

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

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May 11, 2011
Start: 10:36 am
Recess: 10:43 am

HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E:
JAMES VACCA
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Council Member Daniel R. Garodnick
Council Member David G. Greenfield
Council Member Vincent M. Ignizio
Council Member Peter A. Koo
Council Member G. Oliver Koppell
Council Member Darlene Mealy
Council Member Ydanis A. Rodriguez
Council Member Deborah L. Rose
Council Member Eric A. Ulrich

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

N/A

[background noise, gavel]

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Quiet, please.

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Good morning, everyone. It's May 11, 2011, it's the Committee on Transportation. I'd like to welcome everyone here. And I would like to introduce my colleagues who have joined me. To my extreme left is Dan Garodnick, from Manhattan; David Greenfield from Brooklyn; Debbie Rose from Staten Island; myself, Councilman James Vacca from The Bronx; Peter Koo from Queens; and Vincent Ignizio from Staten Island.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: [off mic]

And Darlene Mealy.

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Oh, and Darlene Mealy, at the very end, I'm sorry. Darlene Mealy.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Brooklyn!

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Brooklyn.

[laughter] Okay. I'd like to welcome everyone here, and today we're going to vote on Proposed Intro 521-A, which is primarily sponsored by Council Member Rose and myself, at the request of the Mayor. Today's legislation seeks to address a problem that has been going on in this City for

1 too long, and has defied solution. Every single
2 day we have people in this City who are denied
3 service by a taxicab because of what they look
4 like, or because they need to get to one of the
5 so-called "outer boroughs." This practice is not
6 just against the law, it is completely
7 unacceptable. All New Yorkers have a basic right
8 to hail a cab anywhere in the five boroughs. Yet,
9 the stories are too common. And they are too
10 often ending up with passengers getting left out
11 in the cold, or worse. Specifically, Intro 521
12 raises the penalties for three violations:
13 refusing to take a passenger to a destination
14 within the five boroughs; requesting the location
15 of where a passenger wishes to go prior to that
16 passenger entering a taxi; and overcharging a
17 passenger. The current fines for all three
18 violations max out at \$350 for a first offense and
19 \$500 for a second offense. This bill would
20 increase the maximum penalties to \$500 for a first
21 offense and \$1,000 for a second offense. Repeat
22 offenders would still face license revocation upon
23 a third offense within 36 months. In addition,
24 they would now face a fine of up to \$1,000 for the
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2 third offense. I do want to point out one change
3 to today's version of Intro 521. At the urging of
4 colleagues, this section of this bill that
5 would've raised fines for livery cabs that pickup
6 illegal hails, has been removed so that maximum
7 fines will remain where they are today. I want to
8 briefly, I want to rather be perfectly clear, we
9 have a problem with, in this City with livery
10 cabs, and illegal street hails, and all New
11 Yorkers need to know that this is an issue in this
12 City. They are taking a risk when they hail a
13 non-yellow cab. But the reality is that in many
14 parts of New York City right now, taxis are simply
15 not available, and cannot be found, and therefore
16 we are holding off on implementing this fee
17 increase at this time. Finally, before I move for
18 a vote, I want to thank the Mayor and TLC
19 Commissioner David Yassky for putting forth the
20 legislation, as well as Council Member Rose, who
21 has been staunch advocate of taxi passenger
22 rights, and who will be now commenting on this
23 legislation. I--No? Oh, Council Member Rose is
24 waiving her right, and I thank you, we all thank
25 you, Council Member Rose. [laughter] I welcome

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2 Council Member Olive Koppell who has now joined
3 us, and--from The Bronx--and Council Member Eric
4 Ulrich from Queens, who have joined us. I will
5 now ask the clerk to call the roll of the members.
6 I, the Chair recommends a yes vote.

7 CLERK: Kevin Pin, Committee Clerk,
8 roll call on the Committee on Transportation,
9 Intro No. 521-A. Council Member Vacca.

10 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I vote aye.

11 CLERK: Koppell.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: [off mic]
13 Chairman, if I might just explain my vote, I
14 gather that the bill has been amended to take out
15 the penalties [crosstalk] Okay, I'm sorry, - - .
16 [on mic] I gather the bill is amended to take out
17 the increased penalties for the pickups in the,
18 you know, penalties for picking up street hails.
19 And I know I recommended that, because until we
20 get an effective street hail system in the outer
21 boroughs, unfortunately people are sort of forced
22 into doing this. And so I appreciate your
23 flexibility, Mr. Chairman, and the Committee
24 Clerk's flexibility. I know it's always hard to
25 sometimes, you know, when you're going in a

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2 direction to change your course a little bit. So,
3 it's appreciated that you did so. And I vote aye.

4 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: [off mic] Thank
5 you. [on mic] Thank you, and I appreciate your
6 assistance, Council Member, and your, and your
7 input, thank you, and we did make some changes, as
8 I said. Please proceed, I'm sorry.

9 CLERK: Garodnick.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Aye.

11 CLERK: Mealy.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: May I
13 explain my vote? I just want to thank Chair Vacca
14 for that change is desperately needed, and I hope
15 that we can really look into the livery cabs, and
16 other cabs, to see how can we adjust it, even
17 though it's illegal, some of them, we still need
18 service, so I thank you and I vote aye.

19 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: And I thank you
20 Cou--I thank you, as well, Council Member Mealy,
21 for reaching out and indicating your concern to
22 me. Thank you.

23 CLERK: Rose.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Chair Vacca,
25 I want to thank you so much for your leadership on

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2 this bill. And to make sure that all New Yorkers
3 can hail a cab, and get to the, their, their
4 destination of choice. I want to thank you so
5 much for your leadership. And my vote is aye.

6 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you.

7 CLERK: Greenfield.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Vote
9 aye.

10 CLERK: Ignizio.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: I just
12 want to thank Dan Garodnick for being Dan
13 Garodnick, [laughter] and Chairman and Deb Rose
14 for putting in a good piece of legislation.

15 CLERK: Ulrich.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: You got me
17 as an aye, by the way, Ignizio.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: Mr.
19 Chairman, I vote aye.

20 CLERK: Koo.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Aye.

22 CLERK: By a vote of nine in the
23 affirmative, zero in the negative, and no
24 abstentions, the item has been adopted. Members,
25 please sign the Committee report.

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2 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: There being no
3 further business, I thank the members of the
4 Committee, and I will hold the vote open for 30
5 minutes, for additional members to register their
6 vote, officially. This meeting is adjourned and
7 will be reconvened should members arrive within
8 the next 30 minutes.

9 [gavel]

10 [crosstalk, background noise]

11 CLERK: Rodriguez.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIQUEZ: Aye.


13 CLERK: Vote stands at ten in the
14 affirmative, zero in the negative, no abstentions.

15 [background noise]

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, JOHN DAVID TONG certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.

Signature

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John David Tong". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the printed word "Signature".

Date May 27, 2011