

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
JOINT COMMITTEES ON GLOBAL
OPPORTUNITIES AND THE CREATIVE/
INNOVATIVE ECONOMY AND TRANSPORTATION
AND PUBLIC UTILITIES

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Tuesday, February 25, 2014
10:10 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILMAN DAVID OH, CO-CHAIR
COUNCILMAN KENYATTA JOHNSON, CO-CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS
COUNCILMAN WILLIAM K. GREENLEE
COUNCILMAN BOBBY HENON
COUNCILMAN DENNIS O'BRIEN
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA

RESOLUTION 130830 - Resolution authorizing Council's Committee on Global Opportunities and the Creative/Innovative Economy and Council's Committee on Transportation and Public Utilities to hold hearings to investigate the current status of taxi cabs in the City and the impact of modernizing and increasing the number of taxi cabs as it relates to the continued efforts of making Philadelphia a globally competitive, world-class destination city.

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COUNCILMAN OH: Good morning.

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We are here this morning for a joint

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hearing of the Committees on Global

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Opportunities and the Creative/Innovative

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Economy and Transportation and Public

7

Utilities.

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At this time, I would have the

9

Clerk read the title of the resolution.

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THE CLERK: Resolution 130830,

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authorizing Council's Committee on Global

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Opportunities and the Creative/Innovative

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Economy and Council's Committee on

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Transportation and Public Utilities to

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hold hearings to investigate the current

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status of taxi cabs in the City and the

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impact of modernizing and increasing the

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number of taxi cabs as it relates to the

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continued efforts of making Philadelphia

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a globally competitive, world-class

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destination city.

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COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very

23

much.

24

Good morning. My name is David

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Oh and I chair the Council's Committee on

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2 Global Opportunities and the
3 Creative/Innovative Economy. I'm very
4 pleased to be sitting here with my
5 Co-Chair, who is the Chair of Council's
6 Committee on Transportation and Public
7 Utilities, along with Councilman Bill
8 Greenlee.

9 This hearing examines taxi
10 service in Philadelphia, with the goal of
11 assuring that our city is doing its best
12 to provide quality cabs and taxi service
13 that meets the needs and desires of the
14 existing and future riders in a way that
15 maximizes the entire pool of ridership.
16 Better cabs; for example, newer models
17 with modern technology, alternative fuel
18 capabilities, wheelchair and handicap
19 accessibility, cabs that are equipped
20 with bike racks, can this be a win-win
21 for everyone in our city, for the cab
22 owners, the cab drivers, and the public?

23 This hearing will examine what
24 needs to be done to achieve this, either
25 now or in the future, and in particular

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2 with the future cooperation and support
3 of our State Legislature.

4 Just some facts that I'd like
5 to state as a basis of some of the
6 reasons why we're looking at this. In
7 Philadelphia, the information I have is
8 that we have about 1,600 cabs, one
9 thousand six hundred cabs, for a
10 population of 1.5 million people. We've
11 not had an additional cab added to our
12 city since 1974. We have only seven
13 wheelchair-accessible cabs, and none of
14 the cabs are wheelchair -- none of the
15 cabs have alternative fuel capabilities.

16 Compare that to New York City,
17 only the Borough of Manhattan, which has
18 12,000 cabs for 1.6 million people, 233
19 wheelchair-accessible cabs, and 2,000
20 alternative fuel cabs. Taking a smaller
21 city than ours, Boston, which has a
22 population far less than ours, 636,000
23 people, they have more cabs than we have
24 at 1,800 cabs, 100 wheelchair-accessible
25 cabs, 400 alternative fuel cabs. And

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2 then in the Midwest, Chicago has 7,000
3 cabs for 2.7 million people, 172
4 wheelchair-accessible cabs, 3,000
5 alternative fuel vehicles.

6 The issue that we'd like to
7 examine today is, can we do a better job
8 as a city? Can we do a better job, along
9 with our State Legislature, working
10 together to ensure that this is a truly
11 globally competitive city and that the
12 population is well served, the cab
13 drivers are making the most amount of
14 money that is possible by studying the
15 demographics and analyzing what we need
16 to do?

17 Thank you. Let me turn it over
18 to my Co-Chair, Councilman Kenyatta
19 Johnson.

20 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you,
21 Chairman Oh. My primary purpose of
22 partnering with you as we look at this
23 issue of expanding our taxi base in the
24 City of Philadelphia just revolves around
25 my interest in making sure that we're

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2 competitive as a city, specifically in
3 the area of travel and tourism.

4 I'm an avid traveler, and as I
5 had the opportunity to go from recently
6 London, Paris, Israel, and New York and
7 had an opportunity to really look at
8 their level of taxi service and the type
9 of services that they provide, I thought
10 it would only be fitting as we examine
11 the City of Philadelphia and as we move
12 forward to be a progressive city how we
13 provide quality taxi services. And I
14 also have a special interest in making
15 sure, in the event that we do expand in
16 the future, that we always consider how
17 we're supporting those individuals who
18 have disabilities and making sure that
19 they have equal access and options in
20 utilizing the taxicab service here in the
21 City of Philadelphia.

22 So I just want to thank
23 Councilman Oh for bringing this issue to
24 the forefront. I look forward to getting
25 some good information through this

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2 hearing.

3 Thank you very much, Councilman

4 Oh.

5 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very

6 much, Councilman Johnson.

7 Councilman Greenlee?

8 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: No.

9 COUNCILMAN OH: I will note for
10 the record that Councilman Bobby Henon
11 has joined us. He has just stepped out
12 temporarily, and coming in now is
13 Councilman Dennis O'Brien. Good morning.
14 Councilman, would you like to make an
15 opening statement on this hearing?

16 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: No.

17 COUNCILMAN OH: At this time,
18 then I'll ask the Clerk to call the first
19 panel of witnesses.

20 THE CLERK: James Ney, Vincent
21 Fenerty, and Ed Grose.

22 (Witnesses approached witness
23 table.)

24 MR. NEY: Good morning,
25 Mr. Chairman and members of the

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2 Committee.

3 COUNCILMAN OH: Could you give
4 me one second. I'm sorry. I know that I
5 have kind of interrupted for a second,
6 but the Co-Chair would like to make an
7 announcement.

8 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I just
9 want to acknowledge one of my
10 constituents, Mr. Jim Ney, 30th Ward, a
11 good friend of mine. Thank you for
12 coming down here today, as well as --

13 MR. NEY: Very pleased to be
14 here, Councilman.

15 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: -- Vince
16 Fenerty as well.

17 Thank you.

18 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
19 much.

20 Would you please state your
21 name for the record and proceed with your
22 testimony. Thank you very much.

23 MR. NEY: I'm James Ney. I'm
24 the Director of the Taxicab and Limousine
25 Division for the Philadelphia Parking

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2 Authority.

3 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
4 much. You may proceed.

5 MR. NEY: Thank you.

6 Mr. Chairman, members of the
7 Committee, thank you for all of your
8 efforts to draw attention to the need for
9 better taxicab service in Philadelphia.
10 The Authority dearly needs support from
11 every sector in our efforts to make
12 taxicabs in Philadelphia among the best
13 in the world.

14 The taxicab industry in
15 Philadelphia is more complex than it may
16 appear at first glance. There are
17 taxicabs with medallions and those
18 without medallions. One medallion
19 permits an owner to operate one taxicab
20 anywhere in Philadelphia, but
21 non-medallion taxicabs can operate a
22 limitless number of taxicabs in certain
23 designated areas of the City.

24 Some medallion taxicabs also
25 have rights from the PUC to operate in

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2 other parts of the Commonwealth just
3 outside the City, and taxicabs with
4 service territories almost exclusively in
5 areas outside of Philadelphia have
6 certain rights to provide service in the
7 City.

8 Dispatchers do not own
9 medallions. They do not own taxicabs.
10 Yet through their distinctive names,
11 colors, and markings, dispatchers are the
12 most readily identifiable signifier of
13 Philadelphia taxicabs.

14 Not a single taxicab company
15 owns more than approximately 30
16 medallions, but some key individuals in
17 Philadelphia control hundreds of those
18 medallions.

19 The number of medallions is
20 capped by statute, 1,600 as you mentioned
21 earlier. Medallions are owned by
22 individuals and corporations and
23 transferred between buyer and seller with
24 transactional oversight by the Authority.

25 Very few major insurance

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2 companies will insure a taxicab in
3 Philadelphia. The suggestion of moving
4 taxicab insurance levels above the
5 mandated state minimums runs the risk of
6 sending those few insurers or risk
7 retention groups present in Philadelphia
8 fleeing.

9 Very few drivers actually own
10 medallions, but instead lease the
11 medallion rights and often the taxi
12 itself from the medallion owner for a
13 shift, a day or a week.

14 Limousines, medallion taxicabs,
15 and non-medallion taxicabs often compete
16 for the same customers, and not always
17 legally.

18 Regulating this industry became
19 the Authority's responsibility in 2004
20 when Governor Rendell signed Act 94. Act
21 94 transferred regulatory power in
22 Philadelphia from the Public Utility
23 Commission to the Philadelphia Parking
24 Authority.

25 The legislative findings in Act

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2 94 specifically identify the importance
3 of taxicab service to all levels of the
4 Philadelphia economy as well as the value
5 of having more local control over their
6 operation.

7 Since 2004 and earlier, the
8 Authority has continually met with all
9 sectors and interest groups associated
10 with or impacted by taxicab service, all
11 stakeholders. While we may not have
12 always agreed on best practices, it has
13 been key that we understand all
14 perspectives, motivations, and goals.

15 After more than two years of
16 meetings, studies, and debates, the
17 Authority started its taxicab regulatory
18 program in April of 2005.

19 I appear before you and state
20 without question that the quality of
21 Philadelphia's taxicab service has
22 improved significantly since that time.
23 For example, for the first time,
24 Philadelphia taxicabs have been subject
25 to age and mileage limitations, resulting

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2 in the use of vehicles that are newer and
3 in better condition than required by
4 statute.

5 Drivers are now subject to
6 driving record and criminal background
7 checks by the Authority and must attend a
8 four-day training seminar, the content
9 for which they are tested before
10 certification.

11 Taxicabs are inspected at
12 Authority facilities twice a year. Each
13 time this is a "wheels off" and "on the
14 lift" inspection, emissions inspections,
15 everything.

16 The Authority was able to
17 obtain a certificate to operate as a
18 Pennsylvania state inspection station,
19 meaning one of the annual taxicab
20 inspections is also the required state
21 inspection that everyone in the state
22 must have.

23 Every medallion taxicab is
24 equipped with a modern meter system that
25 includes GPS tracking and driver

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2 navigation assistance, credit card
3 payment acceptance, printed receipts with
4 all trip information, and other modern
5 functions. Drivers must log on to the
6 system through their Authority-issued ID
7 card and can be prohibited from using the
8 meter remotely if necessary.

9 Dispatchers are now
10 certificated for the first time and must
11 adhere to the new regulations, including
12 the requirement to promptly respond to
13 customer complaints. They are required
14 to remain open for business 24/7.

15 With that said, the
16 Philadelphia taxicab industry must
17 continue to improve exponentially from
18 its current posture. As you know,
19 however, change often engenders
20 resistance. The changes I just noted
21 were resisted almost universally by the
22 taxicab industry in Philadelphia. The
23 Authority has endured countless lawsuits,
24 protests, and administrative challenges
25 just to get where we are now. We will

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2 not waiver in our pursuit to assure the
3 continued improvement of taxicab service,
4 and we request your support in our
5 efforts to do so.

6 In order to make any changes to
7 our regulations or to impose a new
8 requirement, the proposed change must go
9 through an extensive, at least one year
10 long, review by several Commonwealth
11 entities, including the Legislature, the
12 Independent Regulatory Review Commission,
13 and others as well. The process is very
14 time consuming and proposed regulations
15 may well not be passed or approved.

16 Currently, the Authority has
17 initiated regulations to provide for the
18 issuance of at least 15 but up to 150 new
19 wheelchair-accessible vehicle medallions.
20 Those vehicles will be new, according to
21 our regulations, retired earlier and
22 available for use by all taxicab
23 customers, but with preference to the
24 community of people with disabilities.

25 At the request of taxicab

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2 drivers and many owners, the Authority
3 has also initiated regulations to require
4 the use of security cameras in all
5 taxicabs in Philadelphia. The risks that
6 taxicab drivers take every time they
7 provide service certainly merits this
8 relatively inexpensive feature that is
9 likely to discourage crimes against
10 drivers.

11 While we advance these new
12 initiatives, we will continually look for
13 other ways to make taxicab service better
14 in Philadelphia. Ideas such as
15 incorporation and integration of the use
16 of smartphone apps with the currently
17 required meter technology system,
18 universal reduction in vehicle age and
19 mileage requirements, enhanced training
20 for drivers and dispatching companies,
21 and requirements for use of green and/or
22 alternative energy vehicles with more leg
23 room all merit review.

24 In 2005, the average taxicab
25 medallion sold for approximately \$60,000.

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2 Today those medallions sell for more than
3 \$500,000. The Legislature created the
4 medallion program to give owners an
5 equity stake in taxicab operations that
6 they could use to improve the quality of
7 taxicab service.

8 Unfortunately, most medallion
9 owners continue to use the worst vehicles
10 they can possibly get into service. In
11 many cases, the vehicles used by
12 medallion owners cost \$5,000, \$6,000 or
13 less. The huge capital increase in the
14 value of medallions has not been used to
15 improve taxicab service yet.

16 While the disabled community
17 has rightfully demanded the availability
18 of many more wheelchair-accessible
19 vehicles, medallion owners have almost
20 entirely ignored these pleas. There's
21 nothing that prevents a medallion owner
22 from converting his or her taxicab to a
23 wheelchair-accessible vehicle.

24 Unfortunately, the issue has been
25 presented as one that must be dictated by

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2 the Authority, which we can and will do,
3 but we will have to follow the
4 aforementioned time-consuming regulatory
5 process, the promulgation process I was
6 just talking about, in order to force the
7 issue.

8 As I noted at the outset, the
9 taxicab industry is very challenging to
10 regulate, but the Authority has already
11 proven its willingness to fight for
12 better taxicabs through all of the
13 lawsuits and other delay tactics we have
14 had to traverse.

15 We assure you, however, that we
16 will keep advancing. We will continue to
17 see better vehicles, better drivers,
18 better dispatchers, and a more
19 accommodating fleet of taxicabs in
20 Philadelphia. Not merely because it is
21 our job to do so, but because it is the
22 right thing to do.

23 Mr. Chairman, I make myself
24 available to you and your committee to
25 review any and all ideas to continue this

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2 process, and I hope that I can count on
3 your assistance as we move these changes
4 through the legal process in Harrisburg.

5 Thank you for allowing me to
6 appear before you today.

7 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
8 much, Mr. Ney. Is it Ney or Ney?

9 MR. NEY: It's Ney. I answer
10 to either one.

11 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
12 much, Mr. Ney.

13 What I'm going to do is just
14 start directing questions to you, because
15 I think you'll probably be the Parking
16 Authority's main witness when it comes to
17 taxicabs. I see that we do have the
18 Executive Director, Vincent Fenerty, and
19 thank you very much for being here,
20 Mr. Fenerty. I know your time is very
21 valuable.

22 Let me just recognize that
23 Councilwoman Cindy Bass has joined us and
24 also Councilman Mark Squilla, who just
25 stepped out for a brief second.

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2 So let me start with just some
3 questions. And first let me say that I
4 do appreciate the work of the Parking
5 Authority, PPA, and your work in
6 regulating the taxicabs. And what you've
7 testified today is I think good news to a
8 lot of people, certainly to the public
9 that is watching us, the efforts to
10 improve the cab service and to work
11 through all these very difficult
12 regulations. You certainly have my
13 support and I'm sure the support of all
14 of Council in your efforts.

15 That being said, let me ask you
16 in regards to some of the challenges that
17 you're facing, could you explain to me a
18 little more how City Council could be
19 helpful? You've talked about, for
20 example, non-medallion cabs that come
21 into Philadelphia and the fact that
22 owners who pay above \$500,000 for a
23 medallion continue to purchase the
24 cheapest cabs out there. I'm sure that
25 and I wonder if that also affects the

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2 ability of the cab drivers to earn a good
3 living. Could you touch on that a little
4 bit?

5 MR. NEY: Sure. I think
6 since -- City Council does not actually
7 regulate really any aspect of what we do
8 in terms of regulating taxicab and
9 limousine service. What we would count
10 on you for is support in our regulatory
11 efforts in Harrisburg with the
12 Legislature and with the Independent
13 Regulatory Review Commission and provide
14 us written support, testify at hearings,
15 that type of thing, to improve cab
16 service here.

17 COUNCILMAN OH: Yes. Thank
18 you. What about the fact that medallions
19 are purchased for Philadelphia, I assume,
20 but non-medallion cabs and other types of
21 cabs come into Philadelphia? Is that --

22 MR. NEY: Unfortunately, that's
23 basically -- again, that's in our statute
24 and that's the way it was handed to us
25 when we took over in 2005. There are

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2 partial rights companies that have the
3 authority to operate point to point in
4 various sort of peripheral sections of
5 Philadelphia, the Far Northwest,
6 Roxborough, Mount Airy, Chestnut Hill,
7 that territory. That would be Germantown
8 Cab. There are other cab companies,
9 partial rights companies, that have
10 territories in the Southwest and also
11 some in the Northeast. That was
12 basically -- the Legislature handed that
13 to us and said this is what you have to
14 do, you have to regulate these, they're
15 not going anywhere.

16 COUNCILMAN OH: Could you
17 explain to me a little bit about the
18 issue of adding more cabs and the risk to
19 cab insurers.

20 MR. FENERTY: I'd just like to
21 add something, Councilman, so Council
22 understands.

23 COUNCILMAN OH: I'm sorry.
24 Could you please identify yourself for
25 the record.

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2 MR. FENERTY: It's Vince
3 Fenerty, Executive Director of the
4 Parking Authority.

5 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you.

6 MR. FENERTY: You had said
7 earlier there are 1,600 medallion cabs.
8 The majority of the medallion cabs; in
9 fact, all of the medallion cabs, are
10 basically in compliance with our
11 regulations. The challenges that the
12 Parking Authority has had over the last
13 half a dozen years have come primarily
14 from the partial rights cabs who come
15 into the City, don't obey the statutes,
16 are not at this point inspected, and have
17 not paid their fees. One particular
18 company has led the fight against the
19 Parking Authority in multiple lawsuits
20 going all the way to the Supreme Court,
21 and that is, Mr. Ney has said, Germantown
22 Cab Company. They operate inferior cabs.
23 Their drivers are not certified. Their
24 vehicles are not inspected. They've
25 challenged every regulation that we've

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2 had, our budget process, et cetera, and
3 we've spent an inordinate amount of time
4 in court trying to get this company to
5 come into compliance.

6 The Legislature has changed
7 statutes after rulings which adversely
8 affected the Parking Authority in the way
9 we operated. We believe we are now at a
10 good point to hopefully bring this
11 company into compliance. We're going
12 to -- so the Council knows, we're going
13 to take a very firm stand on them coming
14 into compliance. I'm sure it will bring
15 many more lawsuits to the Parking
16 Authority, but part of the inferior cab
17 service is the partial rights this
18 particular company that you will see in
19 Center City, they can do point to point
20 service. They can bring someone from
21 their territory into Center City. They
22 can pick someone from Center City and
23 take them back to their territory, out to
24 their designated point in their
25 territory. But they often cheat. We

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2 fine them. They don't pay the fines.

3 So we do have one, as we would
4 say, uncooperative and one company that's
5 not following the statutes that we are
6 having a difficult time with. I don't
7 mind publicly saying it. I think the
8 Council should know, because I'm sure you
9 had lobbying efforts from this company
10 that we're being too hard on them. And
11 we're going to become harder on them, and
12 when they start lobbying in Council, I
13 would appreciate Council's support for us
14 bringing this company into compliance.

15 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
16 much for letting us know that.

17 MR. FENERTY: Thank you.

18 COUNCILMAN OH: The question I
19 had had to do with the -- you made a
20 statement during your testimony that
21 increasing the number of cabs somewhat
22 risks the insurance companies not
23 insuring these cabs?

24 MR. NEY: No. I think that the
25 risk was increasing the coverage rates

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2 right now. I think with additional
3 vehicles and newer vehicles, that the
4 whole insurance scheme actually for
5 taxicabs in Philadelphia is going to have
6 to change because there are going to be
7 new vehicles. They're going to be
8 requiring collision coverage,
9 comprehensive, that type of thing that
10 everyone is required to have for newer
11 vehicles. Right now such vehicles don't
12 exist in the taxi fleet. So, I mean,
13 it's going to require some changes.

14 COUNCILMAN OH: Changes that
15 you think are overall positive or --

16 MR. NEY: Yes. I think that
17 the public will be better protected. I
18 think that drivers will be better
19 protected. I think that, you know -- I
20 think it will be good for everyone.

21 COUNCILMAN OH: If it is true
22 that we have a larger portion of
23 ridership than is actually -- potential
24 ridership that's actually using the cabs;
25 for example, I'll say personally there's

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2 many times I'd like to take a cab but I
3 won't, because I know I might be able to
4 get a cab on my way to an appointment,
5 but then I figure I might not be able to
6 catch a cab for 30 minutes, and I'm on a
7 tight time schedule, so I'll bring my car
8 and use my car. But if it weren't for
9 that, like when I go to New York, I don't
10 really need a car. I just hop in a cab,
11 same in Boston.

12 If it is true that there's a
13 larger pool of ridership that may take a
14 cab, especially as we're looking at
15 Center City with the addition of the
16 Comcast building and new hotels, that
17 there would be a desire for more and
18 better cab service, with the bike lanes,
19 people with bikes, people living in
20 Center City wanting alternative green
21 fuel vehicles, more people want
22 handicap-accessible cabs, if that is
23 true, then supplying more cabs that met
24 these needs would appear to me -- and I'm
25 looking for your input -- to actually

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2 better serve the public and spur the
3 economy while also providing a better
4 level of income for the cab drivers, more
5 fares, more riders, more tips, that type
6 of thing. Do you think that's true or
7 not?

8 MR. NEY: Well, yes. I think
9 that one of the things that I want to
10 address here is that perhaps better
11 connectivity in terms of what I mentioned
12 about smartphone apps and that type of
13 thing to actually get cabs to where you
14 are. You're concerned about you might
15 not be able to get a cab back. In Center
16 City, right now I think from east to
17 west, north to south, that's pretty well
18 covered. If you're talking about going
19 to a more peripheral area for a meeting,
20 if you're going to a meeting in West
21 Philadelphia somewhere or Chestnut Hill
22 from Center City, you might not be able
23 to go out on the street and hail a cab as
24 easily as you would if you were in the
25 downtown.

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2 But I would agree that more
3 cabs in good measure would be a good
4 thing to support the economy, the local
5 business and tourism economy. And right
6 now there are 150 new medallions, new
7 cabs slated for coming into service in
8 Philadelphia over the next ten years.

9 COUNCILMAN OH: How will those
10 150 medallions be distributed to go from
11 being those 150 medallions to being
12 actual cabs on the street? Is there a
13 process? Can you release all 150 right
14 now, or what is that process?

15 MR. NEY: The way the
16 legislation reads is that it would be 15
17 new vehicle -- or new medallions issued
18 for sale each year over the next ten
19 years, beginning two years ago. So when
20 we go to sell medallions this summer, our
21 intent is to sell 45 medallions for
22 wheelchair-accessible service,
23 wheelchair -- that will go on wave
24 vehicles. Basically it's open. We're
25 going to have to evaluate how the cabs

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2 are being used by people with
3 disabilities. If the demand is there,
4 continue issuing wheelchair-accessible
5 medallions.

6 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
7 much.

8 Are there any questions?

9 Councilman Greenlee.

10 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
11 you, Mr. Chairman.

12 Good morning, everyone. A
13 couple of questions. Mr. Ney, first,
14 towards the end and just continuing to
15 talk about handicap-accessible cabs, I
16 know you said that right now a medallion
17 owner could convert his or her cab to a
18 wheelchair-accessible vehicle. Do you
19 have any idea cost-wise what that costs?

20 MR. NEY: Yeah. I mean, the
21 cost is significantly higher than what
22 medallion owners are putting into service
23 right now. As I mentioned, around \$5,000
24 for a vehicle. You're looking at
25 probably 25,000 at a minimum for a

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2 wheelchair-accessible vehicle to be
3 outfitted, a van that's large enough to
4 have the door -- the floor dropped and
5 the tie-down, all the equipment placed in
6 there to accommodate someone in a
7 wheelchair.

8 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Because
9 in fairness to the medallion owner on
10 that one -- and I know we're going to
11 hear from the disability community, and I
12 think it's in everybody's interest to
13 have more handicap-accessible cabs out
14 there, but I'm sure the cost is probably
15 an issue here, I would guess, right?

16 MR. NEY: It is, but, again, as
17 I had mentioned, medallions are worth
18 well over \$500,000 now.

19 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Right. I
20 got you.

21 Now, you mention also about
22 driver navigation assistance. Are all
23 medallion owners required to have that
24 and required to use it?

25 MR. NEY: Yes. We actually --

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2 when we took over, the Legislature handed
3 with us in the legislation some money to
4 be used for what they called the
5 hospitality initiative to make taxicab
6 service more consumer friendly, and we
7 purchased new technology, this basically
8 integrated system which allows us to
9 track every trip. Every cab driver that
10 drives every cab we can identify. We can
11 put them out of service if they're not
12 behaving correctly or for whatever
13 reason, if they're not doing what they're
14 supposed to be doing, and that's required
15 in our regulations to maintain that
16 system.

17 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: The
18 reason I bring that up, I know over time
19 we hear that complaint sometimes. It's a
20 big city. Most people don't know where
21 Ogden Street is where I live, but, I
22 mean, if the cab driver is able to just
23 use the navigation systems, that would
24 seem to solve that kind of problem.

25 MR. NEY: Absolutely.

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2 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Lastly,
3 Mr. Fenerty, you mentioned about fines
4 and the violators not paying. What other
5 enforcement powers do you have?

6 MR. FENERTY: Normally with a
7 medallion cab when you would come in for
8 your inspection, your vehicle wouldn't be
9 put back out on the street. We wouldn't
10 renew you. Since the one particular
11 company -- and there may be one or two
12 others which are much smaller that are
13 not in compliance -- they have challenged
14 everything in the court, every fine, et
15 cetera. Right now they are on a losing
16 streak. They've lost multiple cases in
17 the courts, and the courts -- they've
18 challenged the fact that we have the
19 right to rule them versus the Public
20 Utility Commission. The Commonwealth
21 Court all the way up has ruled that we
22 do.

23 Some of the law, the statute,
24 was ambiguous, and it was corrected by
25 the Legislature last year and the prior

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2 year. The ambiguous part was taken out.

3 It was clarified that we do regulate

4 them. And that's what we're starting to

5 do. But as of this moment, they have not

6 brought their listings of drivers in.

7 Their drivers have not been checked.

8 Their drivers do not have a PPA license

9 to drive a cab, and their vehicles, we

10 don't know if they're safe or not. And

11 we are at the very, very end of the

12 litigation, and we're hoping to bring

13 them in compliance within the next

14 several months.

15 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: And about

16 how many cabs roughly would you say are

17 out there in that situation?

18 MR. FENERTY: I believe with

19 that one company, approximately 160.

20 Am I correct on that?

21 A hundred and sixty. So we are

22 spending a good amount of our time trying

23 to regulate just partial rights more than

24 we actually should, and if we could get

25 that under control, we would have more

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2 time to spend on the medallion cabs and
3 make sure they're inspected correctly,
4 which we do, but we could be a little bit
5 more aggressive there. And as everything
6 else, the funds are short.

7 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Yeah. We
8 know about funds being short. Okay.
9 Thank you.

10 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

11 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
12 much.

13 Are there any other questions?
14 Councilman O'Brien.

15 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Thank you
16 very much.

17 When was the last time you
18 issued medallions for cabs?

19 MR. NEY: The last time new
20 medallions were issued were just prior to
21 the Republican National Convention back
22 in 2000.

23 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Right.

24 MR. NEY: Sixteen hundred were
25 authorized already, but only 1,400 I

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2 think were in service at that time up to
3 that point, and then the 200 additional
4 ones were issued to make up the 1,600.

5 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: And this
6 isn't a trick question, but when is the
7 next time do you think you'll issue
8 medallions?

9 MR. NEY: Hopefully this
10 summer.

11 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: No. After
12 that, when do you think the next time
13 will be?

14 MR. NEY: Well, as I said, 150
15 are authorized now through this new
16 legislation. So beyond that, you know,
17 unless there's a great deal of support
18 and need that we identify, you know, it's
19 150 over the next ten years.

20 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Okay. My
21 point is -- and no one has to lobby me
22 being an advocate for individuals with
23 disabilities, but we have one cab for
24 every 20,000 individuals, and we're not
25 going to do this again in the foreseeable

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2 future.

3 It's been brought to my
4 attention that New York has 50 -- in
5 December they announced that 50 percent
6 of all their cabs are going to be
7 wheelchair accessible or handicap
8 accessible, and SEPTA years ago when they
9 did the recapitalization plan, they
10 initially said that they were going to
11 make all their buses wheelchair
12 accessible, and there was wild debate,
13 that that's a waste of money, but you're
14 not the person that has to stand on that
15 corner and wait for the tenth bus. Seven
16 cabs out of a fleet of 1,600 is just not
17 acceptable. Not acceptable. And I know
18 that you mentioned that you'll do a
19 marketing survey and see what the demand
20 is, but it's like the field of dreams,
21 and this is their dreams. If you don't
22 build it -- it's like you build it, they
23 will come, they will use it. But now
24 they can't. It's not even an option if
25 you have one in 20,000. They're not

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2 going to call a cab. They can't. And
3 Paratransit is good, but it's not
4 reliable.

5 And so I think what I would
6 suggest is that we have a meeting with
7 SEPTA and see the process that they
8 employed to get to the decision-making
9 policy that they arrived at, and that
10 should be incorporated deliberately in
11 our projections going forward.

12 The other thing that I will
13 suggest -- and this is an ask -- I had a
14 vision that we're going to make
15 Philadelphia the first
16 disability-friendly city on the planet,
17 and we're well on that way. Most
18 recently --

19 (Applause.)

20 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: I didn't
21 even know you were over there.

22 I'm really not trying to
23 grandstand.

24 What we did is, we went to the
25 Philadelphia Phillies, and Dr. Wendy

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2 Ross, who is the developmental
3 pediatrician, trained up 3,000 employees
4 at Citizens Bank Park, 3,000 employees.
5 And I will bring to your attention that
6 the New York stinking Mets took one
7 little section of their stadium and made
8 that available to families with
9 individuals living with autism. Our
10 whole stadium, every person that works at
11 that stadium, is autism friendly and has
12 been trained to be so. We recognized the
13 Philadelphia Phillies for being the
14 Employer of the Year, and Eric Tobin
15 said, Wait a minute, I don't think we
16 deserve that.

17 I said, Eric, wait until you
18 see how many people come up to you and
19 identify themselves as living with
20 autism. But they don't want you to tell
21 anybody. Okay?

22 We have a discussion going on
23 with SEPTA right now where they're going
24 to give us a bus, they're going to give
25 us a train car, and we are going to train

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2 all their personnel up to be autism
3 friendly. I would like to initiate that
4 protocol with you as well. I think it's
5 very important to enable these
6 individuals to be able to enjoy all the
7 cultural and other benefits that the City
8 has. They enrich us by who they are. My
9 vision is that at some point, we're going
10 to have individuals living with autism
11 taking off from Atlanta and flying to --
12 we also trained up the Philadelphia
13 International Airport. I left that part
14 out. So that individuals living with
15 autism and their families, they couldn't
16 fly before. So what we did is, we went
17 down, we went to a rigorous training,
18 where the families come in, they check
19 their bags, they go up, and they go
20 through the most rigorous security check.
21 I mean, the most rigorous that you could
22 ever imagine, so nothing worse could
23 possibly happen. Then they go to the
24 gate, they board, and they have a virtual
25 takeoff and landing. They come back and

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2 they leave. Now that family can fly all
3 over the United States. There's at least
4 20 cities that are now trying to
5 replicate that process.

6 My vision is that we're going
7 to have families take, in the near
8 future, take off from Atlanta, fly to an
9 international -- the first
10 internationally friendly airport in the
11 City of Philadelphia, and they will take
12 taxicabs or they will take SEPTA to an
13 autism-friendly venue, which is Citizens
14 Bank Park.

15 This is achievable. This is
16 wonderfully achievable. And I don't know
17 that we need a marketing survey. If New
18 York has identified that 50 percent of
19 their cabs have to be wheelchair
20 accessible, then all we have to do is ask
21 them for their justification for that.
22 And I think another conversation with
23 SEPTA to see how the rationale was built
24 to build those cabs out and maybe we can
25 go to our friends in the Legislature and

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2 tell them that incrementally those that
3 have those cabs, they have X number of
4 time to get back in and contribute so
5 many of their vehicles to the fleet.

6 It's not acceptable if we're
7 not going to do this again for time out
8 of mind that we don't begin to approach
9 what they've done in New York City and
10 other venues across the country.

11 Thank you.

12 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
13 much, Councilman O'Brien.

14 Let me recognize Councilman
15 Squilla, who would like to make a
16 statement or ask some questions.

17 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Yes.
18 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

19 I have a quick question, and I
20 agree with my colleague Councilman
21 O'Brien.

22 What was the process to make
23 you decide how many medallions to go
24 after?

25 MR. FENERTY: When we went to

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2 the Legislature for how many medallions
3 we wanted, we asked for 150 to 200. The
4 150 was what came out of it. And there
5 was a lot of lobbying going back and
6 forth on how many should be
7 wheelchair-accessible vehicles. We
8 believed it should have been a little
9 more than 15 per year. The cab ownership
10 associations believed it should have been
11 less than 15 a year. When the
12 legislation came out, we pushed it and
13 the best push I could get -- and I
14 handled this myself with our general
15 counsel, who is here today, and Mr.
16 Ney -- was 15 a year out of the
17 Legislature.

18 Unfortunately, those who have
19 spent time in the Legislature, Councilman
20 Johnson and Councilman O'Brien, know that
21 the process to go through IRC to get
22 regulations done is the largest
23 bureaucratic nightmare that exists I
24 believe in America. I just -- it's a
25 good process, but it is extremely slow.

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2 There is a lot of input from the
3 industry. There are financial impact
4 studies on things. For instance, how
5 would it impact Council to buy that name
6 plate that's sitting in front of you.
7 That's the extent that they go to, and it
8 does take a year or more to get the
9 regulations out.

10 This law was passed two years
11 ago this past June. The end of June we
12 will have three years worth of medallions
13 to go out. We're going to go out with
14 45. I think my colleague, Mr. Ney, may
15 have not explained it clearly when he
16 said a market study by what a market
17 study is. I'm sure these 45 new
18 medallions will be used pretty well by
19 the disabled community. If that is the
20 case, we will issue 15 more the next
21 year, 15 more the following year. If we
22 find that the ridership is not there
23 because SEPTA may beef up its Paratransit
24 and -- my mother was a Paratransit user
25 before she passed away last year and not

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2 a cab user. She would have preferred to
3 use a cab to go to doctors' appointments.

4 I give you my word, we will do
5 the best, the Parking Authority, what we
6 think is good. We will always have
7 discussions with the disabled community
8 regarding what we're going to do.

9 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you,
10 Mr. Fenerty.

11 Also I believe it's a challenge
12 to get up there, and I remember when you
13 were going through that process to try to
14 increase the medallion usage. If this is
15 successful, which we believe it will be,
16 people will get used to using cabs. Is
17 there a likelihood that you would go back
18 up there again to increase the number of
19 medallions even further or because of
20 maybe some of the cabbies get upset
21 because they feel like, well, we don't
22 need any more cabs on the street because
23 we have a hard enough time finding fares
24 now?

25 MR. FENERTY: Well, if we need

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2 to release them at a greater volume than
3 15 per year, if we find that's the case,
4 we will have to go back to the
5 Legislature. And I'm not bashful, as you
6 know, to ask people to introduce bills.
7 I've been in your office enough.

8 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Yes.

9 MR. FENERTY: So, yes, we will
10 go back.

11 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: And if we
12 couldn't do that, is it possible to even
13 look at retrofitting some of the current
14 cabs, or that medallion would not work
15 for the cabs that aren't necessarily --

16 MR. FENERTY: Any medallion
17 owner who currently has a medallion can
18 retrofit that cab. I think we do a
19 medallion -- a value of the medallion is
20 not to increase the financial well-being
21 completely of the owner, which
22 unfortunately sometimes is how it's held.
23 Part of that money, the value of the
24 medallion, is supposed to go back into
25 the cab, which we're trying to educate

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2 the medallion owners that that's what
3 it's for. It's not to live in a high
4 rise on Rittenhouse Square or in
5 Manhattan, and we need to get them to
6 invest more of their money in their cabs
7 and bring them up to grade. And as we do
8 that, we're going to have to do it
9 through changing in regulations and going
10 back to IRC to do it. We hope they'll
11 voluntarily start doing it. And some of
12 the medallion owners have said they will
13 do it as they bring more vehicles into --
14 newer vehicles into their fleets with
15 their current medallions. We always push
16 that, but it's been somewhat fruitless.

17 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: So the
18 PPA, you can't demand they make them all
19 handicap accessible at this point?

20 MR. FENERTY: No.

21 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: You could
22 ask if you wanted to improve?

23 MR. FENERTY: Right. We can't
24 mandate it unless we go for a regulation
25 through the IRC process.

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2 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you.

3 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
4 much, Councilman.

5 Councilwoman Bass.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Yes. Thank
7 you.

8 I just had one quick question,
9 Vince. You mention in your previous
10 testimony that you thought SEPTA might
11 somehow play a role in the additional
12 need that may be out there. Can you talk
13 a little bit about that? Has there been
14 any sort of coordination with SEPTA?

15 MR. FENERTY: There's been no
16 coordination with SEPTA, but I do know
17 SEPTA, with the transportation bill that
18 just went through, is getting some
19 additional monies, and hopefully they'll
20 improve that. I also do know that when
21 you -- and I'm not exactly sure. Mr. Ney
22 may know a little bit more than I. The
23 Paratransit, there are subsidies that
24 could be gotten through SEPTA's
25 Paratransit. Those subsidies are not

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2 there at this point for medallion owners
3 to do that type of billing, and that is a
4 hard financial impact on some of the
5 disabled community that may want to ride
6 a cab but because they're poorer, they
7 would always take Paratransit. We do
8 have to explore to see how we can get
9 medallion cab owners who have disabled
10 vehicles reimbursed through the Medicaid
11 program, et cetera, and that's
12 something I don't know if Jim has looked
13 into yet or not. I'll let him speak on
14 that.

15 MR. NEY: We've begun those
16 conversations with the Mayor's Office of
17 Transportation and Utilities, Rina
18 Cutler's office, who basically oversees
19 all transportation, SEPTA, and the
20 Authority to some extent, because there
21 are other cities that actually have made
22 Paratransit funds available to taxi
23 riders as well, and through a prepaid
24 card, that subsidy can go right into that
25 rider's account and can be made available

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2 for either Paratransit or taxicab
3 service. We want to do the same thing
4 here.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. I
6 would just strongly, strongly, strongly
7 suggest that we have a strategy in place
8 so that we are working directly with
9 SEPTA. And I know you said you're
10 working with Rina Cutler's office, and
11 that's great, but there's nothing like
12 going straight to the source, just
13 because one of the things that we do in
14 the City -- well, I'll say that we don't
15 do very well is, we don't coordinate. We
16 don't talk to different agencies and what
17 are you doing and how is this going to
18 impact you and so forth. So I just
19 really think that they have to be a
20 player at the table, particularly if you
21 think that there's going to be an impact
22 for those who need additional services,
23 who need special services and that SEPTA
24 is going to somehow play in that. I
25 don't think that we should assume

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2 anything. Okay?

3 Thank you.

4 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
5 much.

6 Councilman O'Brien.

7 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Yes. I
8 appreciate your education on this issue,
9 and I'm sure you understand my passion on
10 this, and I would really like to
11 participate in an offline conversation on
12 how we can achieve these goals for the
13 handicapped community.

14 I have had some experience with
15 IRC, and I will accept full
16 responsibility for not being engaged in
17 this issue in Harrisburg, because I've
18 had wranglings with them over issues
19 involving disabilities, and I'm very good
20 at rallying my communities to make sure
21 that they understand the importance of
22 this. But in discussions -- and I will
23 relate this to you -- with SEPTA, this is
24 a civil rights issue. This isn't a
25 choice. And we have an obligation to do

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2 this, and if we don't do it, we're going
3 to be told to do it. And so I'm not
4 meaning that as a threat. I would love
5 for the Philadelphia Parking Authority to
6 lead the way or at least try to emulate
7 the strides that they've made in New York
8 City, and that may mean incorporating the
9 kinds of discussions that you're talking
10 about with SEPTA and finding some
11 creative blending and braiding of funding
12 streams. But I will stress that with the
13 issue of these 150 medallions, now is the
14 time to have these discussions and put a
15 concrete, formidable plan in place,
16 because we're not going to get a chance
17 to do this again. And like I said --
18 and, Vince, you talk about your mom. We
19 all have people who are close to us,
20 either friends or families, and we have
21 to be better than this. And the reality
22 is that if you're in a wheelchair and you
23 have to get from Point A to Point B, it's
24 going to be very difficult, even though
25 SEPTA will try to accommodate that to get

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2 from one place to another, even with
3 their Paratransit.

4 I know my mom was on dialysis,
5 God bless her, for eight and a half
6 years, but she used to go at 10 o'clock.
7 She switched her appointment to 6:00
8 a.m., because if the person that used to
9 go in and take that chair at 6:00 a.m.
10 got there at 7:00 or 6:45 or 6:30, then
11 she wouldn't get into her chair until
12 10:30, 10:45, 11 o'clock. And you know
13 what that means? Paratransit is not
14 going to come back and get her. She was
15 stuck there. She'd have to find her way
16 home.

17 So that is not guaranteed
18 success, and like I said, we've also had
19 debates, even in this legislative body,
20 where people say, Do we have to have the
21 depressed curb at every corner. Well,
22 you know what? Again, if you're in that
23 wheelchair, you don't want to have to go
24 two blocks and do it every other corner.
25 You have to be sensitive to the world

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2 that these individuals are trying to
3 navigate. And I know that you're doing
4 wonderfully creative and innovative
5 things. You're leading the country's
6 discussion in so many other things, but
7 this is really critical. And I have some
8 expertise expressing on a national basis
9 how this is a civil rights issue, and
10 it's compelling.

11 So thank you.

12 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
13 much, Councilman O'Brien.

14 Let me do this: I am reminded
15 by my colleague Councilman Squilla, who
16 chairs Streets Committee, that we do have
17 a Streets Committee coming up. And that
18 is not really a message to all of you.
19 It's a message to all of us that we're
20 going to start to contain our questions.
21 I have some more questions. I will do
22 that offline. I'd like to know a few
23 more things.

24 Let me do this: I appreciate
25 the three of you being here. I know we

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2 have one more witness to hear who has not
3 yet had a chance to speak.

4 MR. GROSE: I'll be very quick.

5 COUNCILMAN OH: But let me
6 excuse the two of you. If you don't need
7 to stick around, I appreciate you coming
8 here, sharing all that information. If
9 you do want to stay at the table, thank
10 you so much, but you certainly don't have
11 to. I know you have some busy work to
12 do.

13 With that, let me ask --

14 MR. FENERTY: Thank you.

15 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
16 much.

17 MR. NEY: Thank you,
18 Mr. Chairman.

19 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you.

20 Let me ask Ed Grose to please
21 identify yourself for the record and give
22 your testimony. Thank you so much for
23 being patient.

24 MR. GROSE: Good morning. As
25 you just said, my name is Ed Grose. I'm

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2 the Executive Director of the Greeter
3 Philadelphia Hotel Association. We
4 represent 91 hotels around the region,
5 including all the hotels in Center City
6 and most within Philadelphia County.

7 I am here today to express the
8 hotel industry's concern about the state
9 of Philadelphia taxicabs, and by request
10 of the PHLCVB, I was asked to include
11 them in my testimony. So you get the two
12 for one and it will save you some time
13 this morning.

14 I'm going to go a little bit
15 off script that I wrote last night based
16 on some of the questions I heard earlier.

17 As you know, a Philadelphia
18 taxicab is the first and last impression
19 our visitor has of our city. When they
20 arrive in the airport, it's often a
21 taxicab that takes them into the City and
22 a taxicab who returns them to the airport
23 at the conclusion of their trip.

24 I commend the Parking Authority
25 for many of the things that they have

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2 achieved, credit card processing, GPS,
3 and we're getting to a point now where we
4 have to take it a step further. I know I
5 would like to hear from more of my
6 members on when they have issues with
7 cabs so that it can be passed on to the
8 PPA. But the biggest thing that -- the
9 thing that is getting me today in hearing
10 some of the questions is the issue of
11 taxicabs that are retrofitted for
12 wheelchairs for the disabled citizens and
13 visitors of Philadelphia.

14 I have been a member of the
15 customer -- the Philadelphia Taxicab
16 Customer Advisory Board for nine years,
17 and we have discussed having taxicabs for
18 disabled riders. Many times over the
19 nine years I've heard many arguments
20 against it, and it really bothers me that
21 nine years later, we really -- we still
22 don't have enough disabled cabs.

23 I've seen it put in legislation
24 in Harrisburg that doesn't pass because
25 of other things that are added on to the

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2 legislation and it doesn't pass, and then
3 we end up without the disabled cabs.

4 Just for fun, I did some
5 checking, and Juneau, Alaska at one point
6 had more taxicabs for disabled riders
7 than Philadelphia, and they're a town of
8 30,000 people. You know, some of the
9 arguments against it are the cost of a
10 disabled cab. I just don't buy that.
11 Other cities are doing it. Small towns
12 are doing it. And we are doing our
13 riders a disservice.

14 You know, I commend SEPTA for
15 all the things that they have done, but I
16 believe a disabled rider deserves a
17 choice. Thank God, you know, I'm an
18 able-bodied person, but I rely on
19 taxicabs to do my job, and if I were
20 disabled, it would hinder my ability to
21 make my appointments and to get around
22 town. And I think this is something that
23 we can't keep talking about. We need to
24 do it. And like I said, nine years is
25 too long.

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2 So like I said, I'm not going
3 to continue with the rest of my script.
4 I'd be happy to answer any questions that
5 you may have. And you have my
6 Association's full support on anything
7 that improves the customer service of a
8 Philadelphia taxicab.

9 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
10 much.

11 Are there any questions?
12 (No response.)

13 COUNCILMAN OH: Just one
14 question.

15 MR. GROSE: Sure.

16 COUNCILMAN OH: Very brief
17 answer. From the perspective of the
18 hotel industry in terms of business and
19 tourist visitors, has there been any
20 information that people who come to our
21 city are not able to get the cabs that
22 they need or that we are going to be
23 affected convention-wise or otherwise?

24 MR. GROSE: Yes. I mean, it is
25 a problem. I mean, we market ourselves

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2 as a walkable city to conventions. Bill
3 Schmidt, who is behind me, has been
4 extremely patient and responsive with any
5 concerns that I pass on to him. I mean,
6 we're talking five minutes he's on it.
7 But there's still -- we need to support
8 the PPA in making the cabs better, and in
9 their efforts, their efforts get a lot
10 of -- they have a lot of arguments
11 against them. And if you consider things
12 like in -- oftentimes I hear visitors
13 have trouble paying with credit cards,
14 they get harassed if they're not going to
15 the airport. And on our end, we need to
16 pass this information on to the PPA.

17 But I do hear things like that,
18 and I think that we need to support them.
19 And I think that more medallions will
20 mean more competition and it will give
21 cab owners incentives to improve the
22 product and to improve the service that
23 they're offering.

24 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
25 much for your testimony.

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2 MR. GROSE: Thank you very much
3 for your time.

4 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you.

5 Clerk, would you call up the
6 next panel, please.

7 THE CLERK: David Alperstein,
8 Ronald Blount, Billy Goodman, Joey
9 Gabbays.

10 (Witnesses approached witness
11 table.)

12 COUNCILMAN OH: I will say we
13 only have one more panel after this.

14 I understand we called four
15 witnesses. So I see three witnesses at
16 the table, and so what I will just advise
17 you is that if you have submitted written
18 testimony, you don't have to read it
19 verbatim. We do have that for the
20 record, and this, as you know, is a
21 fact-finding examination.

22 So please let me go from your
23 left to right. Please state your name
24 for the record and then provide us with
25 your testimony. Thank you very much.

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2 MR. ALPERSTEIN: Thank you very
3 much. My name is David Alperstein. I am
4 the Executive Director of the Greater
5 Philadelphia Taxi Association, also known
6 as GPLTA. I'm also a practicing
7 attorney in the City of Philadelphia and
8 I've represented hundreds of drivers and
9 medallion owners over the past, I'd say,
10 close to a decade.

11 Members of the Committee,
12 Philadelphia is a world-class city in
13 nearly every way. We are a tourist
14 destination for our arts and history, an
15 academic hub, and a center for global
16 commerce. But the residents of and
17 visitors to the City of Brotherly Love
18 often encounter one aspect of our city
19 that is hard to love - the condition of
20 our taxi industry.

21 We lag behind many cities in
22 the quality and safety of our cabs, their
23 impact on the environment, how accessible
24 they are to the disabled, and how widely
25 they are available to all. Now, thanks

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2 to you, the resolution being discussed
3 today hopefully will initiate ways to
4 improve the taxi experience for everyone
5 who is a passenger, driver, taxpayer or
6 visitor to Philadelphia. The Greater
7 Philadelphia Taxi Association hopes to
8 help in that effort.

9 I'll skip through a little bit.
10 I could submit the written testimony to
11 move this along.

12 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
13 much.

14 MR. ALPERSTEIN: Mr. Chairman,
15 here are some of our ideas:

16 Let's make Philly cabs greener.
17 There are no energy efficiency
18 requirements or mandates that our cabs be
19 hybrid or CNG vehicles that are less
20 burdensome on our environment. This must
21 change. Like steps taken to make our
22 fleet of official cars and trucks more
23 green, so too should we have requirements
24 that our cabs live up to higher
25 standards.

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2 Let's make Philly cabs safer
3 for drivers and riders. Taxi owners are
4 required to have the lowest levels of
5 insurance in the country, a mere 15,000
6 in liability coverage per person. Many
7 cities protect passengers with
8 requirements that are ten times that
9 amount. We should raise our minimums.

10 Drivers also lack protection
11 that is common in other cities like a
12 flashing panic light that can alert
13 passersby or police officers of a driver
14 or passenger in distress. This low-cost
15 safety regulation should be added to all
16 our cabs.

17 Let's make Philly cabs
18 accessible to all. Our city has a grand
19 total of seven wheelchair-accessible cabs
20 serving a disabled population of at least
21 130,000. By contrast, New York City
22 added 200 medallions for
23 wheelchair-accessible vehicles in one
24 day. This lack of access for the
25 disabled is more than inhumane for our

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2 residents. It makes us uncompetitive
3 when attracting conventions and
4 businesses that want to accommodate all
5 citizens.

6 Let's make Philly cabs modern.
7 In addition to ensuring that cars
8 themselves are new, we must also strive
9 to have cabs that can be tracked by GPS,
10 that give passengers access to
11 applications to pay for some of the ride,
12 and let passengers give instant feedback
13 on the quality of their experience.

14 Lastly, let's make Philly cabs
15 equal for all. There are wide
16 disparities in the taxi experience in
17 Philadelphia. Depending on the luck of
18 the draw, an arriving visitor at 30th
19 Street Station could hop into one of the
20 best appointed cabs in America or
21 something approaching a jalopy. There
22 are some communities that have virtually
23 no access to hail and long delays for a
24 dispatched taxi. And as pointed out
25 before, if you are in a wheelchair,

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2 catching a cab is akin to winning the
3 lottery.

4 Much of the problem is the
5 sheer shortage of cabs. With only 1,600
6 cabs permitted in Philadelphia, a number
7 that inexplicably hasn't risen in 40
8 years, there are simply not enough taxis
9 to go around and little competitive
10 incentive for medallion owners to improve
11 service. A sale of new cab medallions
12 coupled with higher standards would
13 infuse City coffers with cash and ensure
14 equal access for all to quality service.

15 These are broad outlines of
16 badly needed reforms. We at GPHLTA stand
17 ready to help this Council make sure that
18 this isn't the last of the conversation
19 but rather the beginning of a true
20 conversation that makes Philadelphia a
21 world-class city that finally has a
22 world-class taxi system.

23 Thank you for allowing us to
24 testify today, Councilman, and I am
25 pleased to answer any questions you might

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2 have. If not, we do thank you for your
3 time.

4 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
5 much for your testimony.

6 Sir, would you please identify
7 yourself for the record and provide us
8 with your testimony.

9 MR. GOODMAN: Yes. My name is
10 Billy Goodman and I was a taxi driver in
11 the City of Philadelphia about 25 years
12 or more. And the last two and a half
13 years, I was the first and the only
14 wheelchair driver in the City of
15 Philadelphia, and the last two and a half
16 years was very challenging to me, because
17 I enjoy what I'm doing. Unfortunately,
18 my mother, she was in a wheelchair the
19 last eight years of her life. So it's
20 really touched me a whole lot.

21 But the problem is -- it's not
22 a problem for me. It's a problem for the
23 industry right now. We may have somebody
24 in South Philadelphia want a cab at 9:30
25 and somebody in Chestnut Hill want a cab

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2 at 9:30, and right now what we're doing
3 because the wheelchair-accessible cabs
4 are so limited, we are adjusting times,
5 like I can't pick you up at 9:30, make it
6 8 o'clock I do South Philadelphia and
7 then later I have to adjust the Chestnut
8 Hill time. So that's a real problem,
9 trying to get Point A to Point B and
10 Schuylkill Expressway.

11 But I really enjoy driving.
12 It's really exciting to me at the time.

13 I have a lady I pick up. She's
14 a young attorney in the City of
15 Philadelphia, and I was telling her she
16 has to make an advanced appointment
17 sometimes through my dispatcher, and she
18 said, Why do I have to do that?
19 Everybody else don't have to do that.
20 She said that's discriminating.

21 And I said, You're right about
22 that.

23 So we do need more
24 wheelchair-accessible taxis in the City
25 of Philadelphia.

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2 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
3 much, sir.

4 Sir, would you please take the
5 microphone, identify yourself for the
6 record and provide us with your
7 testimony. Thank you.

8 MR. BLOUNT: Yes. My name is
9 Ronald Blount. I'm the President of the
10 Taxi Workers Alliance of Pennsylvania
11 based here in Philadelphia. I'm also the
12 Vice President of the National Taxi
13 Workers Alliance affiliated with the
14 national AFL-CIO.

15 I'm going to skip through my
16 comments since everyone has a copy of it.
17 But I began driving a cab in 1983. Our
18 first vehicle was an old checkered, and
19 during that time, I didn't have to come
20 to Center City. I was servicing the 1.45
21 million people that lived in the other --
22 out in the neighborhoods. And I just
23 want to say that times have changed since
24 then. In those days, I didn't have to
25 work 12 to 16 hours a day. I didn't have

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2 to work six to seven days a week. I
3 could work five days a week, send my
4 child to college. I had a middle-class
5 life.

6 And the first thing like when
7 we talk about taxi reforms, we always
8 talk about new vehicles and better
9 vehicles, but there's another part that
10 goes with it. Even if you put every
11 vehicle on the street, if every vehicle
12 on the street was a Rolls-Royce or
13 Maybach or Maserati, it doesn't matter if
14 the taxi drivers themselves are living in
15 poverty, if the taxi drivers themselves
16 can't pay they rent, they can't send they
17 kids to school, they don't have any
18 health insurance, they have no workers'
19 comp, no disability coverage. They're
20 not even covered on the vehicle's
21 insurance. If the drivers is hit by a
22 drunk driver per se, he's pretty much on
23 his own. That 15/30 coverage doesn't
24 cover the driver himself. What they're
25 doing now, even if it's not the driver's

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2 fault, the driver has to pay a 500 to a
3 thousand dollar surcharge to these
4 medallion owners. So not only did the
5 drunk driver not only injure the driver,
6 the driver has no workers' compensation,
7 but he also has to pay the medallion
8 owner a thousand dollars if he wants to
9 continue to drive.

10 Also, we talk about the
11 medallion owners buying the vehicles.
12 Well, in Philadelphia, it's not like
13 that. Fifty percent of the vehicles in
14 Philadelphia is actually owned by the
15 drivers. So these drivers that are
16 making, according to the Parking
17 Authority, less than \$5 an hour, they're
18 taking their last little bit of savings
19 and they going out there and they buying
20 these crummy Crown Victorias. So all the
21 risk is put on them, the accidents, no
22 coverage, no nothing, but all the rewards
23 goes to the medallion owners. They went
24 from 2006, they went from \$60,000 for a
25 medallion to now \$500,000. So they get

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2 all the profits, and these poor drivers,
3 they're doing all the work, but they have
4 nothing.

5 And I want to talk about
6 another issue that's going on. It's in
7 my comments. I want to talk about the
8 overcharging of leases. The Philadelphia
9 Parking Authority by Act 94 was tasked
10 with regulating taxicabs, setting either
11 a minimum wage or a maximum leased cab.
12 Well, these medallion owners have been
13 overcharging drivers. Fifty percent of
14 the drivers are paying since September
15 the 1st, 2012. We, the taxi workers,
16 went to the Philadelphia Parking
17 Authority. We staged several protests in
18 front of these medallion owners for
19 overcharging. Eight months later, the
20 Philadelphia Parking Authority did post
21 on a website telling these medallion
22 owners that they are overcharging the
23 drivers, and they gave them the list and,
24 to they credit, they even asked each
25 medallion owner to submit their lease

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2 agreements with the drivers. Well, I'm
3 here to tell you today, a year and a half
4 later, not only do those medallion owners
5 continue to charge more, they went up
6 even more money. So these drivers are
7 paying like \$60 to \$70 more a week to
8 lease a cab. I mean, that's a lot of
9 money for somebody that's making \$5 an
10 hour.

11 Now, the Parking Authority's
12 solution to this is to, Okay, well, what
13 we going to do is, we going to raise the
14 meter so that because they charging you
15 guys illegally, we're going to raise the
16 meter so we can raise the leased cab so
17 they are legal. But all that does is,
18 it's not giving any more money to the
19 drivers. It's putting more pressure on
20 the customers, the riding public, to get
21 into these cabs. And we want people in
22 North, South, West Philadelphia, we want
23 them inside of these cabs. We don't want
24 to just service Center City district. We
25 got 1.45 million residents that deserve

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2 taxicab service, along with people with
3 disabilities.

4 And so I just want to talk
5 about maybe some innovative ideas and
6 some solutions. Like the City of
7 Chicago, they have a taxi driver
8 incentive program where taxi drivers
9 perform well, there's different programs
10 at the end of the year that rewards
11 drivers. Instead of always hitting them
12 with the stick, sometimes you can give
13 them the carrot.

14 And I want to talk about cities
15 like New York, Chicago, San Francisco
16 that provide some sort of workers'
17 compensation for these drivers,
18 low-income workers, when they're injured
19 on the job. There's some protection. If
20 we talking about bringing us into the
21 21st century, this is one of the things
22 we want to do.

23 Also, I want to give the
24 Parking Authority some credit about
25 helping with taxi drivers' safety. As

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2 you know, last year has really been
3 horrendous for drivers. It was capped by
4 the unsolved murder of Hafaz Safaraz back
5 in May of last year. Since then, the
6 Parking Authority has been working with
7 the drivers, and they have improved, put
8 surveillance cameras in the cabs, maybe
9 putting a trouble light in the cab so
10 people would know when cab drivers are in
11 trouble, but it stopped short with the
12 panic button, number one. The panic
13 button right now goes directly to the
14 dispatcher. So I had a member, he had a
15 shotgun to his head. He hits the panic
16 button and a dispatcher say, Car,
17 whatever his number was, are you okay?
18 There was nothing he could say. He had a
19 shotgun to his head.

20 You know, we would suggest that
21 that panic button some kind of way be
22 monitored to a 9-1-1 call center. And
23 there's enough money in the taxi industry
24 from the taxi drivers, the medallion
25 owners that we could supplement the

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2 Police Department to do this. This will
3 save so many lives.

4 You know, training, drivers
5 training. Initially drivers are trained
6 when they first become a taxi driver in
7 Philadelphia. So it's a three- or
8 four-day training, and that's it. I've
9 been driving for 30 years. I've never
10 went -- besides my initial training, I've
11 never been to another training. And
12 drivers need to be upkeep on customer
13 service, on safety, how to make a living
14 and stuff like that.

15 I'm not going to speak too much
16 longer. I'm almost finished. I just
17 want to make sure I got it.

18 I got to talk about Act 119.
19 They want to add 15 medallions per year
20 over a ten-year period. That's shameful.
21 I mean, 15 per year? That is shameful.
22 Even the whole 150 at the same time is
23 shameful. The legislators in Harrisburg
24 must revisit this Act. That number is
25 seriously deficient.

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2 Also what we're not talking
3 about is where the revenues of the sale
4 of this money is going. You're talking
5 about \$60 million. The PPA Taxi and Limo
6 Division has a budget of about \$5.5
7 million. Right? Every year they get a
8 dollar for every parking ticket, and the
9 medallion owners and the drivers pay the
10 rest. They never have a deficit at the
11 end of the year. They always have a
12 surplus. This \$60 million is just going
13 to sit in some fund and rot away when
14 there's other needs in Philadelphia. I
15 mean, our school system is suffering. We
16 can take 10 percent and create some sort
17 of driver relief fund where drivers can
18 pay into annually to sustain it.

19 So, I mean, we support better
20 cars, but the drivers right now can't
21 afford it. Some kind of way these
22 medallion owners that benefited from the
23 increase of these medallion value, they
24 have to put some skin in the game or the
25 City should control these medallions. I

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2 mean, when you look at cities that have
3 medallions and don't have medallions,
4 Denver, Houston, Austin, they have better
5 cars. You know, we have these crummy
6 cars because two-thirds of the revenue is
7 going to these medallion owners that sit
8 in Miami on the beach somewhere. If the
9 City controlled this public property, the
10 drivers came to get -- to rent the cars
11 from the City, the drivers bring a brand
12 new vehicle to the City, the driver
13 brings his own insurance, the driver goes
14 through training and creates some sort of
15 code of conduct, it would be better for
16 the City. The City itself will benefit.

17 The medallion system -- they
18 were supposed to get this revenue and
19 throw it back into the industry. They're
20 not going to do it. There's no law to
21 make them do it.

22 Thank you.

23 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
24 much, Mr. Blount. Let me just state
25 publicly that you and I have met on a

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2 number of occasions, and one of the
3 purposes of this hearing is to not only
4 improve the quality and availability of
5 cabs for the public, but also to examine
6 how the lives of the cab drivers
7 themselves would be better enhanced. We
8 have had those conversations and we'll
9 continue to have them. I appreciate your
10 innovative ideas.

11 I think one of the things that
12 we're examining and we're trying to
13 examine is that there is a point where if
14 you have too few cabs or the quality
15 isn't of what the ridership wants, you
16 have less revenues per driver. If you
17 increase the quality and the
18 desirability, depending on the
19 demographics; for example, the
20 demographics that I've looked at says
21 that there's an existing and growing
22 night ridership in Philadelphia and that
23 there is, as we've discussed, a large
24 need by conventioners, tourists and
25 others and with the new buildings and

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2 hotels that are coming to Center City and
3 other parts as well.

4 But there are issues that you
5 raise as to how do we take some of those
6 needs and shift them around so that we
7 have better safety and look at some of
8 these cities that have workers'
9 compensation and other things.

10 The one thing that I will state
11 as a Councilman and Chair of this
12 committee, because two of you have kind
13 of in one statement said more money for
14 the City and you just said the fund for
15 PPA. To my knowledge, the money goes to
16 the state. The reason for that is, it is
17 a state legislation. We as a city do not
18 regulate or control the cab industry.
19 This hearing is an examination, as was
20 raised before. There may be some things
21 we could do legislatively. Other than
22 that, it is a collective political will
23 of our elected officials to express
24 themselves in Harrisburg, along with our
25 other state and federal officials, and

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2 also to publicize to our citizenship and
3 to all our advocate groups to focus on
4 Harrisburg for the adjustments and things
5 that we need.

6 So whatever money is here is
7 not going to a fund in the City and, to
8 my knowledge, it's not simply sitting in
9 PPA. I believe the money will go to PPA,
10 but is, by legislation, controlled by
11 Harrisburg. And I'm not saying they have
12 any ill use of the money. I'm sure they
13 have many good things they need it for.
14 If I'm incorrect, I could be corrected
15 later.

16 But I just wanted to address
17 that we do care about the cab drivers.
18 We understand the financial economic
19 challenges. I find it interesting, as
20 I'm sure you do, that we go to other
21 cities that have beautiful cabs, they're
22 well regulated, and they have a lot of
23 cabs, and the fares are cheaper and the
24 drivers are making more money. Somewhere
25 in this mix there is a better formula for

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2 us.

3 So with that, I'll recognize

4 Councilwoman Cindy Bass.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you,

6 Councilman.

7 I was just chuckling a little

8 bit, because I was thinking I don't know

9 if I've ever gotten a cab that I would

10 describe as beautiful.

11 COUNCILMAN OH: Well, you have

12 to travel.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. All

14 right.

15 But I did want to say a couple

16 things. Number one, I wanted to thank

17 all of you for your testimony. And, you

18 know, I am not as familiar with the taxi

19 industry as some of my colleagues may be,

20 but I was intrigued by some of the things

21 that you said, Mr. --

22 MR. BLOUNT: Blount.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Blount.

24 MR. BLOUNT: Yes, ma'am.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

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2 Particularly around the medallions versus
3 no medallions in cities where -- some
4 cities, you said, operate without the use
5 of medallions and that there is -- the
6 end result of that is better taxi, safer
7 taxi, a better equipped vehicle.

8 And so I think even -- I don't
9 know if it's something that we can do
10 anything about, because as my colleague
11 just mentioned, a lot of it comes out of
12 Harrisburg, but what we can do is begin
13 to have the conversation, and I think
14 that we need to at least begin to have
15 the dialogue about what that means for
16 the City of Philadelphia, what it means
17 for riders, what does it mean for those
18 who have -- special needs population. As
19 we think about what it is that we're
20 really trying to do, which is make
21 Philadelphia a world-class city in which
22 everybody can have an opportunity to get
23 into a taxi, not wait for a particular
24 type of taxi or be delayed because they
25 have to wait because the taxi they need

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2 is out of service or unavailable, but how
3 do we make Philadelphia a city where
4 people can come and go and move and it's
5 convenient, and it's a combination of
6 efforts between the taxi industry and
7 between SEPTA and all of the other ways
8 that people can get around.

9 So I really wanted to thank you
10 for your comments, all of you really, for
11 your comments, but also wanted to mention
12 as we talk about the challenges to the
13 drivers and talk about what some of the
14 challenges are to those who have special
15 needs who need taxis that are wheelchair
16 accessible, I have a -- well, I had a
17 father-in-law who spent probably 10, 15
18 years of his life in a wheelchair, and so
19 I know what it's like to travel with
20 someone who is in a wheelchair, whether
21 you're getting on an airplane and how
22 inaccessible it was and how when you're
23 trying to get some place, and even making
24 decisions in terms of buying a property.
25 I remember my husband and I were buying a

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2 home and we decided against some homes
3 because we figured the door frame was too
4 small, he couldn't be able to wheel into
5 that property.

6 And so these are the kind of
7 challenges that our special needs
8 populations have and that we need to be
9 particularly sensitive about, and we want
10 to think about those as well as the
11 challenges to the drivers and to the
12 community at large.

13 But I think that there is a way
14 to make this a win-win for everybody and
15 to make Philadelphia the world-class city
16 that we want it to be. I believe that we
17 can get to where we are trying to get to
18 and that communication, at the end of the
19 day, is really what's going to make the
20 difference.

21 So I think that this should be
22 the very beginning of the conversation.
23 I hope that -- I'll speak with the
24 Chairman particularly of Transportation
25 and also Councilman Oh in reference to

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2 having additional conversation around
3 this topic so that we don't just drop it
4 here after today's hearing, but something
5 that obviously -- we need to find some
6 solutions, and the way to do that, in my
7 opinion, is to communicate. So I look
8 forward to doing that.

9 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
10 much, Councilwoman.

11 Thank you for your testimony
12 and for being here today. I know you're
13 busy and I appreciate your coming in.
14 Thank you very much.

15 (Thank you.)

16 COUNCILMAN OH: With that, I'll
17 ask the Clerk to call our final panel.

18 THE CLERK: Thomas Earle,
19 German Parodi, Mark Longo.

20 (Witnesses approached witness
21 table.)

22 COUNCILMAN OH: All right.
23 Thank you very much. We called three
24 witnesses. I see that two are present,
25 and I will ask you to identify yourself

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2 for the record and provide your
3 statement, your testimony. And,
4 Mr. Earle, would you begin.

5 MR. EARLE: Yes. Mr. Chair, my
6 gratitude to you as Chair of this
7 committee and also Councilman O'Brien as
8 Chair of the committee of people with
9 special needs in the City of Philadelphia
10 and the rest of our City Councilmembers
11 who are here today to discuss this very
12 big dilemma. This is a problem. When we
13 have a city our size that is as populated
14 as we are, having such a poor level of
15 service, not just to the disabled
16 community but the community at large,
17 disabled veterans who visit our city,
18 tourists who visit our city, it falls far
19 short of the mark. And I understand that
20 a lot of -- there was a review of some
21 statistics at the beginning of our
22 testimony. So I'll just identify myself
23 first.

24 I'm Thomas Earle, the CEO of
25 Liberty Resources. I have a legal

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2 background as a licensed attorney. In
3 the '90s, I did a lot of federal
4 litigation, including cases against
5 SEPTA, because SEPTA fell woefully short
6 of the mark in serving the disabled
7 community with their fixed route service
8 as well as Paratransit. Many of the
9 things we're hearing here today -
10 regulations, time, expense - were many of
11 the excuses that SEPTA gave us in the
12 '90s when their bus service was not 100
13 percent accessible and when Paratransit
14 routinely denied people trips for service
15 or were very late for services.

16 So here we are in 2014, 24
17 years after the passage of the ADA, which
18 is the landmark civil rights legislation
19 for people with disabilities, and we're
20 hearing statistics like seven accessible
21 cabs out of 1,600 and the limited service
22 and excuse after an excuse. Whether it's
23 the State Legislature, the Philadelphia
24 Parking Authority or lack of coordination
25 with SEPTA, we're all smart people. We

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2 need to put our heads together and figure
3 out a solution, and I commend you,
4 Councilman Oh, for calling this hearing.
5 This is the first hearing we've had on
6 something like this at City Hall for many
7 years.

8 I am also the Chairperson of
9 the Commission on Human Relations, which
10 is responsible for enforcing the Fair
11 Practices Ordinance, which parallels the
12 ADA on many levels, including public
13 accommodation and transportation
14 services. And what we're looking at here
15 is, transportation is a form of public
16 accommodation. Just like when Rosa Parks
17 in the '60s was instructed to sit at the
18 back of the bus, here people with
19 disabilities sometimes can't even get on
20 the bus, and it's 2014.

21 We would never think of
22 restaurants or hotels or shuttle service
23 or any service in Philadelphia saying,
24 Oh, we're only going to let a certain
25 number of people of color on these

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2 vehicles because we only have seven in
3 service right now. You can't use the
4 rest of them. But that's what the
5 analogy boils down to, is that people
6 with disabilities in Philadelphia and
7 visitors and our disabled veterans really
8 have no choice, and it begins when they
9 fly into Philadelphia airport. There's
10 not one accessible shuttle service from
11 the airport to any of the hotels.

12 We heard from the hotel
13 industry earlier acknowledging that we
14 need more taxis, especially more taxis
15 for people with disabilities, but we also
16 need to realize that the hotel industry,
17 they operate vans. Almost every hotel in
18 the City of Philadelphia that's a major
19 hotel operates a van to rush VIP
20 customers between the hotel and the
21 airport or vice versa. Very few, if any,
22 of those vans are wheelchair accessible,
23 and they need to be.

24 So it's great to look at
25 accessible taxis, but Philadelphia has an

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2 accessibility problem. It's an old city.
3 It's a historic city, tracks millions of
4 visitors a year, yet the accessibility of
5 this city has been painstakingly slow.

6 The disabled community in the
7 early '90s, if you recall, had to sue
8 then Mayor Rendell and the City to get
9 curb cuts in. And as Councilman O'Brien
10 noted, we don't need curb cuts at every
11 third or fourth block. People with
12 disabilities need accessibility designed
13 into everything we do going forward so
14 that they have the choice to do
15 everything they want to do and have many
16 ways to do it.

17 You may ask about SEPTA. I
18 heard some discussion about that earlier.
19 SEPTA Paratransit is one of the most
20 expensive ways to transport a person with
21 a disability. In the '90s I recall when
22 we litigated, it was about \$28 a ride
23 that between state and federal subsidies
24 paid for that cost for SEPTA. Thousands
25 of people use that service on a daily

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2 basis. Cities like Chicago have wisely
3 begun to look at what if we can offload
4 some of the ridership from our
5 Paratransit system into the private pay
6 taxicab system. And there's the
7 beginning and nationwide the use of those
8 Paratransit subsidies to pay for a
9 portion of taxi rides on a private system
10 by a private rider. That's something
11 that could be easily coordinated in
12 Philadelphia with SEPTA. It just
13 requires the responsible decision-makers
14 to come to the table and do it.

15 Councilman Oh, I know you've
16 expressed a desire for clean natural
17 energy, which is very efficient and good
18 for the environment. It's also very cost
19 saving, and Pennsylvania sitting on the
20 mother lode of the Marcellus Shale is
21 going to have more and more readily
22 available clean natural gas. Beginning
23 to convert part of the City's fleet to
24 clean natural gas and possibly requiring
25 the Philadelphia Parking Authority to

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2 also give some type of incentive program
3 when issuing their medallions to issue
4 them to new medallion owners who will use
5 clean natural gas in their vehicles and
6 are also wheelchair accessible, this is a
7 great innovative solution, and there are
8 many ways to do this. We really need to
9 work on this.

10 It's truly an embarrassment
11 when I work at the Liberty Resources and
12 we get a phone call about a disabled
13 veteran who has flown into the airport
14 and can't get from the airport to a hotel
15 except for the SEPTA Regional Rail. What
16 if you're arriving at 1:00 in the morning
17 and you have three suitcases and you're
18 using a motorized chair. Riding SEPTA is
19 not the solution for everyone. It's not
20 the choice that most people would take.
21 When you fly in and out of an airport,
22 you like to be able to have a couple
23 options and know that no matter what time
24 you arrive or how late your flight is,
25 you have a way to get to your

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2 destination. And there have been times
3 in Philadelphia when members from
4 national organizations like National
5 ADAPT, Disabled in Action, Eastern
6 Paralyzed Veterans Association, which is
7 now the United Spinal Association, PVA,
8 Paralyzed Veterans Association, these are
9 all national organizations with a very
10 large footprint of business throughout
11 the country, large membership, many of
12 them disabled veteran groups. They are
13 not going to come to Philadelphia and
14 have a convention here when they can't
15 even get their membership from the
16 airport to the Convention Center. And
17 yet we have this beautiful Convention
18 Center that you can't get to.

19 So we really would like to see
20 at least 200 medallions issued in the
21 next two years, maximum. This talk about
22 this legislation where it calls for 10
23 cabs or 15 cabs per year over the next
24 ten years will net 150 cabs. That's too
25 slow. And as Councilman O'Brien said,

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2 this is something that can be done. I
3 don't hear anyone here testifying that we
4 shouldn't issue more medallions. To the
5 contrary, everybody -- I think one thing
6 that we have consensus on is, we need
7 more medallions. We need more cabs on
8 the street, and not just in Center City,
9 throughout the entire city. And for
10 clients who come to Liberty Resources,
11 having a cab is a choice, an additional
12 choice that they would have to be a
13 member of society.

14 Civil rights movements, whether
15 they're based on gender, race, religion,
16 and now disability, have social costs,
17 and just because social costs might be
18 something that's a short-term concern
19 doesn't mean we should stall long-term
20 progress of a socially integrated society
21 where people with physical disabilities,
22 intellectual disabilities, and any other
23 special needs can hail a cab like anybody
24 else.

25 I thank you very much for this

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2 opportunity.

3 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
4 much. I will have the final witness
5 testify and open up for questions.

6 Please state your name for the
7 record and provide us with your
8 testimony. Thank you.

9 MR. PARODI: Yes. Good
10 morning, Councilmembers. Thank you again
11 for, as every member here has said, the
12 opportunity to have more accessible
13 taxicabs, for the handful we have is
14 pretty horrible.

15 Let me start with the
16 organization that I am here representing.
17 Again, my name is German Parodi and I am
18 a Board member of Disabled in Action. We
19 are a grassroots organization in the City
20 that has been advocating for the rights
21 of people with disabilities for over 30
22 years.

23 A little history of Disabled in
24 Action in trying to get
25 wheelchair-accessible cabs in

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2 Philadelphia. For over 14 years, this
3 has been one of our priorities, since the
4 PUC was responsible for the medallion
5 taxicab program. Then when they refused
6 to work with us then and when PPA got the
7 responsibility for the medallion program
8 in 2004, we initiated the conversation
9 with the need of accessible taxicabs, and
10 nothing has happened since.

11 Many legislations have gone
12 through Harrisburg, and they have stomped
13 it at the beginning, not letting it
14 through because they just -- they don't
15 want it. They see us as a community that
16 does not need the service. Obviously
17 that's what they were speaking of.

18 Now, it is outrageous that 24
19 years after the ADA was passed we just
20 have a handful, seven as we've heard,
21 accessible taxicabs, and the ones that
22 we've gotten have been with no help from
23 the PPA.

24 We, the citizens of
25 Philadelphia, need more accessible

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2 taxicabs, and it's a shame that we're
3 trying to be -- having a world-class
4 Convention Center, bring in the Flower
5 Show, the Car Show, these shows that
6 bring national and international
7 attention, a person with disability, how
8 am I going to get around? There's no
9 way. It already cuts services to tourism
10 that we need in the City.

11 Now, we've spoken that there is
12 only one accessible cab for 20,000
13 residents, and that's not including the
14 tourists that we could have that we're
15 not having. How could we serve the
16 tourist if the accessible cabs that we
17 have are not serving the people that live
18 here?

19 I myself found recently, with
20 this horrible weather that we've been
21 having, waiting 30 minutes at least for a
22 bus, wanting, really wanting, for the
23 availability to hail a cab. And it's a
24 shame, and daily knowing and seeing
25 people hail a cab, 30 seconds, a minute,

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2 you don't have to have your arm up
3 outside and a cab would come by. I mean,
4 it's discrimination and it's segregation
5 that we're experiencing on a daily basis,
6 and it's outrageous. It's really
7 angering that I see that, especially in
8 this weather. We know it's going to get
9 worse. The summer is going to get worse.
10 The winter is going to get worse. And
11 there's hard times aside from tourists
12 moments that more cabs are used because
13 more people are cold, more people are
14 hot. And this morning I was like how
15 easy it would be, but, no. We don't have
16 the opportunity. We don't have the
17 option.

18 We know that Act 119 was passed
19 in Harrisburg. By now we should have 45
20 accessible cabs. Maybe we'll have them
21 in the summer, like Jim Ney said. They
22 won't likely come in one clump. They'll
23 start trickling in. We need more
24 accessible cabs, and hopefully this
25 resolution will add at least 150 by next

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2 year.

3 You know, the comments from
4 Councilman O'Brien were very keen on how
5 Paratransit can serve, but it's very
6 unreliable. It's hours sometimes when
7 they tell you they're going to pick you
8 up or drop off. I have a
9 (unintelligible). I do a lot of work in
10 the City. It's not a reliable service,
11 and taxicabs would be. I mean, it's
12 something that it's imperative and you've
13 heard the need.

14 I really hope that you stand by
15 the rights of people with disabilities,
16 as it's not only an economic -- there
17 will be more people wanting it. There
18 will be an economic growth. People like
19 Ron Blount and the Taxi Workers Alliance
20 have been working with us for the last
21 number of years. We see the need for it.
22 They want it, and hopefully you stand by
23 us and add these taxis in the next year
24 for us.

25 Thank you.

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2 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
3 much.

4 (Applause.)

5 COUNCILMAN OH: At this time,
6 let me ask if any of my colleagues have
7 any questions.

8 Councilwoman Bass.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I did.
10 Thank you so much.

11 Tom, I wanted to thank you for
12 your comments and also Mr. Parodi. I
13 note that, Tom, you had mentioned that
14 this could be -- or actually that we
15 could be smarter about the way we
16 transport people, that in other cities --
17 I think you mentioned Chicago in
18 particular -- that there is a voucher
19 system that works. I was wondering if
20 you could go into a little bit more
21 detail about that and talk about what we
22 might be able to do, what we have under
23 our control, if any of these elements
24 that we could make it easier and smarter
25 and safer for folks with special needs to

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2 be able to travel via taxi.

3 MR. EARLE: Sure.

4 Councilwoman, for a person like

5 Mr. Parodi to use Paratransit, you have

6 to be deemed or certified ADA eligible to

7 use Paratransit, which, in essence, means

8 you have to be a person with a disability

9 that's substantially impaired in one or

10 more major life activities.

11 Once you have that

12 certification, you're eligible to use

13 Paratransit in the City of Philadelphia,

14 and ideally when you travel to another

15 city, that eligibility is supposed to

16 transfer to that other city.

17 What has begun to be used in

18 Chicago wisely is because of the reality

19 that that Paratransit service is so

20 expensive, that door-to-door Paratransit

21 service of a Ford E-350 vehicle,

22 gas-guzzling vehicle, with one rider on

23 it, pulling up, waiting, idling, picking

24 up the passenger, dropping them off costs

25 so much money that policymakers have

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2 discovered that what if we could reduce
3 the ridership on the Paratransit system
4 by using a good portion of that money to
5 subsidize a ride on a private pay taxi
6 service, using vouchers or a smart card
7 system, what-have-you. The technology
8 that's available nowadays is amazing.
9 It's doable, and encouraging people with
10 disabilities who are ADA eligible who use
11 Paratransit to use taxicabs. And they
12 like it because it increases their choice
13 and it's better -- it's more convenient.

14 Let's say I have a dentist's
15 appointment tomorrow. If I use
16 Paratransit, if I don't make that
17 appointment on Paratransit 24 hours in
18 advance, I can't make it to the dentist.
19 So in many cases, the rider, the disabled
20 rider, would have increased options to
21 get from Point A to Point B, whether it's
22 for work, medical appointments, whatever,
23 by using a subsidized system that takes
24 the money from the expensive Paratransit
25 system and moves it into the more

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2 cost-efficient private taxi pay system
3 to -- in Philadelphia, we have now begun
4 to see some better vehicles that are more
5 fuel efficient, such as Freedom Taxi
6 you'll notice uses the Altima, which gets
7 better mileage. It's not wheelchair
8 accessible, but they have rolled out
9 several cabs that are wheelchair
10 accessible.

11 So it's a system and a solution
12 that we need to look at, and I think the
13 stakeholders need to be not only the
14 disabled community but policymakers at
15 SEPTA in the Paratransit division and Mr.
16 Ney from the Philadelphia Parking
17 Authority and City Council's support.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Have you
19 made any recommendations to SEPTA?

20 MR. EARLE: Not yet, no. It's
21 almost embarrassing because it's hard to
22 make a recommendation of offloading high
23 volume demand on a SEPTA Paratransit
24 system. We're talking about 6,000 to
25 7,000 rides a day on that system to a

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2 private taxi system that until last year
3 had zero. So now we have seven. But we
4 really need to balance the system and
5 give more choice, and the Parking
6 Authority could play an instrumental role
7 in rolling that out, but we need to get
8 to the table and do it.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: All right.
10 Yeah, I agree completely. I think it
11 makes a lot of sense. I don't know if
12 you have any of the financial information
13 in terms of what the effects have been in
14 Chicago, but --

15 MR. EARLE: Not with me, no.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Yeah, but
17 the idea behind it I think makes perfect
18 sense, and there's no reason that we
19 shouldn't be having these conversations,
20 as I said earlier. I think a lot of the
21 problems and issues that we have, if we
22 just started communicating between the
23 appropriate parties, I think we can make
24 a lot of headway and get some things
25 done.

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2 So thank you.

3 MR. EARLE: Absolutely. And
4 just one last comment. A lot of people
5 are scratching their head, where does
6 this money go? Five hundred thousand
7 dollars for a medallion is a lot of
8 money. Where is that money going? To
9 the Parking Authority? To the State
10 Legislature? We don't know the answer to
11 that, but we do know that there's a
12 strong market demand for new medallions.
13 I've had conversations with taxicab
14 owners of multiple vehicles who would
15 love to be able to buy more medallions,
16 and they would love to buy them even if
17 they require clean natural gas and
18 wheelchair accessibility. And that
19 money, some of that money, maybe we can
20 look at going to the Philadelphia School
21 District or other funding needs
22 throughout the City.

23 (Applause.)

24 MR. EARLE: The School District
25 and the special needs education in

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2 Philadelphia has been very limited with
3 funding, and this could be an innovative
4 way to provide additional funding from a
5 portion of those medallions into the
6 School District.

7 And my last comment, I promise,
8 is the driver. As Mr. Blount very
9 eloquently pointed out, it truly is an
10 injustice that drivers, the people who
11 risk their lives driving people around in
12 the City of Philadelphia, who get robbed
13 at knife point or gunpoint or, God
14 forbid, get in a vehicle accident on the
15 Schuylkill or whatever it is, and they
16 have no remedy. They don't have workers'
17 comp. They're excluded from the
18 automobile coverage for some reason.

19 So I think it's very important
20 that given the staggering cost of a
21 medallion, \$500,000, that at least a
22 portion of that could be designated into
23 an injured driver fund --

24 (Applause.)

25 MR. EARLE: -- that will help

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2 these drivers stay in service and get the
3 health care they need if they, God
4 forbid, get injured. It's sort of
5 like -- it's like sending a soldier
6 overseas, they get injured, and when they
7 get back, you tell them they have no VA
8 benefits. Here you have a driver driving
9 a taxi transporting someone, they get
10 injured serving the public, and they have
11 no remedy.

12 So it's very important that
13 when the stakeholders get together -
14 SEPTA, the Parking Authority, members of
15 City Council, and the disabled
16 community - that all these issues and
17 needs get addressed.

18 Thank you very much.

19 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
20 much.

21 (Applause.)

22 COUNCILMAN OH: Are there any
23 other comments or questions?

24 (No response.)

25 COUNCILMAN OH: There being

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2 none that I see, I will note that no one
3 has signed up for public comment, but let
4 me ask at this point in time if there's
5 anyone in the audience who would like to
6 make public comment.

7 Okay. I see four people. I'm
8 going to have to impose this rule, three
9 minutes each. The reason is, we have a
10 12 o'clock Streets Committee hearing.

11 So please would you -- why
12 don't I have the four of you come up to
13 the panel table, please identify yourself
14 for the record. I will ask the Clerk to
15 give you a warning when you have 30
16 seconds, because I want to ensure that we
17 respect the next hearing coming up.

18 (Witnesses approached witness
19 table.)

20 COUNCILMAN OH: Please have a
21 seat in any order that you choose. I see
22 three people at the table. Did I
23 identify four witnesses?

24 Okay. It seems as we have
25 three.

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2 So let me ask you, your
3 testimony is being recorded, so please
4 identify yourself for the record and make
5 your statement. It will be limited to
6 three minutes. I apologize. I really
7 have to do that. So starting with you,
8 sir.

9 MR. WARDIGI: Aziz Wardigi
10 (ph). I'm promoting myself as Council
11 advisor in transportation and technology,
12 and as we seeing right now, there is a
13 big change in the industry nationwide and
14 worldwide with the smartpone and with
15 technology. And as the City of
16 Philadelphia, we know that the City of
17 Philadelphia promotes a lot to attract
18 more customers to the City, and we do
19 need this business. We need conventions.
20 We need a lot to promote our city to make
21 this happen, and everybody benefits from
22 it, and the taxi industry needs to
23 change.

24 We know that the PPA since they
25 start, they did a good job. They did

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2 maintain the industry. They did force
3 the owners to put new cars, but in this
4 balance, there is something missing that
5 nobody and everybody I believe, if you
6 are students or if you work, you express
7 your concern about the driver. The
8 driver, he's angry. He's mad.

9 We can change the cars. We can
10 change the technology, but if we have a
11 mad driver, the attitude will not change,
12 and we have these problems. So we hope
13 that the -- pay attention to our Council
14 that there is a mad driver. We want him
15 to be trained. We want him to be advised
16 and to serve the public the better way,
17 because this driver, we do have certain
18 numbers how many drivers have been shot,
19 killed doing the job, but after that and
20 nobody is concerned. So far, like he
21 said, the PPA are working hard to promote
22 this business and to fix this issue, but
23 we want to resolve this issue if we work
24 as partners.

25 I see the cost of \$27,000, the

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2 cost of the handicap cars, is not going
3 to be an issue if we all give to the
4 drivers a chance to own this medallion
5 and pay a fee monthly instead of give it
6 to some owners that they own it and they
7 abuse those drivers. And we can promote
8 this industry with the hand of 15
9 medallions different way. It should be
10 done, but it should be done different
11 way.

12 And thank you for your help.

13 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
14 much for your testimony, sir.

15 Ma'am, would you identify
16 yourself for the record and give us your
17 statement.

18 MS. NIAVO: My name is Falarga
19 Susan Niavo (ph). I thank everybody for
20 their own opinion. I have some bad
21 experience. I'm a college student for
22 Community College of Philadelphia.
23 Unfortunately for me, I have a bad
24 marriage, which I have to start my school
25 and I become -- since then, I become a

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2 cab driver. I worked with PUC first. I
3 never have no problem, never have no
4 ticket. When PPA come in, I like the way
5 they maintain the car. That's good about
6 them. But I have a lot of issue that
7 with my own experience.

8 I have experience of an
9 incident that happened before with them.
10 They suspend my license from then before
11 for six months. I have to hire different
12 lawyer. I lost a lot of money until I do
13 meet people, legal lawyer, they fight for
14 me and get my license back for me.

15 In about -- in July, I took a
16 customer to the New Jersey, and when I
17 went there, it was at nighttime. I
18 didn't see the (unintelligible) and I
19 turned where the arrow said turn. My GPS
20 said go on Exit A. The customer told me
21 to go on Exit C. My GPS said that. So I
22 follow what the customer told me.

23 On my turning that way when I
24 returned, the police came after me and
25 gave me ticket. So when the police came

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2 after me gave me ticket, when they did
3 that, they told me to come to court. I
4 was going to court. It's a special
5 dispatched job for me. Then I look at
6 the time. I said I have to -- it's like
7 a (unintelligible). And I took that
8 customer. I took it to the train
9 station. When I arrived down there with
10 the customer, the inspector -- two
11 inspectors came after me. The first one
12 that came after me said, You have to --
13 the shoe that I wear, they gave me a
14 paper. They just give me that paper in
15 the office. The paper said you can use
16 this shoe that cover your toe in the
17 front. And this is the shoe that I wear.
18 And he came after me and he was pushing
19 me to back up, back up, screaming at me
20 and he was threatening me I would now go
21 to that court. That was the day that my
22 license would be suspended, and that was
23 the month that my license would be
24 suspended if I don't renew it.

25 So as I was -- as they are

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2 screaming at me and they were threatening
3 me, I can't take it no more. I regret
4 ever driving a cab that day. Then when I
5 left, both of them are screaming, they're
6 going after me like a criminal. I almost
7 run to the accident. I almost got
8 killed. I told them that, Look, if
9 you're going to let me get suspended --

10 (Microphone turned off.)

11 MS. NIAVO: This is very
12 important.

13 (Microphone turned back on.)

14 MS. NIAVO: There is a
15 passenger that's coming. People are
16 crossing. I have the picture. I can't
17 honk to them. I stop in the middle of
18 the street. I gave them the key. By the
19 time I gave them the key, by the time I
20 come back, they give me a ticket of
21 \$1,000. They said the needle that was
22 not in the cab, sitting in the cab, and
23 lied against me. That's like a felony.
24 I almost got killed and they put the
25 fraud and sign it.

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2 COUNCILMAN OH: Okay. Ma'am,
3 thank you so much for sharing that. I'm
4 sorry for your bad experience. I
5 unfortunately do have to ask you to stop
6 testifying because we've passed the three
7 minutes, but I did fully understand the
8 experience that you're relaying to me.
9 So thank you.

10 And I will ask the next witness
11 to please identify yourself and provide
12 us your testimony.

13 MR. ATOLA: Good afternoon,
14 everyone. My name is James Atola (ph).
15 I'm a resident of Philadelphia,
16 Pennsylvania for the last 26 years. I
17 present myself as a business owner in the
18 past and with a lot of experience in
19 transportation.

20 I see a lot -- I be a driver
21 before a taxicab, own a dispatch company
22 for taxi, and I see a lot of people
23 outside driving cars with a lot of
24 pressure from the owners that own these
25 medallions, pressure from the insurance

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2 company, which is owned also by breakers
3 who serve the taxicab business for
4 insurance. Some of these driver, they
5 cannot drive these days unless they have
6 to pay extra money to drive their car to
7 feed their family. Some people been
8 forced to pay at least agreement more
9 than what the PPA schedule for lease of
10 medallion. And they tell you if you want
11 to be a driver, this what we need, take
12 it or leave it, which there's no other
13 choice.

14 I believe the Parking Authority
15 did a lot of good job since they took
16 over from Public Utility Commission. We
17 have improving the City as a driver,
18 training classes, tests to become limo
19 driver or taxi driver. We appreciate
20 that, but we need the Parking Authority
21 also to look further and deep to these
22 owners who abuse the drivers, to the
23 insurance company abuse the driver also.
24 We like to do a very good, good job for
25 the citizen of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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2 and the visitors come outside from other
3 states and from other countries to show
4 them a good city, a good drive,
5 comfortable ride, with respect, but also
6 we still need help from the upper hand,
7 wherever is control, from the Parking
8 Authority outside.

9 And for the medallions, the 150
10 medallions, I'm thinking if the Parking
11 Authority will keep these medallions and
12 lease it to drivers to do their job,
13 without any pressure from owners later on
14 with at least agreement between the
15 Parking Authority and the driver, that's
16 also help industry in Philadelphia and
17 help the driver and help the driver to
18 show a good appreciation to the customer
19 with the special needs from handicaps.
20 And my opinion as a long business for
21 transportation, that will work very good.

22 I want to thank you very much
23 for giving me the time to speak, and
24 thank you very much.

25 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very

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2 much for your testimony.

3 Thank you, all of you. It's
4 not always an easy thing to get up in
5 public and make a public statement, so we
6 thank you very much for that.

7 This will conclude at this
8 point in time any further testimony.
9 Everyone has testified.

10 Let me ask, Councilwoman Bass,
11 do you have any further comments or
12 statements?

13 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: No. No,
14 thank you.

15 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
16 much.

17 Let me, first of all, thank all
18 of our witnesses. Everyone has been so
19 busy and so kind. There have been other
20 communications. We do take this
21 resolution and this hearing very
22 seriously. We have all the notes of
23 testimony. We'll do some further
24 investigation as needed and we'll
25 continue forward.

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2 Let me state, as I stated from
3 the beginning, that our city is very
4 concerned about this issue from all
5 sides. At the same time, we have a very
6 limited role in this and, therefore, we
7 are very dependent upon what our State
8 Legislature does and very dependent on
9 working with the Philadelphia Parking
10 Authority.

11 I'm happy to say that Vincent
12 Fenerty, who has remained here, the
13 Executive Director, has been fully
14 accessible to everyone here in City
15 Council. He has invited me to go with
16 the Parking Authority I believe with him
17 to the Independent Regulatory Review
18 Commission when there's a hearing for
19 more cabs for persons with disabilities.
20 I certainly will distribute that, if he
21 allows me, to other Councilmembers so
22 that we can add the influence of
23 Philadelphia.

24 I have said in the past that
25 our city is very much a city that more

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2 and more needs to work with Harrisburg,
3 and so to let our citizens know what is
4 going on and how we can support our
5 Parking Authority in this effort and our
6 cab drivers and associations in our
7 industry. At the end of the day, as
8 Councilwoman Bass pointed out, we will be
9 a lot stronger and a lot more effective
10 if we work together and seek the common
11 good of all of us. And rather than kind
12 of looking at the flaws or the faults
13 that we don't like about each other,
14 finding those common grounds that we can
15 improve ourselves collectively, that is
16 the best way for us to go, and that will
17 be my goal.

18 So with that, I will conclude
19 this hearing, ask the Clerk if there's
20 anything else I need to do.

21 THE CLERK: No, not at this
22 time.

23 COUNCILMAN OH: Then let me
24 conclude this hearing. Thank you,
25 Councilman O'Brien, for being here and

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2 Councilwoman Bass and, of course, my
3 Co-Chair, Councilman Kenyatta Johnson,
4 who did have to leave earlier, but thank
5 you very much.

6 (Joint Committees on Global
7 Opportunities and the Creative/Innovative
8 Economy and Transportation and Public
9 Utilities concluded at 12:15 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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