navy was accused of drag racing out
9 on Baltimore Avenue. The contractor
10 wanted to keep the person. He was one of
11 the best employees. Was able to prove by
12 GPS that the two buses were not drag
13 racing, that somebody called the 800
14 number on the back of the bus, put a
15 complaint in. It went to SEPTA. It was
16 proven that it was not for real, and they
17 looked the rest of his record up and
18 said, Well, you know, you had five other
19 situations; we're taking you off the job.
20 There is no recourse.

21 This gentleman behind me,
22 Mr. Davis, I tried to make a phone call
23 with the contractor. We have a pretty
24 good working relationship. The
25 contractor wanted to keep the driver. I

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2 wanted to keep the driver and at least
3 have some kind of due process. Called
4 the man up on the phone. He said, I'm
5 not talking to your union. Wrote the man
6 a letter. I believe he received it back
7 around March 9th, just to see if I could
8 bring the person in and we could review
9 everything and maybe talk to him and ask
10 for some mercy to get back on the job.
11 No response whatsoever.

12 So I'll tell you that there is
13 no recourse in dealing with SEPTA so far.
14 I haven't been successful at all.

15 The 300 people that I told you
16 about as far as the turnover goes, the
17 company doesn't really want to spend
18 money on constant training and turning
19 people over in and out of a job. They
20 want to be able to have and be able to
21 pay people good, decent wages, benefits
22 and have good working conditions so that
23 those people stay. And, of course, as
24 you guys know, that helps the community.
25 You know, it's better for the tax base.

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2 It's better for the community as a whole.

3 And I don't see turning 300 people out

4 and you're right in the same boat. So

5 you're looking at 673 people that have

6 been in and out, whether they were fired,

7 quit. Most quit, because at 9.75 an

8 hour, it doesn't buy you anything.

9 As far as the accidents go,

10 when I talk to the drivers about why

11 they're having accidents or whatnot,

12 they're rushing to chase tours. I don't

13 know whether you know it or you have been

14 told or not, but there is an

15 out-of-service, they call it an 0.

16 You're not paid for any kind of downtime.

17 So the drivers are always trying to chase

18 that 0. They're always trying to get

19 that work, and they got the dispatcher

20 running them -- you know, get the tour

21 done, get the tour gun, and the people

22 hustle for their 9.75. And, yes, they do

23 have accidents, as many drivers do. As

24 you heard, they're transporting between

25 7,000 and 8,000 people a day. It's a lot

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2 of running.

3 So I just -- I wanted to thank
4 you again for allowing me to come down
5 here to testify to some of that, and if
6 you have any questions, I'll make myself
7 available.

8 COUNCILMAN JONES: As much as
9 we might like to, we don't do union
10 negotiations, but we do do public safety
11 and we do care deeply about the working
12 conditions of the workers and of the
13 clients that they serve. So I want you
14 to know we're paying attention.

15 MR. WHITE: Just let me say one
16 more thing on that note. When you're
17 negotiating with the contractor -- and we
18 have a pretty good contractor -- she'll
19 tell you flat out, I want to pay them
20 more money. I want them -- they can't
21 even afford the medical plan that the
22 employer provided. Out of 250 people,
23 four people were able to take it. They
24 can't afford it on 9.75 an hour. Even at
25 our top-rated 10.85 an hour, we don't hit

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2 that until 2018. But the contractor
3 tells you, I would like to do more. Try
4 and do something as far as politically.
5 Let's have a minimum bid. Otherwise,
6 it's a race to the bottom, is what we're
7 seeing with paratransit, and I'm kind of
8 surprised to see it. My father spent 36
9 years as a bus operator at SEPTA and
10 trolley operator. Good wages, good
11 working conditions, our family survived.
12 You know, we didn't get rich, but we had
13 a good life, and that's thanks to your
14 union. But that's well regulated, and I
15 don't know why paratransit can't be a
16 little bit more well regulated,
17 especially in the name of public safety.

18 MR. BROWN: I think essentially
19 you understand, you have contracts. If
20 you have MV, they have tours, and you put
21 out the bid. Like you said, they go to
22 the lowest bid. Another company will
23 come along. They'll look and see what MV
24 is paying. They'll put in a bid to
25 underbid MV. So they may bid in their

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2 contract not to pay the employees no more
3 than \$9 an hour. So once they get the
4 contract, those people who may bid MV may
5 be out of work or some of them may be
6 taken over by the other employer. So
7 it's a constant race to the bottom for
8 them. So there's no stability there.

9 And just to give you an
10 example, as much as people criticize
11 Affordable Healthcare, I mean, I love it.
12 Just if you look at MV, for example,
13 before Affordable Healthcare, an employee
14 who wanted health benefits for himself
15 would pay \$188.14 every two weeks. After
16 Affordable Healthcare, it went down to
17 62.14 every two weeks. But now you will
18 get somebody testify here, you have a
19 husband and wife who work for
20 paratransit. They have to decide which
21 one could get the health coverage,
22 because when you go to the next level,
23 since Affordable Healthcare only really
24 mandates the employee, for employee and
25 spouse before the Affordable Healthcare,

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2 they was paying as much as \$620.88 every
3 two weeks for healthcare. Now it's
4 305.30 with a \$4,000 deductible.

5 You will hear someone here talk
6 about they have about \$40,000 in medical
7 bills. Well, they're paying their
8 medical bills by way of credit cards.

9 Again, you have SEPTA on the outside with
10 a one and a half billion dollar budget
11 subcontracting this work. They know
12 what's going on. To me it's like -- and
13 this is not defending anybody. It's like
14 saying, Well, look, if we would take a
15 travel back into time, they say, Look, I
16 sell slaves, but I don't own them. This
17 is how these people feel.

18 I mean, something has to be
19 done to hold SEPTA accountable with
20 what's going on. That's why we'd like to
21 see something with a prevailing wage
22 rate. So if you're going to bid for the
23 work, you must at least pay your
24 employees a certain amount of money.
25 Folks are coming in underbidding each

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2 other every time the contract comes up.

3 COUNCILMAN JONES: Councilman
4 Greenlee.

5 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Wow.

6 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

7 Thank you, gentlemen. So,
8 Mr. White, just so I understand it, you
9 said that the contractors you deal with
10 aren't really the problem, but in order
11 to get the job, they have to bid so low.
12 Is that basically it?

13 MR. WHITE: That's what they
14 tell us at the table, and straight out of
15 the contractor's mouth, I really would
16 like -- in certain cases, she tries to do
17 above and beyond the contract, and God
18 bless her, because, you know, the people
19 really deserve it. But that's the whole
20 problem. It's a race to the bottom.

21 MR. BROWN: If I could add
22 something to that. The group he
23 represents, Edens Paratransit, I used to
24 represent them in 234. She lost the bid.
25 The bid went somewhere else, right? So

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2 after that happened and she put in
3 another bid for some more work
4 underbidding the people that underbid
5 her, now we have this (unintelligible)
6 pull up again.

7 I had a group, RTS, when it was
8 (unintelligible). They told us at the
9 table -- we asked for \$9 an hour. She
10 told me, Well, I would love to pay at
11 least -- she said, But if I pay this
12 amount of money, I'd be out of business
13 in six months. Well, one truth, she was
14 out of business in three months. So it's
15 not necessarily the paratransit
16 companies. It's SEPTA allowing this to
17 take place.

18 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE:

19 Mr. Chairman, maybe I want to make a
20 statement here. I see in Ms. West's
21 testimony -- and I don't know if she
22 wants to comment again or this can be
23 part of the questions that we're asking.
24 I know she said SEPTA cannot dictate or
25 define the pay rate of our contractors'

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2 employees, but then just earlier she says
3 SEPTA is obligated by federal procurement
4 regulations to award contracts to the
5 lowest responsible bidder. I guess my
6 question would be, when you say
7 "responsible bidder," if you're making
8 them bid so low, is that responsible?

9 COUNCILMAN JONES: That's a
10 good question. I won't call her up yet
11 because we have a long list of folks, but
12 that is an observation. And having a
13 procurement background in a prior life,
14 you write the specs with a minimum wage
15 rate and say, Now conform around that,
16 and if you don't, then you are
17 encouraging -- there are certain things
18 that if you're asking me for a pencil and
19 I'm digging that out, I do want the
20 lowest responsible bidder of a pencil. I
21 don't want that driving my grandmother
22 around, you know. And responsible has
23 varying definitions. That's just an
24 opinion and that is -- you know, I'm
25 going to recognize --

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2 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Can I
3 just ask one more?

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: Yeah, go
5 ahead.

6 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: And,
7 Mr. White, if I could just add one more
8 question. You heard me talking about
9 this and those of us talking about
10 scheduling before. Is the problem just
11 the amount of trips they put on the
12 driver or would you agree that scheduling
13 is a problem or have you heard from your
14 people that scheduling is a problem?
15 Because that seems to be what we hear.

16 MR. WHITE: Scheduling the
17 patrons?

18 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Lateness,
19 I guess.

20 MR. WHITE: The on-time
21 performances.

22 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: On-time,
23 yes.

24 MR. WHITE: If the on-time
25 performance was really that high, I'd

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2 like to know what the criteria is for
3 on-time performance, first of all. But
4 if it was 83 to 84 percent, our guys
5 disagree with that. They tell me that
6 it's probably much lower than that, in
7 all honesty.

8 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: That's
9 what we hear too. And, again, in
10 fairness, we hear from the complaints
11 more than we hear from you did a good
12 job. I get that, but still it just seems
13 like it's a fairly large amount of people
14 that call to then translate into 84
15 percent reliable.

16 MR. WHITE: And understand that
17 we are being paid by an hourly rate, but
18 what we're told is that SEPTA will pay
19 the contractor by the tour and not by the
20 hour. So when I bring up that 0 time,
21 that's the downtime. That's the time
22 where you can sit on the bus for a couple
23 hours and wait for your next dispatch or
24 you can call dispatch to try and get as
25 many tours as you can. So I just know

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2 that the people that I represent, they're
3 hustling.

4 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: I got
5 you. Thank you.

6 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
8 Councilman.

9 The Chair recognizes Councilman
10 Squilla.

11 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you,
12 Mr. Chairman.

13 I was going to ask this
14 question, but I think you already
15 answered it. What recommendations would
16 you have to fix it? One of them was a
17 wage implementation into the contract.
18 In other words, if you're saying we want
19 the lowest possible bidder, but the
20 salaries have to be \$15 an hour. A
21 driver has to start at a certain wage.
22 That would enable the bidders, if they
23 want to get the lowest possible bid, you
24 can't underbid so much because you have
25 to know how many hours you have to pay a

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2 driver. So that would up the bids for
3 these contractors and, therefore, be able
4 to get the lowest possible bidders. You
5 still would be able to pay a person a
6 specific wage.

7 Are there any other
8 recommendations that either of you two
9 would have to make this a better product?

10 MR. BROWN: I think really
11 bringing it back in-house is the best
12 possible way to do this, for a couple
13 reasons. When you come to insurances,
14 take, for example, if you take Edens, I
15 know, for example, their problem was that
16 the insurance policy, they had no cap on
17 it, where SEPTA if you have a certain
18 accident, they have a cap to bring them
19 back under. When it comes to health
20 coverage, I think we have 9,000 people in
21 our plan. They should be forced to cover
22 them as far as self coverage goes and
23 training.

24 And also one other thing. We
25 need to put people to run paratransit --

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2 this is no disrespect to anybody -- who
3 knows paratransit. When you get to the
4 scheduling of it, Mr. Davis is excellent
5 when it comes to maintenance of SEPTA's
6 vehicles. If you want stations cleaned,
7 that's the guy you go to. If you want
8 trains out there, that's the guy you go
9 to. But I will challenge him to sit here
10 and give you the background of
11 paratransit like he's an expert. Bring
12 somebody in here who understands
13 paratransit and go from there. If I need
14 a plumber, I'm not going to call a
15 carpenter, and I think that's what we're
16 going through here now with SEPTA.

17 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you.

18 MR. WHITE: And I'll second
19 that, even though under that scenario I
20 would probably lose my contract, but I
21 believe that he's right, and in a sense,
22 I don't think a conglomerate from Britain
23 should be able to come over here, not
24 know nothing about the paratransit system
25 here, and then drive wages and benefits

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2 and working conditions into the ground,
3 especially in the City of Philadelphia.

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
5 Councilman.

6 Just real quick before I let
7 you guys go. Do I understand this
8 correctly, that the average rate as
9 stated isn't \$11 an hour; it's somewhere
10 around 9?

11 MR. BROWN: Correct; between 9
12 and 10.

13 MR. WHITE: Yes. They don't
14 stay long. Two, three months and they're
15 turning over.

16 COUNCILMAN JONES: And what --
17 and I should have asked the prior panel.
18 At the end of a term of a contract and
19 another person comes in that isn't the
20 same person, what happens to the existing
21 workforce that worked for the old -- they
22 have to retrain all those people again,
23 or what happens to that workforce?

24 MR. BROWN: Some of them a new
25 carrier may take; some of them they may

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2 not take. It's totally up to the
3 carrier.

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: What happens
5 to their wage structure at that time?

6 MR. BROWN: Most of them go
7 back -- they don't go to top pay. They
8 start over again.

9 MR. WHITE: They start all over
10 again.

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: So if I work
12 my way up to \$11 an hour --

13 MR. BROWN: It depends on the
14 carrier.

15 COUNCILMAN JONES: -- I have to
16 reapply?

17 MR. BROWN: Right. Yes. It
18 depends on the carrier.

19 COUNCILMAN JONES: And we can't
20 in a bid say you have to maintain -- all
21 right.

22 MR. WHITE: It's starting all
23 over again.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you so
25 much for your testimony, gentlemen.

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2 MR. WHITE: Thank you.

3 COUNCILMAN JONES: Will the
4 Clerk please read the name of the next
5 panel to testify.

6 THE CLERK: Arthur Chapman,
7 Colleen Halloman, Raymond Allen, Kathleen
8 Parsons.

9 (Witnesses approached witness
10 table.)

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you
12 for your patience and please come be
13 seated. And as instructed in other
14 panels, please pull those mikes close to
15 you because we're having a little bit of
16 trouble hearing but, more importantly,
17 our stenographer needs to be able to hear
18 what you say.

19 In any order you'd like, state
20 your name for the record and begin your
21 testimony.

22 MR. CHAPMAN: Arthur Chapman,
23 MV driver.

24 MS. HALLOMAN: Colleen
25 Halloman, MV driver.

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2 MR. ALLEN: Raymond Allen, MV
3 driver, section officer for Transit
4 Workers Union Local 234.

5 COUNCILMAN JONES: Please
6 begin.

7 MR. ALLEN: First of all, good
8 afternoon, everyone, and I truly
9 appreciate this opportunity. I've been
10 in paratransit overall since 2005. I've
11 been employed with MV since 2006. The
12 prevailing rate when I started there was
13 \$8 an hour. In order for a driver to
14 reach \$11.50 an hour, they had to get a
15 50 cent raise every year on their
16 anniversary hiring date.

17 The turnover is foolish.
18 That's all I want to say on that, and the
19 fact that drivers do need a second person
20 on that vehicle.

21 I stand as witness in testimony
22 today, factual, driving down 95 with
23 approximately -- I will go roughly, say,
24 50 miles per hour during the rush hour.
25 I had a client get out of his seat, walk

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2 up to me, and tap me on my shoulder while
3 moving. I didn't panic. I was shocked.
4 I just asked him to take his seat behind
5 me and help me navigate my way. I didn't
6 use the word "navigate," but help me
7 navigate down the roadway. The person
8 sat down. Knowing he needed his seat
9 belt on, I didn't push that issue. I was
10 able to get far enough down the road out
11 of traffic and pull over and get him
12 secured once again, this time putting him
13 instead of in the rear of the vehicle
14 where he was up front with me, and I just
15 utilized a "help me" type of attitude,
16 you know, keep an eye on the traffic for
17 me, stay where you are, and we proceeded.

18 On one other occasion, I had a
19 lady that just constantly takes her seat
20 belt off. Didn't get out the seat, but
21 constantly kept taking her seat belt off.

22 On one other occasion, I had
23 (unintelligible) had a mental disability,
24 put it that way, who engaged in sexual
25 acts on the vehicle. Now, if I may paint

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2 a small picture, when you're driving
3 these vehicle, we have a large mirror
4 right above us, rear view, of which they
5 tell us to observe your patrons on a
6 continuous basis as you check your
7 mirrors while you're driving. This
8 produces a very, very hazardous situation
9 for you as a driver as well as having
10 people that at any point in time might do
11 anything that puts you, them, and other
12 people at risk.

13 As far as the thing I heard
14 earlier about the training, there are
15 areas of training that we should have
16 that we don't have. I understand the
17 Good Samaritan Act, but we should have a
18 basic training in -- I'm not going to say
19 CPR. Just first aid, general first aid.
20 We come in contact with a lot of airborne
21 passengers, blood passengers. We handle
22 everybody that -- all your medical type
23 situations, and 90 percent -- and I'm
24 still speaking on MV -- 90 percent of our
25 workforce is under the age of 30, have

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2 very little, if any, understanding of
3 dealing with seniors and medical
4 problems. But they tell us we are
5 professionals, but they don't pay you as
6 a professional.

7 Lately we have worked on the
8 average of 13- to 14-hour days. We
9 receive a manifest, work manifest,
10 showing no scheduled, I repeat no
11 scheduled, I'll call it, lunch break. I
12 think in Pennsylvania after four hours,
13 you're entitled to a half hour. No,
14 there's no scheduled lunch break on the
15 OnStar manifest, of which we are told --

16 COUNCILMAN JONES: Can I stop
17 you a second.

18 MR. ALLEN: Yes, sir.

19 COUNCILMAN JONES: Did you say
20 you have to drive beyond an eight-hour
21 day?

22 MR. ALLEN: What I'm saying,
23 you get a manifest that states your
24 starting time is 7:00 a.m., your manifest
25 ending time is 6:00 or 6:30, but because

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2 of the workload and the time that you
3 have to go from Point A to Point B during
4 the course, it's impossible to do it in
5 less than 13, 14 hours. This is only
6 about maybe made up 60 percent of the
7 workforce.

8 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: I'm sorry
9 to interrupt you also, but are there any
10 breaks mandated in this?

11 MR. ALLEN: No breaks. You
12 have --

13 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: No
14 breaks?

15 MR. ALLEN: No scheduled
16 breaks.

17 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: So in
18 order to keep up to your schedule, is it
19 common that you have to just keep going?

20 MR. ALLEN: The only thing
21 that's in your favor, you might get one,
22 two, maybe three patrons cancelling their
23 ride. So there you have a little leeway.
24 You do have some -- I wouldn't say some,
25 but you do have a few tours that might

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2 have maybe a two-hour gap, but that's not
3 really your time. They try to say it's
4 an O, but it's not your time, because
5 we're told that we work according to the
6 OnStar manifest, the electronic manifest,
7 and at any given time in that two-hour
8 period you're basically still on the
9 clock because you have not been
10 authorized with a scheduled break. So
11 they can call you and say, Go do this, go
12 do that, go do this, go do that, because
13 the manifest is still continuous. You
14 correct me if I'm wrong. If I'm working
15 on the electronic manifest and it tells
16 me there's no break in here for me, even
17 though there's a two-hour hole in it, I'm
18 still on the clock.

19 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: And they
20 could ask you to keep --

21 MR. ALLEN: They could call you
22 right to work, sure.

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: That is a
24 question I would ask of SEPTA. I know
25 SEPTA drivers have mandatory breaks,

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2 mandatory time off based on fatigue
3 factors. So I would wonder why that
4 would not be required. You don't have to
5 answer that now, but I will require that
6 in writing. What is the difference?
7 You're driving a machine going through
8 the City streets. Fatigue plays a role.
9 Truck drivers are pulled over all the
10 time on I-95 and required to rest. So
11 that's a question I'd like to ask. But
12 continue. I'm sorry.

13 MR. ALLEN: Well, I'll finish
14 up with this. Years ago your manifest
15 came with a letter designation, a B for
16 break, which never was more than an hour
17 and roughly 45 minutes, and you were paid
18 all but one-half hour of that. Then you
19 would have a letter designation of an O.
20 That was considered downtime. You got
21 paid for none of that. That was two
22 hours or more. You're totally off the
23 clock. But sometimes you'll get that O
24 and you might be in Willow Grove and your
25 next pickup might be in South Philly and

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2 you might only have eight to ten minutes
3 when you come off of this 0 to get to
4 your next destination. But up until 234
5 became involved, drivers were not paid
6 what we call travel time, because you
7 need to cut that 0 off earlier in order
8 to be on time for your next location.
9 Otherwise, you fall into that tricky area
10 called on-time performance.

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: Let me get
12 this right. If I'm in Mount Airy and I
13 just dropped someone off at Einstein and
14 then I'm told that there's someone in
15 South Philly that wants to go to
16 Graduate, the time between the time I get
17 from Einstein to Graduate is off?

18 MR. ALLEN: No. If you're
19 going into an 0 at that particular time,
20 your time is still concurrent, is still
21 current running once you're given that
22 directive.

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: Okay. Thank
24 you.

25 MR. ALLEN: Thank you.

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2 COUNCILMAN JONES: Good

3 afternoon.

4 MS. HALLOMAN: Good afternoon.

5 My name is Colleen Halloman.

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: You got to
7 pull that mike a little closer.

8 MS. HALLOMAN: Can you hear me
9 now?

10 COUNCILMAN JONES: Yes, ma'am.

11 MS. HALLOMAN: I have with me
12 here a manifest dated March the 13th,
13 which was a Friday. This manifest is 13
14 hours straight through, straight through.
15 When the dispatcher -- when I request for
16 the break and she give it to me, I had
17 another dispatcher give me two add-ons.
18 The manifest ran straight through.

19 Also, my manifest have do not
20 leave unattended. I have three do not
21 leave unattended. By me doing transit
22 work for 14 years, I know what a runner
23 is. A new driver does not know what a
24 runner is. She's my do not leave
25 unattended. I have to keep her with me

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2 at all times until I could deliver her to
3 someone. I was not able to deliver --

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: What is a
5 runner?

6 MS. HALLOMAN: She has
7 Alzheimer's. When I refer to her as a
8 runner, if I leave her unattended on that
9 bus --

10 COUNCILMAN JONES: She'll run.

11 MS. HALLOMAN: -- she is going
12 to get off of that bus and go somewhere.
13 Don't know where she's going. She
14 probably thinks she's going home, but she
15 is going to exit that bus. At the same
16 time, I have to get off this bus and
17 retrieve another do not leave unattended.

18 COUNCILMAN JONES: So how do
19 you do it? Never mind. Don't answer
20 that. Don't answer that. Don't answer
21 it. Go ahead, continue.

22 MS. HALLOMAN: I'm going to
23 answer it. We're not trained to do that.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: Got it.

25 MS. HALLOMAN: You take your

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2 chances. But we are not trained to do
3 that. This manifest has three ladies
4 that are do not leave unattended on here.

5 COUNCILMAN JONES: Are you
6 done?

7 MS. HALLOMAN: Yeah.

8 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you
9 for your testimony.

10 MR. CHAPMAN: Arthur Chapman.
11 Thank you, City Council, for allowing us
12 to bring this to the floor.

13 I've been in this business
14 since '86. Back when I started, the
15 driver was the contractor and the carrier
16 actually was just a provider of the
17 vehicle. So you leased the vehicle from
18 the carrier, which they also provided a
19 source of gasoline and you basically
20 drove. When you got the tour, it was in
21 your name. You were the contractor.
22 That changed late '80s, early '90s. The
23 carrier took over the contracts.

24 I just want to say my portion
25 is going to go towards scheduling,

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2 because scheduling has always been a
3 problem for paratransit. It's gotten a
4 little bit worse over the years, but it's
5 always been a problem, and it's a big
6 issue, because it's a logistics
7 nightmare, I imagine, but it's not
8 impossible.

9 I want to mention before I get
10 into that the fact that one of the
11 problems is when you lose your core of
12 experienced drivers, what happens, you
13 allow safety to decline obviously. Also
14 your overhead is increased. You know,
15 your experienced drivers, they're going
16 to offer you a safe thing. So the
17 litigation go down. All the other
18 overheads will decrease. You'll pay that
19 extra money for that experienced driver,
20 but all this other overhead, wear and
21 tear on the vehicle, better rapport with
22 your passengers bringing in probably more
23 service, better routing, so saving time,
24 saving gas, all those types of things.

25 I want to talk about the fact

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2 that in those days before HIPAA, it was
3 put on the manifest when a passenger had
4 a communicable disease, like HIV, like
5 hepatitis C, like even influenza, so the
6 driver could take special precautions.
7 Now, of course, we don't want to -- HIPAA
8 became law of the land and understandably
9 why. You don't want to bias a person
10 because of a problem like that. But
11 we're still dealing with those types of
12 people. That has not changed. Our
13 public hasn't changed. So I'm not
14 talking about the fact that we want to
15 remove these people, but the fact that
16 the driver needs to be protected,
17 encouraged to understand how to deal with
18 these both airborne and blood-born
19 pathogens.

20 The fact that we handle a very
21 diverse public, from frail seniors, some
22 that are over 100, to young people that
23 maybe have a physical problem like
24 cerebral palsy. Many have both
25 psychological and physical problems. So

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2 that brings a real plethora of different
3 people that you have to learn to deal
4 with. You got to be flexible. Some may
5 be even tendency to be violent if they
6 didn't take their medications.

7 Like Mr. Ray here, I've had
8 situations where I've had centers that
9 mainly dealt with Alzheimer's and other
10 dementia, and as I'm going down the road,
11 everybody may have three wheelchairs, two
12 people aboard, moving down Germantown
13 Avenue, look in my mirror, I got a lady
14 with dementia up shaking everybody's
15 hand. Now, of course, it's not her fault
16 that she has dementia. We're, of course,
17 by law not allowed to secure them with
18 seat belt locks. So you have to use your
19 training and you have to use your
20 experience, and so you can't stop
21 suddenly, because you got an accident.
22 So you try to keep her calm while you put
23 your flashers on and slow down and get
24 out of traffic.

25 So that's part of the

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2 experience that saves a lot of those
3 types of incidents from becoming an
4 accident.

5 One of the biggest things I
6 want to talk about with the scheduling is
7 that scheduling is an issue. Some
8 example -- I just want to give you some
9 examples, operational examples, because
10 I'm a driver, so I look at it from the
11 operational side.

12 I come back to base some months
13 ago Thursday evening. A friend is
14 cashing out. He's telling me about a
15 ride he just dropped off at Haldeman and
16 Bustleman in the Greater Northeast. His
17 next ride is at 72nd and Lindbergh
18 Boulevard near the airport. That's not
19 the problem, because sometimes you got
20 to -- but the problem is this: I was
21 dropping off around that same time at
22 72nd and Lindbergh. My next ride, Grant
23 Avenue and Roosevelt Boulevard. So we're
24 crisscrossing the City 9.5 miles to go
25 where the other gentleman just came from.

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2 So that's one issue.

3 You have issues at some of the
4 centers where you have maybe a large
5 population of people. You may have ten
6 going to a certain part of town. You may
7 have a couple wheelchairs, a couple
8 ambulatory. As a matter of fact, I'll
9 give you example from my -- I used to
10 pick up a lady at 19th and Market, the
11 Blue Cross building, a wheelchair, who
12 lives in Mount Airy, West Oak Lane. So
13 okay. Forty-minute ride in rush hour.
14 Three other ladies come out of that same
15 office. They all live within minutes of
16 each other, Upsal and Thouron, Vernon
17 Road and Wilson. Four people, four vans
18 or three vans will go pick up those four
19 people. So now you have three vans, four
20 vans moving with one person. The ladies
21 want to ride together, but it's a
22 40-minute ride. They ask us -- the
23 dispatcher when we request information,
24 the dispatcher says, No; follow your
25 manifest. So we have four people moving

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2 40 minutes out of Center City, four vans.

3 Dispatch will call 30 minutes into the

4 ride, Do I have any available vehicles in

5 Center City? Well, you would have had

6 three, because one van could have

7 accommodated all four of these people.

8 One was ambulatory, three were

9 wheelchair.

10 Those are the types of

11 scheduling problems that cause us to run

12 late. Those are the things that have to

13 be addressed. And they're not problems

14 that just started. They've been problems

15 for a long time. But they are scheduling

16 problems that not only do they cause time

17 problems, but I can imagine the amount of

18 gas we're wasting. I don't know who pays

19 for the gas. I don't know if it comes

20 from the tax dollars. I don't know who

21 is paying for it, but I can imagine the

22 hundreds of thousands of dollars that

23 probably could be saved if we could

24 address those scheduling issues.

25 We're talking about training.

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2 One of the main training problems that
3 we've run into since W-9 has been a major
4 part of what we -- well, a minor part of
5 what we do. There's actually W-9
6 training. W-9 is what you saw with the
7 first video, the first video there, and
8 as our SEPTA folks said, that's a
9 separate contract that PCA handles. But
10 most of our drivers and aides aren't
11 trained in the lifting aspect. A lot of
12 the lifting -- a lot of the accidents
13 we've had were because of poor technique
14 in lifting. Not to say the part that
15 these drivers are through-the-door
16 employees, so they have the legal right
17 to go into a person's home and quite
18 often to the second floor and on rare
19 occasions -- I'm a W-9 stand-by -- going
20 to the third floor.

21 So these are things where we
22 have what's called a carrier chair -- a
23 stair chair. Thank you. And what that
24 chair is, it's a chair without wheels.
25 It's a lot narrower than a regular chair.

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2 When we bring the person into their home
3 in their regular wheelchair, we'll
4 transport them into the stair chair and
5 then take them to the second and rarely
6 to the third floor.

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: I'm sorry.
8 A stair chair, it doesn't have wheels?

9 MR. CHAPMAN: It doesn't have
10 wheels. It's like a wheelchair without
11 wheels and it has like metal things that
12 will keep it off the ground maybe about
13 four inches, and then you have sort of
14 like two bars coming out the front so
15 that we can lift it safely and then
16 transport them up. A lot more easier to
17 transport -- a lot more maneuverable than
18 a wheelchair itself.

19 COUNCILMAN JONES: I'm sorry.
20 I'm not an engineer, but are you carrying
21 these people up?

22 MR. CHAPMAN: Yeah. Sometimes
23 you have to carry them up because the
24 stairs in North Philly -- and because
25 it's a PCA, really this is a PCA

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2 function. So it's mainly geared towards
3 seniors that for whatever reason can't
4 afford an elevator or a lift. So our job
5 as W-9 operators --

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: So what's
7 happening to the people in the van
8 that -- you have two people at this
9 point?

10 MR. CHAPMAN: There's two
11 people. Of course, you need the two
12 people, but we're both with the chair.
13 Usually the people that are W-9 -- well,
14 I have to cancel that out, because they
15 are operating out of these centers,
16 because a lot of the centers have the
17 seniors with dementia and a lot of those
18 are dementia people, you know, that we're
19 dealing with out of these centers.

20 Primarily W-9 started with
21 mainly the Shared-Rides, people who were
22 being transferred. They were mainly able
23 to -- you know, they were functional.
24 But that's changing. So there are times
25 when people are left in the vehicle while

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2 the two, driver and aide, enter the home.

3 It's part of the job. So that's a
4 reality.

5 But the training on the lifting
6 and the teamwork is also an important
7 issue that is not addressed. It's not
8 addressed because that's not a normal
9 SEPTA function. So down at 1234 for that
10 32 hours, that's not addressed because
11 it's not part of the normal routine. I
12 imagine that the carriers are expected to
13 handle that, but it's not being addressed
14 at this time.

15 And I also just want to make
16 sure, as everybody mentioned, this
17 service is truly a very important --
18 matter of fact, most of the people who
19 have been here a long time, I can point
20 to people who have been here more than
21 10. You got drivers here 10, 15, 20, 30,
22 almost 30 years worth of experience in
23 that one person.

24 The importance to our community
25 is not just to the customer that we're

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2 taking. You know, if I pick up a lady
3 who is going to the doctor and because of
4 the scheduling and other problems --
5 because there are other problems. There
6 are problems on the road. The City is
7 going through a major renovation, so it
8 seems like everywhere you go, the road is
9 blocked, construction, might be police
10 activity. So those are all factors as
11 well.

12 Scheduling more efficiently
13 would definitely help that area, but when
14 you're talking about people with
15 dementia, that family can't leave their
16 home until we pick that person up. The
17 family is -- they can't go to work, they
18 can't go to school, because this person
19 is not able to be trusted in their home
20 until we come. So the importance of our
21 job really goes beyond what many people
22 just say is a driving function.

23 Your drivers also play an
24 important indirect role, because a lot of
25 the people are psychologically -- so we

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2 have to also be able to keep them
3 even-keeled through the trip, and a lot
4 of times that means in some cases you
5 have to be firm, some cases you have to
6 show that little love. You've got to
7 really understand your people. And,
8 again, that's where experience will play
9 a big role in all that.

10 I do want to say, though, I'm
11 not here to just totally slam the people
12 that run it, because we really have a
13 great infrastructure. This is one of my
14 frustrations. I've been in this a long
15 time. The infrastructure that's been set
16 up for CCT is a great one. If we could
17 do the right -- the important things
18 right, and that's really where my
19 frustration comes in, because it's
20 necessary. Most of the people who have
21 been here a long time, they're here
22 because they bought into paratransit.
23 They bought into the whole mission of it.
24 And we understand it's a necessity to our
25 community, because we have -- we are the

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2 ones that the people see. We're the ones
3 that deal with them directly. We know
4 the importance of this doctor's
5 appointment, this lady I picked up last
6 week telling me, Next week I have an
7 appointment with a specialist, I've been
8 waiting three months for this
9 appointment. So it's important for her
10 to get picked up on time and dropped off
11 on time.

12 These are things that we have
13 to -- and if there are problems -- I'm
14 not here to finger-point per se, but
15 we've got to address the issues and get
16 them done, because this industry has
17 become very important to our community
18 and we've got to do everything we can,
19 all of us, every aspect of every
20 component of this, to make sure that our
21 community is serviced properly.

22 I pick up people all the time
23 who they're thankful for the service,
24 because they know without us, they
25 couldn't have a job. You know, they

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2 wouldn't have the independence, you know,
3 that student without this service. So
4 I'm all for the service. I'm all for
5 all -- and like I say, it's a great
6 infrastructure, but we've got to do the
7 important things right. We've got to be
8 more responsible, we've got to be more
9 dependable, and we definitely got to be
10 more efficient.

11 The people that I'm looking
12 around that represent the driving core,
13 you got great people here. These people
14 that I'm looking at have been here five,
15 ten, some are over 20 years experience,
16 and they're here for a reason. It's not
17 only a job. And, see, I think the hiring
18 part of it has to take that into
19 consideration, because we're not Federal
20 Express. We're not just -- packages
21 don't care if you got a bad attitude.
22 We're picking up people, and they deserve
23 better.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you.

25 I want to thank you for your testimony

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2 and recognize that you're in the people
3 business. Sometimes the people can be a
4 little cranky. We feel that all the
5 time. And Councilman O'Neill has joined
6 us, for the record, by the way.

7 So I understand the customer is
8 always right. However, sometimes they
9 can be a little harsh with their
10 rightness.

11 So thank you for -- and
12 understand this: Thank you for what
13 you're doing. I have relatives that use
14 this service, and they're -- as they are,
15 we once were, and as they are, we will
16 be. So some of you young guys, remember
17 my face. Don't drop me. All right?

18 MR. ALLEN: I just want to
19 address one thing, piggybacking off of
20 Mr. Chapman. All he says, I agree with
21 98.2 percent. The infrastructure is
22 okay. It's not great. It's not great
23 because of the turnover of your
24 employees. The people here that he's
25 speaking on and some others that are not

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2 here, they are really dedicated to what
3 they do. They're about the people. They
4 care.

5 COUNCILMAN JONES: So I'm going
6 to hold you, because we have other people
7 and I want to recognize Councilman
8 Greenlee.

9 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Quickly,
10 because I know other people want to
11 testify. Actually, Mr. Chapman addressed
12 what I was going to ask in the scheduling
13 piece, because I was saying it would seem
14 to me to make sense to have drivers with
15 designated sort of areas of the City.
16 You know, like West, Southwest, South
17 Philly is one district. Center City up
18 through North Philly. But you gave me an
19 example of like going from Southwest,
20 from Lindbergh Boulevard to Grant Avenue
21 and Grant Avenue back to Lindbergh
22 Boulevard. Is that something that just
23 happens sometimes or is --

24 MR. CHAPMAN: No. It happens
25 frequently. Unfortunately -- and I know

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2 this is probably more geared toward the
3 software and hardware we're using. The
4 old system we had was a DOS-based system.
5 So it's not -- it wasn't as flexible as
6 the new system that we're using, but it
7 was a better number-cruncher. So we had
8 less. I think a lot of the mistakes now
9 are computer oriented. That's just my
10 opinion from what I've seen through the
11 last bunch of years.

12 I just think that, you know, if
13 we're going to go with the technology --
14 because years ago when I dispatched a
15 little bit in the '90s, I know that there
16 were an army of editors that would look
17 at what the computer would put out and
18 they would edit, take out this, and then
19 the dispatchers -- because we were not
20 centralized. We were on location with
21 our carrier. We had a better rapport
22 with our drivers. We were able to be a
23 lot more flexible if I saw -- if I was --
24 it was okay if Mr. Wright called me and
25 said, Hey, dispatch, look man, I'm stuck

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2 up in the Northeast, I got a Southwest
3 Philly pickup. But we didn't have the --
4 so we had a system where we had
5 everything color coded. I can look real
6 quick and say, Okay, look, stay up in the
7 Northeast, I'll get something for you, I
8 want to take this ride off you, give it
9 to a guy down in Southwest Philly.

10 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: But you
11 say you can't do that now?

12 MR. CHAPMAN: No, I'm not
13 saying we can't. I'm saying that it's --
14 the rapport -- and this is another thing.
15 I'm glad you brought that up, because one
16 of the most important relationships in
17 this business is driver-dispatcher. And
18 if you don't have a seriously cordial,
19 strong working relationship, even the
20 problems that we have now with scheduling
21 could easily be diluted if you had that
22 good relationship, but because there's so
23 much animosity because -- it's just a
24 disconnect. I'm just going to say
25 there's a disconnect between driver and

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2 dispatcher for the most part. There's a
3 lot of people that know -- we know a lot
4 of the older dispatchers who were there.
5 They understand. I think part of the
6 problem too is that once upon a time to
7 be a dispatcher, you had to be a driver
8 first for a certain amount of years. I
9 know that many of our new ones -- and I'm
10 not going to say -- that's not my role to
11 play, but I think that dispatchers should
12 have some --

13 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Knowledge
14 of what a driver is about. Okay.

15 MR. CHAPMAN: Those are some of
16 the things, you know.

17 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: If I
18 could just ask one more question. You
19 mentioned about seat belts. You don't
20 have to make a passenger get in a seat
21 belt?

22 MR. CHAPMAN: We're talking
23 about seat belt locks. That's the
24 illegal part. That's against the law.

25 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: I see.

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2 MR. CHAPMAN: You can put them
3 in a seat belt, but, like you said, the
4 person --

5 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: So the
6 person could detach them themselves.

7 MR. CHAPMAN: We find little
8 ways to try to hide it. It doesn't
9 always work.

10 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: All
11 right. I got you. Thank you. I don't
12 want to belabor it. Thank you.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you so
14 much for your testimony, folks.

15 Will you read the next panel to
16 testify, please.

17 THE CLERK: Kathleen Parsons.

18 COUNCILMAN JONES: Ms. Parsons,
19 are you here?

20 MR. PARSONS: Yes, here.

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: Okay.

22 Are there any others to
23 testify, Stacey?

24 THE CLERK: I have no further
25 witnesses that registered in advance.

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2 COUNCILMAN JONES: All right.

3 Thank you so much.

4 (Witness approached witness
5 table.)

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you
7 for your patience. Please state your
8 name for the record and pull that mike a
9 little closer to you and begin your
10 testimony.

11 MR. PARSONS: All right. Good
12 afternoon, Councilman.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: Good
14 afternoon.

15 MR. PARSONS: My name is
16 Kathleen Parsons and I'm here to speak on
17 behalf of CCT patrons. And I want to
18 start by saying how grateful that I am
19 for CCT's unique door-to-door service.
20 It's very much needed and appreciated.

21 Whoever does the hiring for CCT
22 should be also greatly commended.
23 Ninety-nine percent of the drivers and
24 those who work in CCT's customer service
25 department are very caring and very

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2 patient people, and they really want the
3 best for all patrons. You can really
4 tell they do the best that they can. But
5 some things are really terribly wrong,
6 and on behalf of the patrons, I present
7 the following needed changes:

8 First, it has become
9 increasingly difficult to schedule rides,
10 especially between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00
11 p.m., even when calling the maximum of
12 three days in advance. For example, if I
13 call to schedule an 8:30 a.m. ride for a
14 10:30 a.m. appointment, I'll be offered
15 times of 6:30 a.m. or 10 o'clock a.m.,
16 you know, which is -- yeah. So that
17 means that long of a wait. And lately I
18 have been going that early so I can just
19 have the appointment, because 10 o'clock
20 is too close for a 10:30 time on the
21 other side of town.

22 Also, patrons are told by
23 schedulers and drivers that this is
24 because of an increase in patrons --
25 schedulers and drivers are told this is

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2 due to an increase in patrons with the
3 same amount and even fewer drivers.

4 Also, second, the times that
5 patrons are picked up, CCT asks patrons
6 to be ready ten minutes before your
7 scheduled time and for 21 minutes after.
8 So at different times, it's pretty often
9 that drivers come 20 minutes ahead of
10 time and they're told that their manifest
11 schedules it ten minutes earlier. So you
12 actually have to be 20 minutes early.
13 And the 21 minutes afterwards -- I say
14 within the last month, drivers are coming
15 like 30 and 45 minutes later after the
16 21-minute pickup time. And from what I'm
17 hearing today, it sounds like that's
18 because of the high turnover rate and the
19 fewer drivers.

20 So the system seems to be more
21 on the CCT side, because if, say, I'm not
22 ready when they come 20 minutes early,
23 they'll say, Okay, well, I'll wait a few
24 minutes. And once they call dispatch,
25 dispatch will call me and say, You have

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2 five minutes to board or we're leaving.

3 I have actually been left twice at
4 different locations, and thank God I had
5 cab money to get home.

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: After you
7 were dropped off?

8 MR. PARSONS: Yes.

9 COUNCILMAN JONES: And the
10 pickup time, you were just left there?

11 MR. PARSONS: I was just left,
12 and both times I had -- yes. The first
13 time I was at Penn Dental on 40th Street,
14 and the second time I was at a funeral in
15 the Northeast and I was left. And like I
16 said, I'm just grateful that I had the
17 cab money to get home. And now that I'm
18 in this wheelchair, I'm just petrified of
19 being left, because I don't know -- when
20 you call, they say, We're sorry, we can't
21 reschedule you and you're on your own.
22 So if I'm on the other side of town,
23 there's no way I can get home in this
24 wheelchair, and that really scares me.

25 And then patrons, again, we

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2 often hear that drivers say they were
3 late because they had to come from the
4 other side of town or that we as a patron
5 were an add-on to their schedule, which
6 is very confusing. If I call three days
7 in advance and I'm an add-on to someone's
8 schedule, I know it's because the driver
9 is late. And it's not their fault, you
10 know.

11 I think that another reason --
12 and this is we're having -- here we're
13 asking that all, on behalf of the
14 patrons, that the driver's schedule be
15 changed so that they're scheduled
16 primarily in one area of the City. So, I
17 mean, either your driver is scheduled
18 mostly in the Northeast or West
19 Philadelphia, South Philadelphia. I
20 mean, I hear all the time and I call in
21 advance, we have to go to one end of town
22 to the other. And as also was said
23 earlier, you get like 15 minutes -- they
24 have 15 minutes to get from one side to
25 the other, which is impossible. And then

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2 you hear the dispatch drivers arguing
3 with them, and the drivers are
4 frustrated, which is a safety hazard,
5 because of anyone who has been frustrated
6 when you're driving, it's not good and it
7 puts the patrons and the drivers in
8 jeopardy.

9 And also we think that the
10 CCT's GPS system needs to be upgraded.
11 Often it takes the drivers the long way
12 instead of going to the shortest
13 distance. And, again, since time is of
14 primary importance to CCT and to the
15 patron, a change or if they could receive
16 funding to upgrade their system, I think
17 that will be very helpful.

18 Now, speaking of dispatch, I
19 would say that from what I see, 70 to 75
20 percent of dispatch workers speak
21 professionally to drivers, in addition to
22 the dispatch supervisors, who are very
23 professional and helpful. But then
24 there's that maybe 25 to 30 percent who
25 I've witnessed become -- are very --

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2 speak very unprofessionally to their
3 drivers and, again, the drivers become
4 very frustrated because of it.

5 Finally, for the safety of both
6 the drivers and the patients and
7 hopefully to decrease the turnover rate
8 of the CCT drivers, we ask that CCT and
9 its union officials have direct control
10 over the drivers and dispatch, so drivers
11 can receive their much-needed pay
12 increase, shorter tours, with the option
13 for drivers to work longer when they want
14 to, and hopefully -- I've heard also too
15 about this two-hour lag. If the drivers
16 are sitting for two hours or longer,
17 they're not paid for that time, and
18 that's also a great frustration for the
19 drivers.

20 Now, I want to just say finally
21 that there's an old saying that says that
22 an ounce of prevention is worth a pound
23 of cure. I really hope that the request
24 of all the speakers today will be taken
25 seriously and the considered changes will

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2 be needed before, God forbid, something
3 happens that we all regret.

4 So I want to thank you for this
5 opportunity to speak on behalf of CCT
6 patrons.

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you so
8 much for your testimony, and you were
9 well prepared and it was worth the wait
10 for us at least.

11 Are there any others to testify
12 on this resolution?

13 THE CLERK: Yes, Councilman.
14 Don Britt, Michael Merryweather, Marvin
15 Scott.

16 (Witnesses approached witness
17 table.)

18 COUNCILMAN JONES: This will be
19 the last group to testify. Please come
20 up to the table, state your name for the
21 record. Good afternoon. And begin your
22 testimony.

23 MR. SCOTT: Hi. Good
24 afternoon. My name is Marvin Scott and
25 I'm a paratransit driver, been into it

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2 for 18 years, you know. And my
3 experience in the paratransit, that
4 sometimes the drivers is not really
5 appreciated coming through even with
6 SEPTA. You know, some of them is like --
7 well, I ain't going to say some; I'm
8 going to say all is not filling the pay
9 scale. That's number one. Pay scale is
10 too low, you know.

11 And then another thing, the
12 holes in the tour, when you got two,
13 three hours down and you're not getting
14 paid, but yet you're held responsible for
15 that vehicle, you know, that's not good.
16 That's not good at all, you know.
17 Because I feel as though if we held
18 responsible for having that vehicle out
19 on the street, then we should get paid
20 for it. You know, that's what a lot of
21 complaints come from as far as drivers,
22 probably coming from MV side and Edens,
23 you know. And, you know, to me I feel if
24 they could cover the holes, maybe it
25 would be a little bit more better, you

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2 know. But my boss say if SEPTA not
3 paying them, then why should he have to
4 pay us.

5 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you.

6 MR. MERRYWEATHER: Hello. Good
7 afternoon.

8 COUNCILMAN JONES: State your
9 name again, please.

10 MR. MERRYWEATHER: Okay. How
11 you doing today, sir? My name is Michael
12 Merryweather. Been in this company for
13 almost five years, been here four. A
14 little bit new to the game, but pretty
15 much been there to see people come and
16 go.

17 Another thing about that
18 computer, the computer that SEPTA has,
19 it's not really accurate as far as
20 mapping and everything else, you know.
21 It's just that it makes our jobs a little
22 bit harder. Like as far as gate times
23 like, you know, like somebody from MV
24 just said, you get passengers together,
25 but they all -- you thinking they all

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2 going to the same spot, but they all in
3 different neighborhoods, but you only get
4 this ample much time to get into the
5 neighborhood to get that person, but you
6 still don't count the time it takes to go
7 to the door, get the person onto the bus,
8 and seat belt them. And that's where,
9 you know, as far as us drivers, it get
10 frustrating, because then you expect us
11 to be here at this X amount of time and
12 then, of course, again, that's where the
13 old TB comes in, and what happens is, you
14 know, you get those six instances either
15 PATs, the old TPs or any other things go
16 wrong, then pretty much you're axed, and
17 that's what pretty much us operators at
18 Edens we face like almost every day. And
19 I'm speaking this from experience because
20 pretty much I see people come and go.

21 People get frustrated at this
22 job. We feel like, you know, like the
23 union President said of TWU,
24 stepchildren, and which I don't feel that
25 it's right, you know, because we do a

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2 lot. Some of us go well above and beyond
3 our means to do what we have to do and do
4 it safely, so that way, of course, the
5 passenger get where he's going and then,
6 of course, getting onto the vehicle
7 safely. And like I just really think
8 that really, of course, back to the
9 computer issue again about the timing,
10 they need to do something better on that,
11 because obviously it's just not
12 acceptable, you know.

13 I have a route that I do every
14 single day. It's 549. My first pickup
15 is all the way up at Feasterville-Trevose
16 at around, say, maybe 6:00 something, but
17 then they expect me to be out the yard by
18 5:45, 5:50, but knowing you have to
19 travel up 95 and cut through all this --
20 I mean, 95 is normally good, but then
21 once you get up to Feasterville-Trevose,
22 you have to fight your way down, where
23 they only give you maybe about 15 to
24 maybe 20 minutes going from
25 Feasterville-Trevose all the way down to

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2 South Philadelphia.

3 I pick up maybe six or seven
4 people going down into my center. Two of
5 them -- maybe two or one are in
6 wheelchairs and everybody else is
7 ambulatory. And it's just that me, I get
8 tired because -- you know, when I get off
9 of work, I don't even want to deal with
10 nobody and I just go home. But that's
11 how it feels, because I feel like not as
12 well as us being the driver, but
13 operators, all of us alike, we feel like
14 we're not appreciated, because we go and
15 we do what we have to do, but we get no
16 recognition of it, no consideration,
17 nothing as far as recommendations or
18 anything towards it. I mean, we do, but
19 not in a sense that we should.

20 That's pretty much my piece.

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you so
22 much for your testimony.

23 Sir.

24 MR. BRITT: Good evening,
25 Councilors. I'm Don Britt. I'm one of

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2 the drivers at Edens. And my issue is
3 pretty much -- a lot of it has been
4 answered by Mr. Brown and Mr. White and
5 Mr. Scott over there about the wages, but
6 I wanted to add on to it about when it
7 comes down to the wages itself. Like
8 they were saying before about what they
9 call O's, two hours or more inactivity,
10 you don't get paid for it. Well, the way
11 I see it is, hourly wage is hourly wage.
12 You're out there, you're responsible for
13 the vehicles, you get paid for it. We're
14 not being paid by contract by bike, you
15 know, movement. We're not being paid
16 salary. We're being paid by the hour.
17 And I even spoke myself, I even spoke to
18 the Labor Relations Board and they told
19 me the same thing. They asked me. They
20 say, Yeah, you definitely have a
21 legitimate right.

22 Now, what Mr. Scott mentioned
23 about the contractor and SEPTA saying
24 that SEPTA doesn't pay them for the O's,
25 so they don't pay us for the O, well,

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2 that's their issue with SEPTA. That's
3 between them and SEPTA, but the
4 contractors and us, it's a whole
5 different ball game. We don't get paid
6 out of SEPTA. We get paid out of you.
7 Okay?

8 And another thing too was like
9 something that the patron here had
10 mentioned too about the GPS needing an
11 update too as far as getting on time and
12 whatever some people. I've been living
13 in the City here most of my life, and yet
14 there are even shortcuts I don't know
15 about. I learned from the GPS.
16 Sometimes the GPS will get you there
17 faster; sometimes it won't. It will take
18 you the long way, like she said. And I
19 sympathize with what she was saying too
20 as well.

21 And also too -- well, the other
22 issue I had had, I spoke with Mr. White
23 about, was as of late, I felt as though a
24 lot of nit-picking has been going on.
25 Like when they mentioned about six or

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2 seven issues, like Mr. Merryweather just
3 said, we get penalized for something. I
4 mean, 100 incidents could happen. You
5 could be right 100 times; you could be
6 wrong 100 times. There is no such thing
7 as taking turns, Okay, you were right
8 that time; you're going to be wrong this
9 time. That's why an investigation is
10 important. Like Mr. White had mentioned
11 about the man that was accused of drag
12 racing. Because of the fact he had
13 several issues on him, instead of them
14 taking into consideration like what they
15 said they tried to do, SEPTA just, from
16 what he said, just turned the back and
17 said, We don't deal with you, and now the
18 man is out of service and he's probably
19 got a family to feed.

20 And so that basically is my
21 beef too as well.

22 Oh, one other thing too. When
23 they mentioned about the on-time
24 performance, well, one thing I can say
25 for myself, I've been fortunate so far

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2 with that, because they keep a record.

3 They put up the chart. They're supposed
4 to be, I think, biweekly they put up a
5 new chart.

6 MR. MERRYWEATHER: Every week.

7 MR. BRITT: Oh, it's weekly?

8 MR. MERRYWEATHER: Every week.

9 MR. BRITT: It's weekly they
10 put a chart stating your performance
11 level. Well, fortunately for me, I've
12 been above what they've been saying.
13 I've been doing good there, but a good
14 example is this, like when they did the
15 scheduling, yesterday, just yesterday, I
16 had to do a center. I had to pick up
17 several people off and on and drop off at
18 the same center. One pickup was all the
19 way in the Northeast up there on Academy
20 Road right by where that recent fire was.
21 That was like within like the 9 o'clock
22 hour. Then I had to turn around and be
23 back down all the way in North
24 Philadelphia. Of course, fighting
25 traffic, there's no shortcut. It turns

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2 out there that address didn't even exist.

3 It was like I'm looking for it and I'm

4 losing time in looking for this address

5 there and it doesn't even exist. So it

6 ended up being -- I believe it was like a

7 cancellation. I got a 10 code for it.

8 Then I had to shoot down -- they moved a

9 couple of rides, but they didn't move the

10 right ones. I was still 20 minutes late

11 getting to the other one, but what I do

12 is, I hound them. I just keep on hitting

13 the button saying, Look, I need an 03 for

14 this. I document everything down, so

15 basically I cover myself that way. So,

16 therefore, if they got an issue with it,

17 I say, Here it is right there.

18 COUNCILMAN JONES: Let me say

19 this to you, gentlemen -- oh, Councilman

20 Greenlee. I'm sorry.

21 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: No. I

22 just wanted to just say I think what

23 we've heard today is the drivers are not

24 the problem. You know, nobody is

25 perfect, but we're not hearing that the

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2 drivers are the problem. There are some
3 other problems here, but I know you guys
4 have a tough job and I think we
5 appreciate it and it sounds like the
6 customers appreciate overall what you do.
7 So don't feel that somehow you're being
8 picked on today. I don't think we're
9 picking on anybody, but I think we're
10 raising some legitimate concerns. But
11 thank you for what you do.

12 MR. BRITT: One more thing I
13 wanted to say too. It should be the last
14 thing. It was mentioned -- you had
15 mentioned it and it was mentioned when
16 Mr. Brown was up here about the
17 underbidding on contracts and all. Like
18 he was saying, the turnover rate is high
19 because of that reason. The wages for
20 one thing. And then if they're allowed
21 to come in here and take -- okay. We can
22 understand taking the lowest bid, but
23 wages. I mean, if they're going to be
24 allowed to keep on dropping our wages,
25 because like he said, it goes all the way

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2 back down to whatever they're offering,
3 from what I understand. I've been in the
4 union now -- I was in the union before
5 prior to this there for 15 years. Our
6 union states there are no pay cuts. You
7 buy the company, you buy the contract.
8 Whatever that rate is is what you get
9 paid. Now, I mean, they're allowed to
10 come in here and drop our wages and we
11 had to wait like they said, a year or so
12 before we could get 50 cents and et
13 cetera.

14 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Like I
15 said, I think "responsible" is the right
16 word here. They talk about lowest
17 responsible bidders, and to have -- you
18 can't say it's responsible, people being
19 paid \$9 an hour as a result of that bid,
20 in my opinion, you know. I mean, to me
21 that's contradictory. I don't know how
22 else to say it.

23 MR. BRITT: And their other
24 solution is to try to keep the turnover
25 rate and keep people coming into work,

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2 because a lot of people don't even want
3 to come to work. They've been offering
4 stuff like gift certificates. They've
5 been giving gift certificates, and then
6 there's been for people who have called
7 out, they said back in February -- but
8 that's temporary, though. We need
9 permanent relief, not temporary relief.
10 We'll give you -- it's like they offering
11 a kid, I'll give you a quarter if you go
12 to the store for me.

13 MR. MERRYWEATHER: Or how about
14 this one, right? Since all this been
15 going on, we still short on drivers. As
16 we speak right now in our yard, we barely
17 have any drivers. Us veterans are almost
18 pushed to the pulp. I'm already there.
19 You know what I'm saying?

20 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: If I
21 could ask that, Mr. Chairman.

22 How many on -- I don't know if
23 we can say this exactly, but on a given
24 day, a Wednesday, how many drivers are
25 out in Philadelphia? Could you hazard a

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2 reasonable guess?

3 MR. SCOTT: What you talking
4 about, as far as out on the street?

5 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Yes,
6 transporting.

7 MR. MERRYWEATHER: Between the
8 two yards?

9 MR. SCOTT: What, between our
10 yard in particular?

11 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Yes.

12 MR. SCOTT: Well, I say the
13 majority of them, you know.

14 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Well, no.
15 How many is that? That's what I mean.
16 How many vehicles would be out there?

17 MR. SCOTT: I say about, what,
18 200.

19 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Two
20 hundred?

21 MR. SCOTT: Yeah, you know.

22 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: All
23 right.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: We can't
25 hear people from back there.

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2 So what I'm going to do is
3 thank you. Before you go, though, thank
4 you again for what you do. And I want
5 you to know you are appreciated. We
6 don't say it. My kids don't say they
7 appreciate me either, but I know they do,
8 and I want on the record to say that we
9 do.

10 I have relatives that use your
11 service all the time. I've never once
12 heard them say that the drivers -- they
13 late a couple times, but never once that
14 you didn't treat them with the dignity
15 and respect of a valued customer, and
16 that matters to me. I mean, believe it
17 or not, you may not think it, we catch it
18 from the customer base every now and
19 then, but we remind ourselves we are paid
20 to do it. I couldn't do your job. I
21 couldn't carry somebody and have that
22 kind of responsibility to make sure they
23 get from Point A to Point B safely.
24 That's a tremendous burden you take upon
25 yourselves each and every day.

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2 I can't negotiate wages, but
3 what I can do is say that I'm looking out
4 for safety, and I'm going to pay
5 particular attention to this issue from
6 now on. And we're going to recess this
7 to the call of the Chair for this so that
8 we can get the information that we
9 requested from SEPTA. I can't question
10 their business model, but I can question
11 whether or not we're doing it at the best
12 and optimal peak. Again, my colleagues
13 at the state are now interested in this
14 issue because of your testimony, and
15 they're listening and paying attention.

16 I'm getting these texts. We're
17 getting these texts. We're not
18 looking -- I'm not on Facebook or
19 anything. I'm getting texts from people
20 that are actually listening to these
21 hearings, asking questions about why we
22 would subcontract this out to the lowest
23 responsible bidder when it's not being
24 responsibly taken care of.

25 Our most valued customers, our

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2 seniors, are riding in these vehicles. I
3 wouldn't want to be on I-95 and have to
4 look over my shoulder as to the safety of
5 the other riders and to my own personal
6 safety. It is not fair to have to do two
7 jobs with one person.

8 So I want you to know you're
9 appreciated. I want you to know that we
10 want to make it as safe as possible, and
11 we're paying attention, and you are
12 valued.

13 Councilman.

14 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: If I can
15 just finish, just to say that certainly I
16 don't think any of us here -- and I know
17 I'm not and I know you're not,
18 Mr. Chairman -- SEPTA bashers, because I
19 think we've supported SEPTA in a lot of
20 ways. Ms. Jones knows that. Her and I
21 have been at community meetings where
22 I've gone against some of my neighbors
23 because I thought they were wrong in the
24 criticism of SEPTA. But I think there's
25 legitimate questions being raised here

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2 about this bidding, about what the
3 drivers make, and I'd be interested to
4 hear some of the answers that SEPTA comes
5 back with.

6 Thank you, sir.

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: You're
8 welcome.

9 I want to just close with
10 saying that Philadelphia is a graying
11 city, meaning the average age of the
12 population is going up and more, not
13 less, more of these services are going to
14 be required. So as we increase the
15 demand, we should increase the level of
16 training. We should increase and stay on
17 top of changing equipment, whether it's
18 GPS, whether it's lifting techniques,
19 whether it's -- I just don't know how you
20 get people upstairs. I just don't. But,
21 again, I applaud you for doing it.

22 So we are going to recess this
23 hearing on Resolution No. 140922 to the
24 call of the Chair and then we will
25 reconvene when we have the information

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2 from SEPTA. We will notify all parties
3 as to the date of that hearing.

4 Thank you all very much and
5 thank you for what you do.

6 (Committees on Public Safety
7 and Transportation and Public Utilities
8 concluded at 3:40 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the
proceedings, evidence and objections are
contained fully and accurately in the
stenographic notes taken by me upon the
foregoing matter, and that this is a true and
correct transcript of same.

MICHELE L. MURPHY
RPR-Notary Public

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Committees on Public Safety and Transportation & Public Utilities

March 20, 2015

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