

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

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HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING (VIRTUAL ROOM 2)

B E F O R E: YDANIS A. RODRIGUEZ, CHAIRPERSON

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

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK, Taxi and  
Limousine Commissioner

BHAIRAVI DESAI, New York Taxi Worker's  
Alliance, Executive Director

RICHARD CHOW, New York Taxi Worker's  
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ALLI LANGLEY, Staff attorney of New York  
Taxi Worker's Alliance

PETER MAZER, General Counsel to  
Metropolitan Taxicab Board of Trade

CIRA ANGELES, behalf of base owners and  
customers

ROSE IMPERATO, CUNY

LIONEL MORALES, New York City Black Car  
Fund

AVIK KABESSA, Car Mail and the Livery  
Roundtable

QUDRATULLAH SABERRY, Driver

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

MD Z. ISLAM, driver

GERSON FERNANDES, driver

SUVES BAIRAGI, driver

AUGUSTINE TANG, driver

HARJIT SINGH, driver

MOHAMMED TIPU SULTAN, driver

JOSE HERRERA, driver

VINOD K. MALHOTA, driver

CHIME GYATSO, medallion owner

TILAK RJ, medallion owner

WAIN CHIN, medallion owner

BALKAR SINGH, taxi driver

PABITRA SAHA, driver

DOROTHY LECONTE, driver

RANDAL WILHITE, staff attorney  
at New York Legal Assistance Group

MOHAMMED ISLAM, driver

MOHAMMED ISLAM #2, driver

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

TARIQ MUNIR, driver

IBRAHIM DIALLO, staff attorney for New  
York Taxi Worker's Alliance

ERHAN TUNCEL, driver

VAL GEORGE, driver

JOAN BOTTEX, driver

JASLIN KAUR, daughter of taxi driver

GALINA KAMINKER, daughter of taxi driver

TILAK RJ, relative of taxi owner

SGT. KEVIN KOTOWSKI: Sergeants, please start your recordings. Computer recording started.

SGT. MARTINEZ: Cloud recording has begun.

SGT. POLITE: Sergeant Martinez, you may begin with your opening statement.

SGT. MARTINEZ: Good morning and welcome to today's remote, New York City Council Hearing of the Committee on Transportation. At this time would all panelists please turn on their video? To minimize, uh, disruption please silence your electronic devices and if you wish to submit testimony you may do so via email at the following address, [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov), once again that email address is [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov). Thank you for your cooperation. We are ready to begin.

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank you Sergeants and everyone on the Council that works so hard to be sure that not only myself and my colleagues, the represented administration and the advocate give you the opportunity to be part of this remote hearing but also so others can have the opportunity to be able to follow how we discuss this important issue. Good morning, thank you all for

joining the Committee on Transportation Bay Shore Hearing today on the oversight topic of PLC Medallion Relief Program and also, and how it appears that he is working supporting the block hard and the libre sections. First, I am going to turn it over to our Committee Counsel to go over some procedure items and also including acknowledge that my other colleagues are here.

COUNSEL JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN:

Thank you Chair. First, I would like to recognize the following Council Members, Council Member Rose, Council Member Cabrera, Council Member Holden, Council Member Koo, Council Member Brooks-Powers, and Council Member Menchaca. I am Jessica Steinberg Albin, Counsel to the Transportation Committee of the New York City Council. Before we begin, I want to remind everyone that you will be on mute until you are called on to testify when you will be unmuted by the host Please listen for your name to be called. I will periodically announce who the next panelists will be. The first panelist will be from the Administration, Commissioner Aloysee Heredia Jarmoszuk from the Taxi and Limousine Commission. During the hearing if Council Members would like to

ask a question, please use the Zoom Raise Hand Function and I will call on you in order that you have used the Zoom Raise Hand Function. Unless otherwise indicated by the Chair, we will be limiting Council Member Questions to five minutes including answers. Chair Rodriguez, I would like to turn it back to you for your opening statement.

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ:

Thank you Jessica. Today the Committee on Transportation, sorry, today the Committee on Transportation convenes remotely to hold this important hearing on the Taxi and Limousine Commission Medallion Relief Program in supporting the black car and livery sectors. As we know, the TLC is charged with a regulation and oversize of taxi cars which include yellow taxi cars, street hail livery, for hire vehicles, community van and impaired transit vehicles. Over the last several years the, for hire industry had experienced tremendous changes with the introduction of for hire vehicles in the city. The number of licenses for hire vehicles has dramatically increased in 2011. This has led to a decrease in the number of medallion taxi trips in the city, they had declined in the daily fares collected per taxi

medallion. As we all know, taxi medallions have seen a rapid decline in value. In 2013, the average sale price for corporate medallions and individual medallions was about \$1,289,000.00. Six years later, the average sale price fell to about \$165,000 as medallion value decreased so did the number of fares collected causing many taxi and medallion owners' unimaginable financial hardship. Many owners, drivers and advocates have called for the city to create a taxi medallion forgiveness program. I was part of the team when the Council passed a bill creating the Yellow Taxi Medallion Task Force that put a specific and strong recommendation. Recently the TLC announced the creation of a \$65 million Taxi Medallion Owner Relief Program to help financially distressed medallion owners work with lenders to restructure medallion related loans and provide up to 9,000 in additional monthly payment assistance. This is a good initiative but this is not enough and that's why I would like to ask City Hall to add an additional \$93 million over the next 80 years a mean around \$3.2 million every year in order to help more medallion owners and to help to alleviate this crisis. As of September 27, 2021, the TLC



Commissioner indicated that 26 participants have received over \$5 million in debt, in debt forgiveness and constellations with an additional 900 participants waiting to be served. The Administration believes that the program could resolve \$500 million of debt forgiveness for thousands of drivers. Although this sounds promising we have heard many advocates and drivers led by the New York Taxi Workers Alliance that the financial assistance provided by this relief program is not enough. Just this week, members of all New York City Congressional Delegation also including Senator Majority Leader Chuck Schumer sent a letter to the Mayor supporting the creating of a new program such as that proposed by the Taxi Workers Alliance and also supported by all members of the Medallion Task Force that worked for months before COVID. Many believe that the City failed to prevent the Medallion Debt Crisis. It is now our responsibility to ensure that we face this issue and hope that many drivers who are still facing a financial hardship. Many of them were the ones providing the service during COVID and we have the responsibility to provide all financial support that we can to bring the back.

During today's hearing, the Committee hopes to gather additional information on the Medallion Relief Program to determine how effective it will be in helping med-, more medallion owners. The Committee will also discuss the problems that the traditional black car and livery sectors are currently experiencing and explore ways in which the City can support this service. After we hear from the Administration we will hear from Medallion Owners and their representatives, medallion owners and representatives of, of taxi drivers to, to learn more about how they have been affected by this crisis and whether they believe the Assistant TLC Relief Program will provide the support they need and to hear from them why they also believe that by adding additional \$93 million over the next 30 years will expand the numbers of medallion owners and taxi drivers that will benefit from this program. Before we hear from the administration, I will now have our moderator and Committee Counsel recognize if there are any other members and also, then call on Administration to testify and administer the oath.

JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

COUNSEL: Thank you Chair. I would like to

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2 acknowledge that Council Member Miller has joined us.

3 I will now call on TLC Commissioner Aloysee Heredia

4 Jarmoszuk to testify. At this time, I will

5 administer the affirmation. Please raise your right

6 hand. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole

7 truth and nothing but the truth in your testimony

8 before this committee and to respond honestly to

9 Council Member questions?

10 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Yes.

11 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

12 COUNSEL: Thank you. You may begin your

13 testimony when ready.

14 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Good morning

15 Chair Rodriguez and members of the Transportation

16 Committee. I am Aloysee Heredia Jarmoszuk,

17 Commissioner and Chair of the New York City Taxi and

18 Limousine Commission. Thank you for inviting me to

19 speak with you about the TLCs progress implementing

20 the Medallion Relief Program, the MRP as well as our

21 efforts to support the black car and livery sectors.

22 First, I would like to discuss the current state of

23 our Taxi Industry which has continued to gain

24 strength as the City recovers from CO-, from the

25 COVID-19 pandemic. As you know businesses and

tourists are returning to New York City and passenger demand for taxi service is steadily increasing. For the week of September 26th, taxis made 739,964 trips, a more than 1300% increase from the week of April 5th, 2020. During the same period of time in 2019, pre-pandemic, taxis made around double number of trips showing that there is still room for significant growth. In fact, there is more demand for TLC licensed transportation than the current taxi supply is meeting. Of the 13,587 licensed yellow taxis, approximately 6,600 are in storage, meaning they are not being operated on the streets. Of the medallions held by owner drivers, the vast majority are on the road and providing passenger service. So, the difference right now is that the individuals who own medallions that are non-fleets are the ones that in large part operating. TLC is working with owners to get taxis out of storage and back on the road picking up passengers to meet the growing demand for service. Importantly, the amount of money earned by taxis consistently operating on the road has significantly increased and is approaching pre-pandemic levels. Last month the average fare box earnings for an active yellow taxi

was \$7080 per month plus \$1133 in tips. A year ago, it was less than half of that. Taxis making over 25 trips a day are not bringing in an average of \$10,019 a month plus \$1,710 in tips. Those are robust fare box earnings and indicate substantial recovery in the Yellow Taxi sector. In addition to the growth and demand driven by the recovery, the pause on new for hire vehicle licenses is also working to strengthen the taxi industry market share. Before the change in local law that empowered TLC to stop new for hire vehicles from flooding our streets, more than 2,000 new cars went on the road every month creating a race to the bottom for TLC licensed drivers and worsening traffic congestion. Since the cap was successfully implemented, TLC has seen the attrition of approximately 25,000 for hire vehicles, meaning there are 25,000 less for hire vehicles than there were 20 months ago. We anticipate additional attrition over time which we believe will help achieve a more equitable balance across all segments of the industry including traditional livery and black car basis. While the taxi sector is rebounding in tandem with our city's recovery, too many taxi medallion owners have experienced financial distress. We are all

aware that the industry has faced tragedy, technological change, disruption and uncertainty over the past several years. The path of this reality was paved by those who did not act when market forces and bad actors took advantage of owner drivers and it pains me to see how ill-served they have been a system that treated the medallion as a speculative asset. Today, a number of taxi owner drivers face unsustainable monthly loan payments. Solving this debt crisis is the single most important issue that we must resolve. Doing so will unlock our ability to take aggressive action to increase economic opportunity and quality of life for medallion owners. The TLC is working to determine the exact number of medallion owners who have debt as well as to assess how much of this debt is unsustainable for each individual owner. As you know, the local law 111 of 2020 established the Office of Financial Stability to monitor and evaluate the financial stability of the medallion industry. Over the summer, the TLC released a survey to medallion owners in an effort to meet the requirement that any person who has an interest in medallions submit an annual financial disclosure. While these surveys are voluntary, they

have given the TLC the opportunity to gather personal data that is not publically available. As we continue to receive survey results, the TLC can rely on financial information received from those participating in the MRP for data on the scope of medallion debt. Since April 2021, approximately 1,000 medallion owners have applied for the MRP. The 90 medallion owners who were approved to receive grant money as of yesterday, October 7th had a median original debt of around \$400,000 with monthly payments of approximately \$2500. Through the medallion relief program, they were able to achieve a median average debt forgiveness of nearly \$200,000 supported by monthly payments of \$1600 or less. These figures change daily as more loans are restructured. Through the distribution of the MRP funds, the TLC will have a data driven assessment of the true extent of the medallion debt for individual owners in New York City alleviating this debt is crucial to improving the health and longevity of that iconic New York City Yellow Taxi Industry. I would also like to ask that the 90 medallion owners who have been approved through the program have achieved a total of \$15 million of debt forgiveness and

cancellation. So that is the multiplier effect of, of the grant program. The TLC Owner Driver Resource Center opened remotely during the pandemic in the spring of 2020. Among other resources, the center is a space where owners and drivers can access free financial counseling and legal services related to medallion debt. This includes help with reviewing loan terms, renegotiating financial agreements, challenging debt collections or judgments and filing for bankruptcy if appropriate and halting back bankruptcies where appropriate. Lawyers from the New York Legal Assistance Group provide these free legal services at the center to all medallion owners who arrive there. Over a seven month period after the center opened, TLC learned that medallion owners working with the center and with means for a down payment for refinancing were able to achieve improved loan terms and better financial stability. TLC also learned that a number of medallion owners were unable to afford the down payment needed to refinance. During this time, TLC also engaged in numerous discussions about how to address the debt issue with the industry, stakeholders including medallion owners, drivers, advocates, attorneys and financial



experts. Ultimately the City secured \$65 million and Mayor de Blasio and the TLC announced the MRP on March 9, 2021. In the ensuing months, TLC published proposed rules outlining eligibility criteria for the MRP and held a public hearing and voted on the rules for the program. Additionally, TLC embarked on a procurement process and signed contract with Pursuit, a financial institution with rich experience with COVID-19 relief programs and lending to small businesses in September to distribute grants under the program. The MRP is designed to give individual medallion owners who have five or fewer medallions a critical tool to restructure loans, reduce principal on those loans and lower monthly payments. As previously noted over 1,000 people have applied to participate in the MRP and are in various stages of debt restructuring. The Owner Driver Resource Center is working with these owners and approximately a dozen lenders to significantly reduce debt and loan payments and to achieve settlements where appropriate. The program provides a \$20,000 grant to all participants to be used as a down payment to help restructure medallion related loans. In fact, we are recreating what we saw work for owners when the Owner

Driver Resource Center was established. This \$20,000 can mean hundreds of thousands of dollars off loan principal. Through the multiplier effect of the grant payment a \$65 million program can achieve as much as \$500 million in debt forgiveness. Some medallion owners will reach settlements owing nothing while others will attain over \$100,000 in debt forgiveness. Furthermore, we are aware that the industry has not recovered to pre-pandemic levels and owners may still need assistance keeping up even after substantially reduced payments. To help, the city is providing participating medallion owners with an additional \$9000 to cover loan payments. This means that if restructured, if a restructured loan monthly payment is \$1600 with a medallion owner's contribution combined with the city's debt service assistance the monthly payment for the first year will be \$850 a month, well under \$1000. TLC Medallion, the TLC Medallion Relief Program offers an owner-driver first model that is tailored to the individual financial situations. It focuses on the owner drivers not the fleets and it takes into account the personal circumstances of each medallion owner through a client-centered and holistic

approach. Unfortunately, a one size fits all approach even ones that sound good in theory cannot adequately account for the different circumstances of medallion owners. Additionally, the MRP allows the medallion to be valued based on the income it generates for owners. Price fixing the medallion value at an artificially low price as has been suggested treats the medallion as a speculative asset and deeply threatens its long-term value. We owe it to the hard working owner drivers who have invested in their medallion to restore this asset rather than fix a set price which would distort the market far into the future. Furthermore, proposals that call for a back stop for all medallion owner debt for 30 years would mean New York City Tax Payers are assuming all risks for all borrowers and lenders. This is true regardless of whether the borrower is an individual owner-driver or a large fleet owned by a multi-million dollar corporation or if the lender is a large financial institution capable of covering its own losses or was once the predatory lender that exploited medallion owners in the firsts place. That is unworkable. What is working is the MRP and as I shared earlier, as of last night 90 medallion owners

have been approved for grants and will receive close to \$14 million in debt forgiveness. Furthermore, over 1,000 medallion owners and a dozen lenders are in various stages of working with the TLC Owner Driver Resource Center to restructure loans and lower monthly payments. If the need is there, we anticipate being to help over 2,200 medallion owners and we hope to allocate all \$65 million in funding as soon as possible with a goal of reaching all applicants by the end of this calendar year. The yellow taxi is one of the most iconic symbols of New York City and a healthy taxi industry is critical to the City's recovery. We are heartened to see the industry showing a lot of strength with trip volumes and fare box earnings rising substantially during the recovery from the COVID 19 pandemic. Beyond our work on the MRP, TLC has met with owners, drivers, and other industry stakeholders to develop a yellow taxi strategic plan outlining recommendations for innovation and growth for the sector going forward. And of the course, the MRP is up and running now and it is delivering the relief that hardworking taxi medallion owners urgently need to achieve financial help and stability that they deserve. We owe it to

them to ensure that the medallions continue to be an important asset and an irreplaceable part of New York City's Transportation Network and the MRP does just that. In addition to the TLCs work with the yellow taxis, we are also focused on supporting the traditional black car and livery sectors. A great conduit for us to identify best practices, new policies, and recommendations is through the black car and livery task force which you are a member of Chair Rodriguez. The task force began meeting in June after the last member was appointed. As of today, the task force has two more scheduled meetings to discuss the recommendations that will be put forth in a public report. We hope to publish this report before the end of the year and look forward to continued collaboration with this committee regarding implementation. With those recommendations remain and development we can share some preliminary themes that have come up during our meetings with the task force. These include issues related to prearrangement and payment, educating licensees and car services basis, enhancing regulations for leasing companies, coordinating across sectors on insurance and worker's compensation, the feasibility of

internal and external advertising, increased use of wheelchair accessible and battery electric vehicles, and parity along the sectors including with respect to inspections and vehicle retirement. The task force has also discussed unmet demands in the traditional black car and livery sections and the potential for new FHB licenses to meet that need. We are reviewing this recommendation carefully since we must ensure that the City does not lose crucial gains we have made and reduce congestion, increase driver pay and a more balanced number of vehicles across the sectors that the TLC regulates. Beyond our work with the task force, TLC is conducting a regulatory review, a top to bottom review of all agency rules and regulations. We have received input from our licensees to identify ways to modernize, strengthen, streamline and otherwise improve and update our rules and policies. TLC will also hold a public hearing that is going to gather additional input for our review. As always we welcome ideas from the City Council and on how we can improve operations and better support our licensees in the industry at large. So, thank you again for the opportunity to speak at today's meeting. I'm happy to take questions and

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2 engage in a fruitful and a productive discussion with  
3 you. Thank you.

4 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

5 COUNSEL: Thank you very much.

6 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

7 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

8 COUNSEL: Oh I'm sorry Chair.

9 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: That's  
10 okay and I put it back to you.

11 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

12 COUNSEL: Commissioner, your screen seems to be a bit  
13 narrowed is there any way to fix your camera?

14 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Are you  
15 unable to see me?

16 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

17 COUNSEL: We can see you but it looks like you are in  
18 a circular lens.

19 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Yeah, I don't  
20 know that I can, I can, and I can adjust it.

21 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

22 COUNSEL: That's o- that right there actually is a  
23 little better but we can see you though so, perfect.

24 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Okay.

25

2 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

3 COUNSEL: Thank you so much Commissioner.

4 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Sure.

5 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

6 COUNSEL: At this time Commissioner if you could  
7 please stay unmuted if possible during the question  
8 and answer period and I will now turn it back over to  
9 Chair Rodriguez for questions, Chair?

10 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank  
11 you, thank you Jessica. I have many questions but  
12 I'm going to asking it probably two or three first  
13 and then bring it back and invite my colleagues if  
14 they have questions and then back after.  
15 Commissioner, first of all I appreciate all the  
16 dedication that you have in trying not bring a  
17 solution to this crisis and again this is not  
18 personal at all for anyone. You know I personally  
19 being members of this Committee since 2009 but I  
20 serve as the member of the 2003 and being served on  
21 this Committee from 2013 to today. So we know that  
22 we are today as a result of accumulation of many  
23 years where we have failed and, and, and, and I think  
24 that we got to the moment of this crisis where now we  
25 have the responsibility to think outside the box. We



2 feel that the program, the MRP is a good start but we  
3 don't think that this is enough. A, first question,  
4 do you have, uh, has OMB released all the assisted  
5 \$65 million of TLC at this moment?

6 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: All \$65  
7 million is allocated, correct.

8 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Okay.  
9 So, so what is a universe or how many of those  
10 medallion owners you feel that TLC has a capacity to  
11 work, especially if you are aiming for whatever we  
12 can do from here to the end of this Administration?

13 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: So far, um,  
14 based on the applicants to the program and our  
15 calculations on the potential number of medallion  
16 owners that need debt assistance we feel that the \$65  
17 million should be enough to cover that population,  
18 based on our data.

19 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Okay.  
20 How many medallion owners do you think that can be  
21 covered and be able to be helped?

22 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Sure. So  
23 that's a two part question. Um, if we look at the  
24 \$65 million by the numbers as I shared in my opening  
25 statement that's enough to cover 2,250 loans. We

have 13,587 medallions. We have roughly half of those medallions are owned by fleet owners and the other half is owned by individual owners so the universe of individual owners is approximately 6,000 owners. If we consider that not every one of those 6,000 owners is holding debt, um, we can probably deduce that 2/3 may be holding some debt, so approximately 3,400 medallion owners potentially have some level of debt associated with their medallion and that debt can range anywhere from \$1 to over \$1 million and so we think that the medallion fund is, is adequately sized when you look at make considerations around those numbers. But how many individual medallion owners can get financial support under the MRP with those \$65 million. Based on the data that we are seeing right now we believe that every single medallion owner who is facing insolvency should be able to be helped through the \$65 million fund. So we have an average of, how many individual medallion owners do we have right now?

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: 6,000 sir.

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: 6,000.

So you feel that with \$65 million assuming that every

single individual medallion owner bring home that \$65 million would be enough to cover it, that number?

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: No sir. We have 6,000 medallion owners and not every single medallion owner is holding debt. We, we know that there are several thousand medallion owners that do not have any debt associated with their medallions and so what we approximate is that roughly 2/3 of that universe may have debt. That does not mean that the 2/3 of that universe is facing insolvency. The debt issue can range on an individual basis from \$1 to over \$1 million. So on average we believe that the \$2,250 loans that could be potentially serviced through the \$65 million medallion relief program is sufficient for the universe of medallion owners who may be facing insolvency.

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: This program is structured to help individuals that own less than five medallions, right?

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Those are the parameters, yes sir.

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: So whatever that we are looking at is based on working with that group. I just feel that and again we had

to, all of our focusing on getting results and I appreciate all the hours and time that you've been putting as a TLC Commissioner to work on the yellow taxi crisis and also with the livery and black car task force in order to being accessible to speak to them when it is needed. So I appreciate that. I, I just feel that. I just hope that we can come to the table where we can bring the OMB directors, city hall, you as a Commissioner, the stakeholder, you known from the leaders of the Taxi Alliance our offers and have a discussion with an open mind, revising that good pieces of the MRP and how also city hall should be having an open ear to also hear the other proposed that include an investment addition of \$93 million over the next 30 years. So, again I'm not even going after putting you on the spot I just believe that you know it is a fair call that crisis is so big. This is the result of so many year where we have failed in the past on the current and previous administration to that industry and I feel that beside what we can go over, the details from your testimony asking questions that you are doing here from the leadership today of the Taxi Alliance and the taxi drivers, I hope that we also

can follow up having a roundtable conversation with all the stakeholder having an open mind to go over the MRP, MRP program but also being open to hear also the details of the proposal asking city hall to invest the additional \$93 million over the next 30 year which mean around like \$3.2 million every year. So this is what I want everyone to know that this is the most important thing that I want to bring to the table. We know that we can ask as many questions but I know that this crisis is being for so many years. I think the MRP is a good beginning. I know that you have put up many hours. You have put in your dedication here but I also want to see how we can put a roundtable conversation. Will you be open to advocate and talk to the rest of your partners at city hall to get that roundtable conversation happening?

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Chairman you know that I'm always available and accessible, everyone at the TLC is available and accessible. We are always happy to meet with all stakeholders to discuss the best interest of the industry. I am happy to continue to connect with all of you on same.

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Okay. I as the other two people, the other members of city hall including the OMB director should be asked to be with us too. And again I'm not putting you on the spot to say yes or no because I know that you have to consult but this is a recommendation that I personally have been making to city hall so, as we will hold this hearing today I think that, and hopefully we can make progress getting details for many questions I, I also want to give a heads up for me that roundtable conversation must happen because I think this is only a beginning. What happened with those individuals who owns from 5 to 10 medallions? I know some of those who are struggling to who use the value of those medallion to buy a house and the bank is looking at the house as the collector and try to go after those properties too. So, it, how can TLC identify a way not to, I think that those who own 500 medallions, 1000 medallions at some point they have all the investment, all the portfolio and many of them are good investors so not everyone are bad investors but I feel that the financial crisis is another thing and I think that the city is coming back after COVID and we should also be able to bring

the taxi industry back as we, hopefully by next year we will be back as a city. So, what is a plan to help those individuals who also own from 5 to 10 medallions?

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: So the universe of individuals that own more than 5 medallions is very small, um, and so if anyone fits that dynamic is suffering from in- or facing insolvency they should reach out to us at the TLC so that we can evaluate their, their situation. The good thing is that it's a fine eye group of people and, and the majority of those are corporations and not individuals and I want to just remind everyone that the MRP is very focused, laser focused on the individual medallion owner who, who was facing insolvency but luckily to your question, we have very few medallion owners that have less than five and as I said if there is somebody who is facing insolvency they should reach out to us so that we can evaluate their case.

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: By the program being structured to work and help financially, broad financial assistance to medallion owners that own less than five medallions, right?

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: It's focused on individual medallion owners with a focus on owner drivers the ones who are working their cars every day and individual medallion owner that are not corporations. Um, and those, those entities that tend to have five medallions or more tend to be fleet companies and not individuals but if there is a, let's give you an example. If there is a female medallion owner who had a family of, of taxi owners who now finds herself having inherited six medallions and is facing insolvency and wasn't a driver and just has accumulated these assets and needs help, we will evaluate that case on an individual basis. So, the MRP has maximum flexibility to help the, the small person, the individual medallion owner who needs assistance and so if there is somebody who meets that sort of criteria and that you've outlined I would like for them to reach the TLC so that we can take a close look at their particular situation.

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Okay. Will the TLC support a city backed guarantee program as the strategy to lower the debt to no more than \$20,000 to \$25,000 and more than \$800 per month?



ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: The TLC launched a \$65 million program to help individual medallion owners to be able to restructure and from what we are seeing right now based on our data, what we have launched is working and it is not necessary at this time to create an artificial price or to price fix the asset or to try to right side every single medallion owner into the same debt construct. Again, our medallion owners have varying levels of debt. Through the 90 medallion owners who have already restructured, the debt ranges, the original debt ranges from \$22,000 to \$744,000 so I don't think that you or anyone might suggest that we make somebody who has less than \$145,000 in debt to raise them to \$145,000 so we have to look at all of these cases individually, um, and refinance and restructure them individually.

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: You know there is a level of disconnection when it comes to, and again I don't want to call it as, as you as when I address any agency about commission or any agency but this is not a level of corporation when recommend-, a specific recommendation came out from the Taxi Medallion Task Force and city hall came

hours before releasing a plan not engaging the City Council into their discussion and thinking that we will be only witness on a plan when there is a plan, other recommendations they have been putting on the table. And I know that you had to play your role as a commissioner but City Hall has failed on not engaging the Council before they released this plan. And we are asking, demanding city hall to come back to the table to revise together this plan and the proposed to act in additional \$93 million over the next 30 years cannot be run that all congress members of New York City, Senator Schumer and many other leaders saying we support such initiative. I'm going to leave it here and I'm going to go to now my other colleagues to ask questions we are going to put in a time in five minutes and after they're finished I would come back to other questions.

JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

COUNSEL: Thank you Chair. Before we turn to Council Member questions I would like to recognize that we have been joined by Council Member Levin. We will now call on Council Members for questions in the order they have used the Zoom Raise Hand function. Council Members, please keep your questions to five

minutes. The Sergeant at Arms will keep a timer and will let you know when your time is up. We will first hear from Council Member Holden followed by Council Member Menchaca followed by Council Member Brooks-Powers. Council Member Holden you may begin when the Sergeant calls time.

SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

ROBERT HOLDEN: Thank you Chair and thank you Commissioner, I know it's a tough situation but you said it is really based on an individual, um, assessment and that's, that can get quite complicated because obviously the different medallion owners are paying different prices for obviously their loans. But on the average what are the loans being reduced by? I think you said the 90, 90 medallion owners have been helped so far?

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Yes, Council Member. Uh, 90 medallion owners have been helped so far. The original principal balance owed ranging for those 90 between \$22,000 and \$744,000 and the outstanding principal uh, uh percent reduction ranges from 10% for obviously the smaller, uh, principals owed to up to 77% in debt forgiveness. And so the new principal owed after the restructure range from 0

for settlements to under \$300,000 for the larger loans.

ROBERT HOLDEN: So.

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: And \$14 million has been forgiven for that group of 90.

ROBERT HOLDEN: Right. So, um, generally the, the 90 medallion owners that were helped so far did you speak to some of them or any of them about, you know, how was the process? How could it be improved? Are they happy? Will they be able to work with the restructuring? Did you, did you talk to any of them?

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: We've, we've engaged with several, with several of them. Um, everyone that we have connected with of, of the individuals who have come through the Resource Center they are all very, um, um, relieved and happy to be on, on this path. Um, and, and grateful.

ROBERT HOLDEN: Okay. And, uh, you mentioned the number of 2,300 medallion owners that you expect to help, is that, and is that accurate?

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: So we expect to help all individual medallion owners who need assistance but because we have never been able to

figure out what the debt issue is or what, um, what, how many medallion owners actually need assistance because that, these were all private deals?

ROBERT HOLDEN: Right.

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Um, there's no data on this. What we are seeing based on the intake and, and smart mathematical assumptions is that, you know we have 6,000 owners, not everybody's holding debt and, and everybody that's holding debt is not insolvent so we are assuming that 3,400 or so people and that is at a high range have some level of debt, um, and that about 2,250 may be facing insolvency and as we move through the Medallion Relief Program and have intake we are getting data and I, I, I think that a silver lining here is at the end of this program and as we move through the program we will finally have answers on what the total debt issue is, um, and, and how many medallion owners need help and I think that I cannot wait until we get to the point so that we have something actual to fall back on, um, in terms of what, what was the impact of the shift in market share after the apps ascended.

ROBERT HOLDEN: Yes. But it sounds like the city is coming back and, and like, like you said

in your testimony that it looks like, you know, we, we're in for brighter days at least, um, with not only this for the MRP but and helping the medallion drivers but we are getting more obviously more customers, right? For the medallions and, and so forth but my final question is step by step how does staff at the Owner Driver Resource Center help participants navigate their medallion debt and receive funding through the MRP? So it's a, it's a labor intensive process, um, we have a website and/or email address, um, that every medallion owner who needs can visit. It's available in all languages. Um, we schedule an intake appointment first to make sure that the medallion owner is a medallion owner and, um, and that they have all their documents in order including the loan documents. They are then paired with a financial and legal advisor from Nylag for free. All of these services are at no cost to the medallion owner and then once all of the, um, I guess financial assessments are done ...

SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: ... the.

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: I'm

sorry, you can continue. Yeah. I'm sorry.

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Thank you, the, the attorneys and, um, and the lenders get together with the borrowers and begin to negotiate, um, better terms and once the medallion owner is, is comfortable and we know that the new terms are financially viable from them, and, an agreement is executed and then at the end of that agreement, um, which has to meet the parameters of the program to significantly reduce principal, to reduce the interest rates, to reduce the monthly payments and/or entirely settle the debt, then, then things are finalized and at the end of that, if the medallion owner is still holding, um, debt which is significantly reduced in comparison to what they were holding originally then we will help provide debt assistance if they need it to ensure that the monthly payments are manageable for the first year.

ROBERT HOLDEN: Oh, that sounds, uh, it sounds interesting, it sounds like, it, uh, we can solve this problem. So I thank you Commissioner. Thank you for your hard work and, and thank you Chair.

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Thank you.

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2 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

3 COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member Holden. We  
4 will next here from Council Member Menchaca followed  
5 by Council Member Brooks-Powers. Council Member  
6 Menchaca, you may begin when the sergeant calls time.

7 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

8 CARLOS MENCHACA: Thank you. And I want  
9 to say thank you to the Chair, the Committee that's  
10 here listening, offering some new ideas and  
11 Commissioner. Thank you so much for your time  
12 tonight, or today and the other time where we spent  
13 an hour talking about all of this and I want to do  
14 some follow ups with you that really center us in the  
15 demographic that we are speaking to but I think some  
16 of the most being and those are, are aging medallion  
17 owners and immigrant with some kind of immigrant  
18 experience and so to get a sense from you if you have  
19 done the research of any older, elder, immigrant  
20 owners that we are talking about in your analysis?

21 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: So we, as we  
22 move through the applicants we are flagging and  
23 looking for our older medallion owners that are 65  
24 years old or older. We understand that they have  
25 circumstances that are very different than somebody



who is a 30-year-old driver or a 40-year-old driver or a 50-year-old driver, um, and we want to make sure that they are taken care of and get the attention and the supports that they need, um, and for instance, two weeks ago I had an elder medallion owner who owed about \$25,000 in his debt total and we are working, actively working with him and his lender to reach a settlement so that he doesn't owe any more money at the end of his restructure so we are very, very committed in focus. We will not forget about our older, um, medallion owners who have devoted their livelihood to this work. They will not be left behind.

CARLOS MENCHACA: Awesome. I, I should have started with that I know you are committed to them, my question was number? How many are we talking about in anticipation? And is that something that you have data around and/or are collecting?

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: That is information that we're, we're collecting, we're, we're isolating the medallion owners who are coming to us who are of an age older than 65 and we will have that data in time but the, the overall population of our licensees that are older than 65

is, is quite large, um, but we don't know just yet how many of those are medallion owners who are facing insolvency. We will learn that in time.

CARLOS MENCHACA: Okay. Um, that's a big flag that I raised last time and I, I just want to raise it here for, for this committee and as we move forward. The second area is really is just that has continued to come to light, yesterday we, we even heard the protest, the kind of ever growing and everlasting protest that is outside City Hall while we were at stated and I think some of us engaged them. And I think there is a real problem here that we're not talking about that's beyond the MRP plan that you are here to push and get support for. But the, the fact that there's just a lack of trust with this community and when I engaged them with new information that I had from you, it was just clear that it didn't matter what the program is, the, the kind of classic misstep of the de Blasio Administration across the board, like this is just how de Blasio has run his Administration for the last eight years, is you know if you build something for us, without us it's not for us. And that's just classic, that's just like this DNA that has seeped in

to all agency operations, especially this one. So, how do you, how do you plan to confront that?

Because what I believe that what you have created is good for many, not all, many off the drivers but they will never come to you the way that you had asked and need them to come to the table to negotiate and sit down that's, that's the poison pill here and I'm just realizing how much that's the biggest issue you can, you can kind of tell the procedural and access to the \$60 something million dollars left but that, how do you get across that? How do you, how are you planning to confront that directly?

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: I think that we have to continue to build bridges and trust. And I think that as this program, um, continues to provide definitely ...

SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: ... that relief effort ...

JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You may finish answering.

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: ... as the program continues, um, to ramp up and, and provide relief I'm confident that more people, um, will come

forth or that everybody who needs to come forth will come forth. I think that is evidenced in the thousand, um, individuals who have already applied for, for the program and anyone else who, who needs we are here and we're available and I will not stop until, um, we have exhausted all of our outreach abilities.

CARLOS MENCHACA: Okay. Um, Chair, can I ask one more question?

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Yes.

CARLOS MENCHACA: Okay. Just the last question, I'm actually walking to Senator Schumer's house, we have a big protest and rally in support of immigration reform but Schumer has supported the oppos-, oppositional plan and he's not alone, uh, it was mentioned earlier today, what, what is that worth in this conversation to really force the Mayor to force the city to sit down and come up with an alternative plan to point, to the point that the Chair made? Like, is that worth anything to, to offer something that looks more like what they're offering and is that something that can be part of these negotiations as you move forward? I think a gesture in that way will help build the trust that

you need, uh, to build something that they helped create with their DNA. So, yeah, what's, what is it worth at all that all these other elected officials have signed on to this alternative plan and, I mean if they're wrong I think now is the time to hear that all of the elected officials that signed on are wrong and why they're wrong so that we can take that back when we are engaging Nyqua and Medallion owners.

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: No. I'm really that you that you brought this up council member. It is critical that we all acknowledge that everyone is coming from a place of wanting to provide medallion owners and drivers with financial relief supports, um, and I think that we can all agree that there are multiple ways to solve the debt issue and, and, and I think that we, you know as a, I, I just on a, on a personal note as a, as a daughter and as a parent I've always been taught and teach that we can disagree and still be friends and still be productive. Um, and, and the congressional delegation wants to ensure that we are providing medallion owners with the relief that they need, um, and we believe that the MRP is providing that. Um, what the congressional letter said was that they

would like a guarantee of medallion loans in exchange for firm commitments from the lenders to restructure medallion loans to a viable market of the valley of the medallions and the city's plan achieves commitments from the lenders to restructure the medallion loans without a guarantee. And the delegation is asking that the city provide owners the, the needed resources to restructure their medallion loans and the city's plan is achieving that. Um, and if I may suggest is what we really need now from the congressional delegation is to help advance Congressman Meeks' Bill to exclude debt relief from gross taxable income. That's the next hurdle in this debt forgiveness and cancellation process regardless of the plan and, and we need to make sure that we continue today, regardless of what happens, may or may not happen in the future, our program is up and running right now. We have 90 people that got help over the last 14 days. We want to get to the 1,000 people before the end of the year and we cannot delay, we cannot stop, we cannot halt, we have to get the money out because these people need help, right now, today. And then once they are restructured we want to make sure that they have the

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2 protection from the federal government around  
3 taxation, um, and so if, if you can, you know,  
4 support that in your conversations with the  
5 delegation I would be much obliged.

6 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

7 COUNSEL: Thank, thank you Council Member.

8 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank  
9 you.

10 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

11 COUNSEL: Thank you Chair.

12 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: And  
13 Jessica before, before, uh calling the next Council  
14 Member.

15 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

16 COUNSEL: Please.

17 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ:

18 Commissioner we definitely you know, when you  
19 look at the numbers. I should say how many, how  
20 many, at some point we have 15,000 medallions in the,  
21 in the street. How many of those 15,000 are now hold  
22 by TLC because you know, not being able to sell it,  
23 people are returning. From those 15,000 how many are  
24 under TLC?  
25

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Chairman, I just want clarify that the TLC by, by law only has 13,587 medallions.

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: How many, 13,000?

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: 13,587 medallions, half of those medallions are owned by fleets, half of the medallions are owned by individuals.

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: So, so, you keep saying, you know how difficult it is from TLC to know there is some data that you don't have it yet because, not because of lack of effort, not because of lack of style, but because you know, their relationship basically with a private sector, the bank but we as talking about well then, well like 3,000 are individual medallion owners. What is the exact numbers of medallion, individual medallion owners?

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: It's approximately 6,000 sir.

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Well.

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Are you asking a question about storage numbers or are you trying to



ascertain the number of medallion owners who are holding debt and, and what, and the population who are holding debt that are facing insolvency, is that what you are asking?

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: No first, first the total is that by law right now TLC has 13,587 and half of them are individual medallion owners, so it means that there's, if we divided it split by half this is like almost 6,300 individual medallion owners. And you got it.

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: It's roughly 6,000 individual medallion owners.

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Again, Commissioner I'm following what you are saying. TLC.

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: I, I just want to make sure that I'm following what you are saying. I want to make sure that I answer your questions.

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Okay. You are saying TLC, not in TLC you are just saying there are by law 13,587 medallions and you say half of them are individual medallion owners is that the case? Or is different?

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Roughly half of the fleet is owned by individual medallion owners that is the case.

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: So if it's half from 13,587 then is not 6,000 it's like 6,250.

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: We're saying roughly half are and what I shared is that we have 6,000, around 6,000 individual medallion owners that's the number, 6,000.

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: But is, is that by law that half of them must be individual medallion owners?

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: No sir. It's just the construct. Half of the medallion owners are owned by fleet and half of them are owned by individuals. That's that ...

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Exactly.

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: ... that's the evolution of the industry.

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Okay. Commissioner and half of 13,587 is not 6,000. Is more like 6,250?

ALOYSEE HEREDIA RODRIGUEZ: So more precisely sir, half, more precisely we have approximately 6,000 medallion, individual medallion owners so I want to clarify on the record for you that roughly 6,000 medallions are owned by individuals.

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Let's use including one, let's, go with what you said, there area 13,587, half of them are individual medallion owners. How do you come out to the conclusion that only 3,250 will be the average number that will need help from the financial relief program?

ALOYSEE HEREDIA RODRIGUEZ: I see what you're asking now so I'm going to, I, I will try to explain this again and, and just to clarify I think you, you may be familiar in your tenure which is far longer, exceeds me, um, that by law it used to be a 60/40 mix but that was no longer the case. Now, let's, let's try this again. We have 13,587 medallions, roughly 6,000 of those are owned by individuals. We know that we have several thousand medallion owners, individual medallion owners who don't have any debt. So, based on.

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2 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Do, do we  
3 have that number? Do, does TLC have the number of  
4 how many doesn't have any debt?

5 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Roughly,  
6 roughly 2,000 or so do not have any debt and we are  
7 gathering that information as we move through the  
8 medallion relief program. The most, the very  
9 critical thing to, to understand here, um, and that  
10 needs to be articulated is that debt around  
11 medallions were all done as private transactions and  
12 for a very long time until now we have not had a  
13 mechanism for tracking individual private  
14 transactions and understanding exactly what each  
15 individual medallion owner has done with their  
16 medallions. Thank, thankfully through the City  
17 Council we have established an Office of Financial  
18 Stability whereby medallion owners now have to submit  
19 financial documents to the TLC and in time we will  
20 have all the data point that you are asking whether  
21 we have or not. We have a lot more data now than we  
22 did before. We have a lot more data since March 9th  
23 than we have ever had before.

24 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: I, I have  
25 question.

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: And we will,  
and we will get that information for you.

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: I have no  
question that we being able to collect more data  
because of our playing a role passing many, many law  
mandating TLC to work around those data collections.  
So, I know that we've been working together between  
the Council and City Hall to move the agency to be  
what it is. Still a lot more work has to be done.

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: And, and,  
and, and, and, and I say that it's like, this is not  
about, you know, about what anyone regardless of the  
role that you can have, that I have, that anyone have  
at City Hall from the \$1 million dollar director. We  
can be thinking about it affecting so much of this  
industry can be to only help with \$65 million, it  
averages 3,250 individuals. We would not come up  
with a solution right now because that's a different  
approach and City Hall has never engaged the Council  
before this plan was released except for a few hours  
before it went out. So, I go back to my Council  
knowing that if we want to be closer we have to sit

2 on the table. The next Council Member that has a  
3 question, Jessica please.

4 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

5 COUNSEL: Thank you Chair. The next Council Member to  
6 be called, to be called on will be Council Member  
7 Brooks-Powers followed by Council Member Levin,  
8 followed by Council Member Miller. Council Member  
9 Brooks-Powers, you may begin when the Sergeant calls  
10 time.

11 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

12 SELVENA BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you and  
13 thank you Commissioner for your testimony today.  
14 Just a couple of questions, just in the interest of  
15 time I'll ask all my questions and wait for your  
16 response. And so, um, I know that we were talking  
17 also about the, the average debt for the owner-  
18 drivers which I think is largely believed to be  
19 \$500,000 and in the plan I'm just curious to  
20 understand how was a livable wage factored in to  
21 that plan? How was it rather accounted for? Also I  
22 would like to know, um, the City Comptroller has  
23 stated about the proposal by the New York Taxi  
24 Worker's Alliance is physically sound. I'm  
25 interested in understanding why TLC continue to say

that it's not feasible. Also would like to know how lenders have reacted to the MRP and just in terms in the type of outreach that's being done to the, the, TLC the, the owner driver's, how is TLC like really doing a grassroots operation to make sure that they understand that there is a resource center and the type of services that are being offered. We know that a large, um, population in terms of the livery drivers are, um, individuals of color who are immigrants, um, they are head of households in many instances, homeowners here in communities like that one that I represent and so, um, just wanting to know that the agency is thinking outside of the box and really working in overdrive to making sure that they are addressing language barriers and connecting the, the impacted owners to these resources that are being offered through your agency, so thank you. Those are my questions Commissioner. I think you are on mute.

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Yeah first I was. Sorry I was typing your questions because I want to make sure that I don't miss any of them. I appreciate your, your very thoughtful questions. Um, I'll knock out the less complicated answers, um, out of the way now. All the lenders that we are aware of

that have, um, that are medallion owners have loans with are at the table. I have not heard from a single lender that they are not interested or willing to participate in our program and that is, you know, very, very critical to the success. Um, and of the 90 restructures that we've done over the last couple of weeks we have a good mix of a dozen of lenders that, um, have, that are medallion owners have loans with. So again, I'm not aware of any lenders who are, who are not participating in the, in the MRP. Um, everybody is, is very committed to moving away from this debit issue for a variety of reasons. Obviously for the medallion owners, um, to be in a healthier financial situation it is critical but the industry needs for this debt issue to be resolved so that we can attract new capital, focus on revamping the yellows and, and move forward without the, um, without the next risk profile that the industry or the sector has right now. Um, in terms of, of the conditions for, for livable wages and earnings, the conditions are far superior now than they have been in the past 20, 20 months. Um, the fare box is the big indicator of what is possible. Um, and as I said right now we are seeing on average 7,000 to 10,000



dollars plus tips, um, being generated by the fare box, our medallion owners who are driving are getting 30 to 40 trips a shift just for perspective, 18 months ago, that was 11, um, rides per shift. There was a huge disproportion in the industry that was caused by the influx of vehicles. We have the cap, thank goodness in place and we have seen an attrition of vehicles and all of those things combined and with the huge reduction in debt that we will achieve through the MRP we are in a much better place for, for our owners to be able to make not just a livable wage but get on the path to being able to save money, um, and, and not be burdened ...

SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: ... by unmanageable debt.

SELVENA BROOKS-POWERS: Chair I just ask if we could have a few more moments just to get the rest of the response and ...

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Yeah, one, yes commission you can, you can finish it yes.

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Thank you, um, with respect to outreach, we have continued and will continue to employ, um, a variety of communication

methods for medallion owners. We email. We have emailed all of our medallion owners about the resource center and the MRP. We have held webinars specifically for medallion owners, we've done them on a borough level, an individual level. We have calling trees where we have reached out to medallion owners who we haven't heard from. Um, we want to make sure that we capture the entire universe and, and any suggestions that anyone may have with how we can do better outreach, we are open to that and will to try things, um, there is some, um, Council Members who will be partnering with to come to their districts to get the word out. Um, um, but we've done, I think pretty well. We've reached 1,000 people and they're there, um, and coming to the resource center and as I said we will not rest until we reach everyone who needs assistance.

SELVENA BROOKS-POWERS: I'm sorry Chair, just one follow up question if I can? Chair?

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Yes you may, you may ask the question.

SELVENA BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you, um and Commissioner I know you mentioned in, uh, with the fare box and the increase. Do you think that's

due to right now the reduction of cars on the road in terms of the competition of the driver's right now? And that after the pandemic has kind of moved and run its course and things continue to open up that that could change? And if so, like what would that impact be?

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: I think that, that, um, right now we have what we're seeing is a sufficient amount of supply for the demand and as the city continues to reopen and the passenger, um, ridership or the transportation needs continue to grow for the city and we've seen consistent growth since the quarantine last year that the numbers will continue to, to, to go up. So we don't, we, we are not anticipating, um, a downshift. If anything, we're expecting to get back to the million rides a day that we, that we had before, um, the pandemic and again the conditions for market, for more market share for the yellow taxis is, is, um, better than it has been since the onset of, of the apps. Um, and so there is more market share for yellow taxis so we don't anticipate a loss of market share, we're anticipating an increase in market share.

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2 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank you  
3 Commissioner. Thank you colleague.

4 SELVENA BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

5 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE  
6 COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member. We will next hear  
7 from Council Member Levin followed by Council Member  
8 Miller. Council Member Levin, please begin when the  
9 Sergeant calls time.

10 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

11 STEPHEN LEVIN: Thank you very much and  
12 thank you Commissioner for your testimony today and  
13 Chair for conducting these hearing. Commissioner I  
14 want to ask, um, specifically the, um, the letter  
15 from our congressional partners um, to, I think Mayor  
16 de Blasio, uh, regarding these matters the other day,  
17 specified the idea of the City providing some sort of  
18 guarantee on the loans or kind of a back stock. So  
19 the idea being that, um, if the City were to say that  
20 through the lenders that they would, um, guarantee  
21 the loan at whatever value, \$150,000 for example. If  
22 in the case that a, uh, at a borrower default, um,  
23 that that guarantee has some value, um, in the  
24 equation with between the, in, within the loan terms.  
25 The, to work in the borrowers favor, to make for more

favorable loan terms or drive down that negotiated principal that is, um, that is, is happening anyway. So for example if, somebody's loan, uh, goes currently under the, under the MRP is going to \$400,000 to \$285,000 and a guarantee this kind of back stop would, could help bring that further down to say \$225,000 or something along those lines. Why not do that? Because this was my recommendation that you know I spent a lot of time on this issue in the task force that we did at the council, working with, you know, pretty much every, uh, you know in my working group and we had pretty much every perspective on this question represented in that working group during that many hours, so this was one of our recommendations. Why not do that?

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: You know that, that, that's an assumption that, that has not been, uh, that has not been tested. And the medallion relief program is modeled after a tried and tested process that we have seen has worked. Um prior to the MRP being launched we had several, about 100 or more medallion owners renegotiate their, their loans independently, um, and they were able to achieve a, you know a \$200 million write off in that, in that

tranche. We know that, um, providing the down payment for restructure achieves all of the things that we have all been speaking about achieving, lower principal amounts owed per the medallion owner, lower monthly payments, close to or under \$1000 and lower interest rates and fuller amortization schedules.

Um, and, and, and, um, you know, we, we're happy to continue the, the conversation but we also, you know we would, we would appreciate as well if consideration could be given to the, to the MRP. I don't know that the Task Force considered the, the program that is underway right now, um that is tried and tested and that is what is available to the medallion owners, right now, today we are providing funds and I really think that we should be talking about the existing program and how to reach the 1,000 people that we need to get to before the end of the year. We know it works. It's worked for the people that came before the program was fully, um, established. We know that it's working for the 90 people who have gotten \$14 million in debt forgiveness and we know that we can achieve up to \$500 million in debt forgiveness through this program.

STEPHEN LEVIN: Uh-huh. No I hear that and I'm just, I'm just trying to think through if, if there's a, and I, I appreciate the kind of, the constraints that under which the program is working. The TLC can't unilaterally ...

SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

STEPHEN LEVIN: ... um, offer a, uh, you know a, a guarantee behind the loans, um, I think that, uh, and then, and then, and frankly you are working within rules promulgated on this program that don't include such a guarantee and so, and you are issuing loan or you are issuing, um, you know the down payments to renegotiate the loans now. So, the, so, I, I appreciate all those limitations, I acknowledge that and then when we did our, our task force it was prior to the MRP, um, so it was, this was, we were talking through any options that we though available. Um, such of which are similar in analogous to what the MRP is doing. We was, we had thought of including a CDFI and, and, um, the MRP is using a CDFI so, if, I, I've just, it just struck me that if it's, if that's the request that is being put forward and, uh, and is being put forward by our colleagues in Congress, um, as well, um, you know, I,

I'm kind of, one of the reason why I was an appealing idea in the first place and this is an idea that I've been thinking about for a number of years now. It, it kind of has the ability to, it's, it's a set aside and City has to be prepared for the liability of, of, of every single loan defaulting, right, so if you are going to guarantee every loan to a certain price then you have to, you know, you have to be at least theoretically prepared to pay out on all those guarantees. That said, that said if you are driving down the principals on these loans, combined with an increase in the value that we are seeing now of the medallions, I don't know about an increase to \$1 million, um, we all know that, but they go, they are stabilized for all the reasons that you've spoken of and all the work that you are doing in TLC to stabilize those, those medallion values. Um, you know as those medallion values are stabilized and the loan principals that are on the existing loans are driven down further or the terms get better or the interest rates go down, based on you actually can beat that, those benefits can be increased and further leveraged by a guarantee, it, it, the, the risk of default goes down, um, because the, because



they're, they're now have this asset, the borrower has the asset and is paying a lower principal on it and so it's, while the asset is actually, you know stabilized, so, um, it just, I think that it's, it's worth kind of considering though I don't, I don't really have the answer as to how that framework or this tool would fit into the existing program and I don't know the answer to that because the existing program is subject to its current rules. As you've said you're looking to basically compete, complete the program by the end of the year. So, so that is a very tight timeframe. Um, it's just, as a, as I met with you earlier last, earlier this week I've spoken to officers of members of Congress. Spoken to Taxi Worker's Alliance it's, a, I think worth considering if and how, uh, this could be leveraged. While it is a, a liability, a very large liability, the risk itself of, of having to pay out that liability is very low and I think like that's a pretty reasonable, I'm not an actuary so I don't know how to gauge that, um, but it seems to me logical that that risk is low of default because people want to hold on to their assets. Their asset that is now stabilized. I'll turn it back over to the chair.

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Okay.

Thank you. Thank you. Council Member and I know that as you are now writing more, you know, based on conversation that we have as you and I were the co-chair of the Yellow Taxi Task Force and I see her before and we are re-elaborating that beside this hearing today we need to sit down at City Hall with a Commissioner, with an OMB Director with a stakeholder, to look on how this program is working but also to be open to the proposal on coming out from the Rider's Allia-, from the Taxi's Alliance calling for City Hall to add the addition of \$93 million for the next 30 years, so I feel that it's important to hear, to have this hearing, to have this conversation but I think that we need to also keep moving forward, keep planning and the best way to do it as I mentioned before, I also had City Hall that we need to have time to sit down at a roundtable at City Hall with a Commissioner, with OMB, with a Taxi Alliance and other stakeholder with an open mind to see what is working with this program and also to be open to see what other things we can do. There's a, this crisis as I said before is too big, too long.

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2 This is a good initiative but we believe that we can  
3 do more so, thank you Council Member.

4 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

5 COUNSEL: Thank you Commissioner.

6 STEPHEN LEVIN: Chair, I do want to just  
7 acknowledge the all the work that, um, that the  
8 Commissioner and her staff, have, have done in  
9 creating this plan. I don't want that to go  
10 unremarked upon. This is, this effort has been, uh,  
11 very massive and is, uh, is very much working in the  
12 right, in the right direction.

13 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Sure.

14 STEPHEN LEVIN: I just want to make sure  
15 that I acknowledge that.

16 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: And, and  
17 I agree with you.

18 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: And that  
20 has been my point from the beginning that I know how  
21 this hearing said this program is not working and we  
22 have to start on 0. For me, this is about, this is a  
23 good beginning but we should be open to, for the  
24 other ideas and how to make it better.

25

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2 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

3 COUNSEL: Thank you Chair. Thank you Council Member

4 Levin. We will now call on Council Member Miller.

5 Council Member Miller you may begin with the Sergeant  
6 calls time.

7 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

8 I. DANEEK MILLER: Good afternoon,  
9 good afternoon Mr. Chair, good afternoon  
10 Commissioner. Um, so, just a point of clarity on a  
11 couple of issues with the Chair and my colleagues  
12 have had really good questions around this issue.  
13 Could you confirm that the average debt, uh, as  
14 mentioned by my colleague is \$500,000, is that  
15 accurate, for the individuals?

16 ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: That's, that's  
17 a number that's been stated, um, a lot. That is now  
18 what we are seeing right now from the applicants that  
19 have come in that we are helping. We are seeing the  
20 latest average around \$350k with a median of \$415,  
21 but the latest average is, is well under \$500 at  
22 \$350k. Again we haven't closed deals for the full  
23 list of people that have come through so that, that  
24 an shift, um, but right now, from that first group

25

it's, thankfully it's far lower, um, than \$500,000.  
That's, that's good and welcome news.

I. DANEEK MILLER: And could you,  
could you without really spending a good bit of  
limited, could you give me a number of, of that is  
just within the industry, is there, could you just  
give me an average number of lenders that are  
interested in this.

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: It's about a  
dozen, it's about 12 dozen, the, it's, it's a small  
world.

I. DANEEK MILLER: Okay. Right, so,  
so it's a small world so really securing this  
relationship or having a relationship with, with  
these lenders to work with the to make the  
adjustments to, to, uh, mortgages, uh and negotiate  
new rates. Is it more manageable than a larger unit  
is? I had this experience in dealing with the  
Council's distressed mortgage buyback program for the  
many, many HUD and section 8 distressed mortgages.  
And, and so I don't know if you were familiar with  
that, um, but the City actually along with not for  
profit holds those mortgages and negotiated more  
favorable terms themselves. So I would say that what

the suggestion is, not unlike, in terms of guaranteeing and holding the mortgages. A lot different because the debt doesn't seem to be as high. With that being said, to return today, what is, and you said that the, uh, the average number of trips are going up so we are trying to kind of and we are talking about living wages, what is necessary in order for the drivers and owner-operators to achieve living wages. Um, have you calculated the amount of trips? You said it's up to about 40 trips per day. What, how many trips would be necessary to meet the goal of the average debt even by US standards?

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: So the -- the revenue that is, that we're seeing being generated now is on par with the heydays of the industry where when there were no concerns, um, around debt and, and, uh, and revenue, um, and what we need to work is to ensure that that continues through our cap, though, through better regulation, um of the industry, what we need to really be focused on in addition to lowering the debt is to ensure that there is appropriate market share for the medallion owners. And not just the medallion owners who -- who are holding debt, we have you know 13,587 medallions and

we want to make sure that the entire industry is viable. That is has a securer future in New York City and that they have an opportunity not just to have market share but to recapture the market share that they are entitled to and that they once had in New York City and that is the goal that we all need to work toward collectively and we cannot do that and ensure that until we resolve the debt issue.

I. DANEEK MILLER: Okay. So, so certainly because we want to make sure that we've seen drivers, workers and so many folks and, and in industries around the City, uh, really almost the alternate canary in the coal mine carriers a lot of hours that folks are actually put behind the wheel and this is especially important that a ...

SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

I. DANEEK MILLER: ... a is set to certain standards. So you know, certainly we want to ensure that whatever we're doing ensures people aren't required to work 12 hours a day 7 days a week in order to have this -- the payday and have, have a quality of life as well. So, to get us there, certainly we, we would like to see what those numbers are, as, as well as and finally we, we, know that

there was a congressional letter of support that, that was sent. Was that letter based on financial support? Additional stimulus? Stimulus that had already been ear marked or identified? The transportation or specifically for this particular industry because certainly there is some course associated with this. There has obviously been an 800 pound elephant in the room that no one has even talked about whether or not this is viable if in fact it is not or whatever the city's contention is with the additional support from the federal government kind of us help us.

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: I'm, I'm reviewing the, the letter and it does not state um, um, where the funding should come from.

I. DANEEK MILLER: That, that ...

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: That being said is it the contention that the City has exhausted all its financial means in the \$65 million.

ALOYSEE HEREDIA JARMOSZUK: That is not a question that I, have um, the expertise or ability to answer; however, I, I can say that based on the conversation that we've been having and all the analysis that the economists have done for the City



that the \$65 million should cover restructurings and settlements for all the medallion owners, the individual medallion owners that have need.

I. DANEEK MILER: Thank you Commissioner. Thank you Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank you and Jessica I don't see another Council Member?

JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No Chair. I will turn it back to you if you have any additional questions for the Commissioner?

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Commissioner, let's just keep working together. You know a, a lot of work to be done. Again, I say as the beginning but definitely need to follow up with a more, with another meeting. So I'm hoping we can coordinate it with you and City Hall to see that meeting happen and be able to go after you know with details about your plan. We want every, any plan that can help the Taxi and Medallion owner to be successful and that's our responsibility. So, thank you for your service and now we're going to be going to the public. Uh, the first panel that will be composed by the leadership of Bhairavi Desai and

Richard Chow and other and Jessica will call them. We will give them 15 minutes so that they can speak mainly on behalf of that taxis and the great group of men and women that's been holding the protest and rally in front of City Hall. Raising their voices speaking on their behalf and the behalf of their family in the City but after we give them the 15 minutes and I hope that the Commissioner can stay around at least for that portion so that she can directly from them and after that we're going to be calling other taxi individuals since we are giving the 15 minutes to the leadership of Bhairavi Desai and Richard Chow we're going to be giving one minute to the second part of the public and we hope that we are going to be very tight, be sure that everyone stays with the one minute. So now I turn it back to our lawyer, Jessica.

JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

COUNCIL: Thank you very much Chair. As the Chair just mentioned, we will begin with a panel comprised of Bhairavi Desai from the New York Taxi Worker's Alliance and Richard Chow and they will begin 15 minute to -- for their testimony. Ms. Desai

and Mr. Chow you may begin when the Sergeant calls time.

SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

BHAIRAVI DESAI: Yes. My name is Bhairavi Desai, I'm the Executive Director of the New York Taxi Worker's Alliance. Thank you so much Chairman Rodriguez and members of the Transportation Committee for holding this hearing. I am struggle with where to begin. I'm a little bit shocked by some of the information that I just heard from the Chairwoman. First of all, this is the first time that the TLC has admitted that they only have money to help 2,250 individuals in need. Now they said that they use smart math to determine that that's the total number of people that need help. At the same time the Chairwoman have said, has said that they are basically gathering data as they go along so they really don't know and we're talking about an issue where thousands of people are struggling with lifetime debt and poverty, people facing bankruptcy, the risk of losing their homes, having their wages garnished. This is a serious issue, we've had driver's suicide over this issue. We have seen so many families that have had early death with driver's

that have passed away from heart attacks and strokes from the tension of this crisis and to hear the TLC say to a community of 6,000 families that they basically have only budgeted money to help 2250 of them is beyond shocking for me. And by the way when we raised this point six months ago we kept hearing that no we're going to be able to. You know everyone is going to get help which again you heard that today and I don't know what that means you know when you say everyone's going to get help but oh yeah, the numbers only add up to helping 2250. So basically what you're saying is you actually only 2,250 out of a universe of 6,000, a broader universe of 13,000 are in a crisis? A crisis that this deep? Of this level? That is so shockingly out of touch for me to hear. The second thing and to Council Members who have raised the question about a living wage. Let's dissect the TLCs numbers together. The TLC Chairwoman has said and this is not the heyday of taxis by the way to assert that they're grossing \$7,000 a month. That would mean for the year, you know, at \$84,000 a year gross would basically mean \$300 gross per shift, okay, so \$300 per shift gross after you annual expenses of you know liability, you

know vehicle payments, the taxes, surcharges, gasoline, credit card processing, all of that you're going to be left with less than \$11 an hour working 60 hours a week throughout the entire year if you're mortgage is \$1200 a month. If your mortgage is \$1600 a month which is what the TLC is saying would be the average mortgage you are going to be left with earning \$9 an hour. If your mortgage now is up to \$2000 a month because while the TLC has said mortgages will be on average \$1600 their own rules allow the lenders to go up to even \$2000 in order to be eligible for the lender to get the \$20,000 cash down payment and we know the TLC it's knows that these numbers are unsustainable for driver's. That's why in their program the second half of the program is a subsidy, a \$9000 subsidy which sure sounds so, you know, sounds so gracious for six months or up to a year they're going to allow you \$9000 that you can spent to subsidize your mortgage but for a working person, for a driver what that means is they're saying, they're going to leave you with the mortgage that you're going to need help to pay and they're going to give you that help for six to six months to a year and then after that sayonara you're on your

own. That's a bridge to bankruptcy and the biggest lender in the industry as the TLC well knows has said that they are going to lower the debt to \$275,000 across the board for anybody who's above \$300,000. You get a \$20,000 cash down payment from the TLC grant program. You're debt will be lowered to \$275,000 that will still be lifetime debt in a market where the value is around \$100,000. You know, and, and we've also heard that if the \$20,000 doesn't work enough for you to restructure your debt then they're going to find other means. Let me tell you what those other means are from the conversations our members have had with the TLCs driver's resource program the other means are basically bankruptcy and the whole purpose of this program is to help people avoid bankruptcy. We are not looking to lower debt so when you get into bankruptcy you have a lower liability that, does that qualitatively change people's lives? We are trying to avoid bankruptcy, avoid foreclosure, avoid a need for subsidy because when you work 60 hours a week you should have a dignified living where you don't need a subsidy for your medallion payment or for your groceries and rent but this program right now is going to leave a large

number of driver's dependent on that kind of a subsidy. I am also really shocked to hear the TLC Chairwoman say that um, that the concept of the guarantee is not tested but that their concept of the \$20,000 cash down payment was "tested." So let's talk about what that test was, you can go back to the newspaper from September 2020 when Marble Gate, the largest holder of loans in the industry talked about having driver's give a \$25,000 cash down payment using that to restructure loans to you guessed it to \$275,000 at an average of \$1600 a month so the reason this is shocking to me is I would really like to know did the TCL come up with that structure for Marble Gate a year ago and we're just now hearing about it did the, does the TLC consider Marble Gate a private entities restructuring practice to be a test for a public program. I think, you know, we, we want to know that answer but you know the most important question here to us is if this entire city were so thankful to the congressional delegation, to the Medallion Task Force. If this City is dedicated and actually committed to finding a final resolution then we need one that can stand the test of will driver's be able to avoid bankruptcy and avoid poverty pay.

That is the test. A mortgage of \$1200, \$1600, \$2000 is going to leave workers under the minimum wage and it's the same agency that has a rule that we fought for that established a minimum weight standard for Uber and Lyft drivers is now going to allow for owner drivers to be at a standard below minimum wage. This is a contradiction, a hypocrisy that is just immoral and you know possibly unlawful by the way. Our program, our proposal it is not such a novel, radical idea as you know Councilman Levin and Councilman Rodriguez have said. The Medallion Task Force talked about this and what we're saying, you know the comptroller has vetted it, found it to be physically sound, the entire congressional delegation as well as the Majority Leader, do you, does anyone out there think these are offices that would have vetted a proposal before endorsing it? We, we're not exactly a powerhouse like political army here. This was not done as some sort of a favor, this was done after serious individuals vetting a proposal, looking at the numbers, looking at the letters that say that you know that the drivers are going to get an offer of \$275,000. Now I understand that the TLC seems to think that that is okay. They think that \$1600, even



\$2000 a month that will leave drivers under the minimum wage is somehow okay. But you a Council Members do you think that's okay? Do you really want to delegate this workforce, a workforce that is in this crisis of lifetime debt and poverty because of the direct actions of the City of New York? Do you want to leave them in that kind of a predicament and please don't tell us to wait. The last time we were told to wait and see was in 2015 when the vehicle cap was not passed and we had Uber, Lyft, Yellow, Green, Livery, Black car drivers united on those steps fighting for the vehicle cap. When this body did not look for it, three years later we were back on the steps not fighting for the cap but having vigils for drivers who had taken their own life. Don't tell us to wait. Drivers have waited long enough. We can fix this. The city of \$96 billion dollar annual budget was given \$6 billion in COVID aide, \$2 billion above the deficit while that might not be in the congressional letter you can see that in Senator Schumer's testimony during a rally that we had on Zoom. You could hear it with his own voice the City's got the money, all we're talking about is getting drivers more leverage at the table.

Interestingly when the Chairwoman talked about our proposal for the \$145,000 she referred to it as "price fixing and treating it as a speculative asset. When she referred, when she was asked to comment on the congressional delegation talking about 145, \$145,000 she said well they're just seeking a firm commitment, so are we. We are seeking a firm commitment to allow our members to get their life back so people don't have to worry that they're going to be an entire lifetime of debt. That what they were supposed to leave behind for their children instead of an asset will be an impoverishing debt. Our proposal is sound. The City has the money and based on everything you heard today you should understand fully well that it is absolutely necessary in order to the drivers to the number on their monthly payment as well as their overall loan that will allow people to survive, avoid bankruptcy, foreclosure, liens on their homes, on their bank accounts and with that working 60 hours backbreaking weeks in order to survive. Mind you only half the cabs are even back on the streets right now, 30,000 black cars are not even back on the streets yet. This is not the heyday. This is not the heyday and

you don't regulate. Talk about speculation, you don't come up with a policy for workers based on what you think is a heyday. You don't do that. You look at what you think you know, do you protect workers against the worst of their conditions. That's what the concept of minimum wage is in our labor framework. You don't come up with a debt relief program with a monthly payment that is based on a speculative notion of what you believe is their heyday. Please Council Members, get this right. We can fix it. We've got the support. We've got the plan. The City's got the money. We've got the need. The TLC does not have the solution. We're not out here on day 20, 24 hours because this is political theatre, because this is fun. These are mothers and fathers. Some of these folks are grandparents. They're out here for a sense of dignity and pride that we refuse to be cheated out of a solution from a crisis that the City of New York is responsible for and we're not going to be fed a bunch of lies when they tried to abandon us and claim it as a victory in our name. That's why we're out here. We want a solution. We want our lives back add the guarantee to make it a comprehensive program so people can get

their lives back. That's what we're asking for.

Richard.

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank you Bhairavi and before anything and of course, know I'm going to be working with it with Richard. We are going to end that we allocate at this time. After we hear for you to that have been important leaders in this movement that also we get a time to hear the other brothers and sisters who also will be testifying.

RICHARD CHOW: Can you hear me? Can you hear me? Hello?

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: We do, we do yes.

RICHARD CHOW: Yes. Yes. Good, after -, good afternoon Mr. Chairman and everyone, my name is Richard Chow. I'm driving a cab for 16 year. I'm an owner driver. I'm in NYTA member. I'm 63 years old. CV and TSC are inflated medallion value created by a customer medallion value. Nine driver committed suicide including my brother Kenny Chow committed suicide in the year. He paid \$700,000 to buy the medallion because he now he's struggling, devastating, passion, he lost everything. He lost

the investment. He lost the retirement. He lost the exclusive right that's why he committed suicide. So on March 17, TLC Commissioner in 2021, the TLC Commissioner met and had a conversation on the telephone. She promised me to bring down my loan 50%. She lied. After \$30,000 refinanced my loan \$275,000. So, offered me \$275,000, \$1600 a month payment. My principal is \$389,000. This is about 50% reduced my loan \$194,500. So even \$1600 my loans, I cannot pay. I cannot afford it. I cannot trust the TLC Commissioner keep lying and totally on purpose. And now if they \$2000 from us. She lying. She lied. Stop lying please. City did not help us. Proposed thousands of owner drivers going to bankruptcy. I have two kids. I have to pay a lot of payment to taxi insurance, gas bill, toll bill, going to Staten Island, insurance, TLC and DMV ticket, among the household bills is piling up. I cannot breathe. I need air to breathe. You know, so we need, we need to have as soon as possible. Forgiveness as soon as possible. We, I don't know to.

SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

2 RICHARD CHOW: Yes. Please give me just  
3 one or two minutes. My debt will be continued. We  
4 will continue with foreclosure and bankruptcy and we  
5 cannot survive. The Taxi and Limousine Commission  
6 plans to lock my hand on the wheel for life  
7 imprisonment until I die. I don't want to leave my cab  
8 to my kids, the next generation. Please, we want a  
9 real debt forgiveness. We want the city guarantee.  
10 We want our life back. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank  
12 you.

13 RICHARD CHOW: You are welcome.

14 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank you  
15 Bhairavi and, and Richard and of course you know our  
16 prayer to your brothers and those great New Yorkers  
17 like your brother that we have lost and their family  
18 and, and every day when you know for the last couple  
19 of years as we've been, you know, working with all of  
20 you together industries, City Hall and now this down  
21 on Broadway here for City Hall. I know and we look  
22 at your face that the pain that you have you know is  
23 that one that represent those that lost their love  
24 one that we would never be able to bring them back  
25 but at least we keep fighting to be sure that nobody

else goes through that situation. So, let's just continue together like you know. I think very important, very clear, we should too. This is about sitting on the table. We need to be offering. We have to, we, there is a plan again that in a meeting that I go that can happen very soon with OMB, TLC Commissioner, the leadership of this group and stakeholder from the private sector, we should be able to sit on the table and be open especially to discuss not only to see what hap-, what is good on this plan but also to talk about how an additional \$93 million to be spent over the next 30 years can also bring stability and security to those working class people that work so hard with a dream that you can move on not only to take yourself to be a middle class but also to educate our children and many of the children that doctor. They are big men already. They are engineer. They are lawyer. They work in the private sector so thank you. Now, we are going to be again. This is one of the most important part, you know from the Leadership of the Taxi Alliance but now we're going to be calling. Jessica is going to be calling the other Taxi because of the numbers. We are going to ask you to please summarize in one

minute whatever it is that you think that you can add to what Bhairavi and Richard already have said. We are going to be strict with the time. If you think that you have something in writing that is more than the one minute you can summarize. You can send the written testimony but now we are calling Jessica to please, you know, start calling the members of the public and the clock will be in one minute. Thank you.

JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

COUNSEL: Thank you Chair. As the Chair mentioned, we will now turn to the rest of the public testimony. I would like to remind everyone that unlike our typical counsel hearings we will be calling individuals one by one and as the Chair said each panelist will be given one minute to testify. If your testimony is longer and you would like to submit written testimony please do so by sending it to [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov). For the public testimony we will first be calling on Assembly Member Mamdani followed by Zubin Solemay of NYTWA followed by Alli Langley of NYTWA. Assembly Member Mamdani you may begin when the Sergeant calls time.

SGT. LUGO: Starting time.



2 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: For the  
3 Assembly Member, for the Assembly Member we can put  
4 the clock on three minutes.

5 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE  
6 COUNSEL: Thank you Chair.

7 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

8 ZOHRAN MAMDANI: Thank you so much Chair  
9 and thank you Counsel. I really appreciate the  
10 opportunity here to testify in front of this hearing  
11 and in front of the many other Council Members who  
12 are on this Committee. I want to make clear that I  
13 stand wholeheartedly with the New York Taxi Workers  
14 Alliance call for a City backed guarantee. And I had  
15 a number of remarks that I had prepared to deliver  
16 today but I think it's important to go over some of  
17 what has already been said earlier today to counter  
18 some of the narratives that have been put forward.  
19 You know, I in listening to this testimony, I heard  
20 the Commissioner of the TLC say that \$90 to \$93  
21 million over 30 years is an unfair burden on tax  
22 payers and using that number as a citation of what  
23 this city back guarantee would cost. It's the city  
24 that brought taxi drivers to this point. It is the  
25 city that owes a debt to taxi drivers. This amount

of money is but a drop in the bucket in terms of what these drivers are owed, in terms of what they were promised and what they have actually been given at this point and in terms of the larger budget that New York City has \$90 to \$93 million over 30 years is nothing and it is something that can truly be found within the liability budget, \$3 million a year is what is being asked for. And the difference that \$3 million would make is the ability for drivers to make more than a minimum wage and I find it extremely offensive to call this plan as a burden to tax payers when in fact all I hear from my constituents who are taxpayers is that they want these drivers to survive. They want them to finally be able to live a life where they are not afraid that they will have their medallions seized, they will have their home seized, they will have any asset in their name seized by the predatory lenders that the city stepped up to take advantage of these drivers. Additionally, I want to say that we cannot achieve the goals the true relief is consisting of without this guarantee and any statements made that we can do that is frankly a lie. I would not be pushing the city back guarantee. I would not be standing with the entire congressional

delegation of New York City. A delegation that disagrees on far more than they agree on if we did not believe that the guarantee is what was critical to bring this relief. The guarantee is what can bring monthly payments below \$1000 a month. The guarantee is what can ensure that if there is some kind of a default from a driver that it is not their homes and their entire lives that are at stake. A guarantee is what can actually give a 94% immigrant workforce a chance at living out retirement in the way that they were promised by this very city. We are not doing a favor to these taxi drivers by passing this plan, we are simply doing what is owed.

SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

ZOHRAN MAMDANI: I want to add one additional think so I can move on which is that I find it very, very strange to say the least that the TLC has been trumpeting the achievements of their plan prior to the ratification of that very plan by voting of their own body. How is it that we are told this plan has doled out x amount of million dollars in debt forgiveness and x amount of driver's have been helped when the plan was only approved this week? What kind of a process is this where the

results are being put forward before the plan has even been put in place? So, I really do think that it's important to note that and important to press on that, that we are not in opposition to the \$20,000 that can be given to these lenders. What we are in opposition to is there must be more than that. There must be a guarantee. We must change the terms of this plan. Everyone is in favor of this. It is simply a question of political will, of TLC and Mayor of the City must change this plan. Thank you very much for the time.

JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

COUNSEL: Thank you very much Assembly Member. Um, if the Sergeant has put a minute clock on, we will next hear from Zubin Solemany followed by Alli Langley followed by Peter Mazer. Zubin Solemany you may begin when the Sergeant calls time.

SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

ZUBIN SOLEMANY: Uh, good afternoon.

This is Zubin Solemany. I'm a Senior Staff Attorney at the New York Taxi Workers Alliance and I just want to talk about the fact that the reason it's incumbent upon the City to come up with something better aside from the reasons that Assembly Member Mamdani and

Bhairavi just said is that the current proposal is simply fundamentally legally flawed. The rules that passed on Wednesday are not illegal or rational exercise with agency power. The Chair noted that the TLC didn't consult with the Council before coming up with these rules and it doesn't seem clear that they consulted with anybody or any data before coming up with these rules. If the stated goal of the rule is to make medallion loans sustainable which is what the rules say it is, sustainable means that people don't go into foreclosure and they don't go bankrupt. It doesn't mean they go bankrupt a year from now paying less payments along the way it means they don't go bankrupt. This rule doesn't do that. There was no data presented to show as Council Member Miller said that folks would be able to afford a living wage. The Chair did not answer that question today and saying that folks would be relieved and happy.

SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

ZUBIN SOLEMANY: That is not the standard. I can wrap up in 10 seconds quickly. So, without that purpose being served, the rules isn't rational. Data was ignored and no bare bone simple analysis was even presented to show that it would

meet that standard. We're finding out today that the TLC is getting the data and now they're realizing what people will be afforded to pay, now they're realizing what people are making. You have to do that before you pass rules. This is completely backwards. In addition, the process was entirely regular just in the fact that the Commissioners didn't even receive written comment until the day final rule the vote was posted online. Commissioner said that they had no choice but to act upon the proposal that was presented by the Mayor. If regulatory rule making is simply and up or down rubber stamp on what the Mayor is handing down to Commission, that is not an actual delivery of process and is an insult to the invitation for the public and the affected parties to participate in this process. The Council needs to force the Commission to come up with a real play that will provide real meaningful debt relief that would actually serve the stated purposes of the rule. Thank you for the extra time chair.

JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

COUNSEL: Thank you. We will now hear from Alli Langley followed by Peter Mazer followed by Cira

Angeles. Alli Langley you may begin when the Sergeant calls time.

SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

ALLI LANGLEY: Hi. My name is Alli Langley, I'm a staff attorney at the Taxi Worker's Alliance. As we talk about the TLCs plan, it's easy to get lost in the uncontextualized numbers, in conversations about market shares, and industry trends but this isn't an academic problem. It's not an abstraction. The cost of this crisis is a human one and the solution must be centered around the people who are most impacted by this. The people who will be speaking to you today were rallying outside your windows. They are the people who will suffer under the TLCs insufficient plan. They will bear the violence of unending poverty. They're the people who won't be able to make rent, who won't be able to put food on the table, who will be evicted from their homes. They're the people whose bodies will bear the beatings of 12-hours a day behind the wheel, 6 days a week all in service of a monthly mortgage that they can't possible pay. What does a reduction in loan principal mean if you still can't make your monthly payments? What does a reduction in loan principal

2 matter if you still are going to lose your home and  
3 saving in foreclosures because your loan principal is  
4 still double and triple the value?

5 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

6 ALLI LANGLEY: One second to conclude it.  
7 Too often Council Members we are faced with problems  
8 that we can't solve, but today is not one of those  
9 days. There is a clear and simple solution, add a  
10 city backed guarantee to the TLCs program. Thank  
11 you.

12 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

13 COUNSEL: Thank you very much. We will now hear from  
14 Peter Mazer followed by Cira Angeles followed by Rose  
15 Imp. Peter Mazer, you may begin when the Sergeant  
16 calls time.

17 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

18 PETER MAZER: Good afternoon. My name is  
19 Peter Mazer, I'm General Counsel to the Metropolitan  
20 Taxicab Board of Trade. We represent owners and  
21 operations and medallion taxi cabs and I will address  
22 the city's proposal. Much of which you have heard  
23 and I will also be supplementing this with this  
24 written testimony. The rule permitting owners of  
25 Fiber Fuel and Medallions is arbitrary, there's no



basis for it. A debt is a debt whether you own five medallion, six medallion or some other number of medallions. The City hasn't pointed out that most lenders are not participating believing that this is not in their best interest. Borrowers are asked to stretch out payments for 30 or 40 years in order to make the loan restructuring work. Many unfavorable turns such as personal guarantees continue to be contained in these restructured loans. Significantly, a plan offers nothing to medallion owners who don't have a lot of debt but are unable to get financing to purchase cars or other capital improvement. For true debt relief to work it is necessary for all lenders to have an incentive to renegotiate and a backstop in a form of a guarantee but a government entity may be the best way.

SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

PETER MAZER: If I can just sum up.

Maybe the best way to encourage lenders to reduce loan balances. Legislation has been introduced at various levels which would provide loan guarantees to lenders, reduce loan balances to manageable amounts and make these benefits available to all owners and expand their availability to finance vehicle

purchases and other medallion related needs and that would be the best approach while also be supplementing this with a written testimony and I thank you for giving me the time to speak today.

JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

COUNSEL: Thank you very much for testifying. We will now hear from Cira Angeles followed by Rose Imp followed by Lionel Morales. Cira Angeles you may begin when the Sergeant calls time.

SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

CIRA ANGELES: All right. Good morning to dear members of the Transportation Committee and TLC Commissioner Aloysee Heredia Jarmouszuk. On behalf of the base owners and customers we serve and our drivers we respectfully submit the following comments. We are on a state of emergency. Our Livery sector is currently dying before our eyes and I hear a lot about the yellows but our industry is in the same place. We enjoy back in 2014 over 27,000 vehicles. Today we are at 8,000 vehicles, seven years later, our industry is dying and I don't see any help coming from the City nor the City Council has proposed any assistance. Today, we are looking for our communities that we cannot continue to serve

2 because the truth is the yellows do not service our  
3 neighborhoods. Our livery sector has been pleading  
4 for years.

5 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

6 CIRA ANGELES: May I sum up?

7 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

8 COUNSEL: Yes, please sum up briefly.

9 CIRA ANGELES: In 2018 this count was ---

10 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: You may  
11 use an additional two minutes so that you can finish  
12 your testimony.

13 CIRA ANGELES: I appreciate it Chairman.  
14 Our communities aren't the ones suffering when the  
15 small bases are unable to provide a ride from lack of  
16 our cars and we are forced to deal with such prices  
17 elsewhere and our community cannot afford those  
18 trips. Our livery sector has been put in a place  
19 that BC&C Companies have seen have seen exponential  
20 growth. Unfortunately our livery sector has been  
21 dragged along the ride. Our struggling bases are  
22 constantly having to tell our customers that we do  
23 not have vehicles for them during peak moments. Up  
24 to 50% of our polls are going negative every single  
25 day due to the lack of vehicles. If any sector

should be allowed to add vehicles to service our community, I would think that the yellows do not serve, we have asked in the past to the commission to allow us to restricted permits that will allow us to stay in business. This also will allow the drivers who have lost their licenses and cannot work, cannot sustain their families they are dying and pleading for this and also we have heard from the Commission that is very sympathetic to this issues, we still need City Council action. We still need those drivers, the freedom to work in our livery bases and the communities that they're accustom to serve, the people of color and the immigrants who are stranded every single day. Our bases need to choose how to service these communities and should not be punished or our passengers in our community should not be charged for months of search pricings that they cannot afford. Our small bases are in crisis. We are however optimistic under the leadership of this Oversight Committee and also...

SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

CIRA ANGELES: Commission Aloysee, her approach of seeing the sectors as separate entities issue has been very refreshing. Also, the program

she installed for drivers is a life saver. We also thank Chair Ydanis Rodriguez for creating the task force alongside with Chair Aloysee in order to analyze the sector, the needs and provide a revitalized option for our industry, for the black cars, for our car services. We look to the City and the TLC again to provide leadership in the state of emergency. We cannot respond to the demand of the current situation in our community. Thank you. And we'll submit the testimony in writing.

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank you Cira. I, I had a specific question. How many drivers, livery taxi drivers do we have today? Did we have before this crisis in two particular basis let's see Seaman to use as an example Seaman and Riverside Car Service. For me where were those two bases where they have a higher number and what are those basis today when it comes to livery taxi affiliate in those bases?

CIRA ANGELES: These two basis have employed basically having 300 to 400 vehicles at a given time back where the TLC were not adding all this amounts of vehicles and they were servicing our communities but today we bases our, let's say

Riverside only has approximately 150 vehicles left at my check, the lost almost 200 to 300 vehicles and also Seaman has approximately 79 vehicles. So this is the kind of situation that we are in. The calls keep coming in because they like our service but we unfortunately have to turn these people down.

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank you, thank you and for me I want to be clear that, you know, as I was talking today at a press conference we are brothers from the especially the yellow taxi and the Taxi Alliance. You know, I spoke very clear that you know for me this is like a crisis I suffer. It's affecting the yellow taxi, medallions and also it's affecting, you know, the mom and pop, is more livery bases. For many, they could be in working together. And as I say, I used to be a 110 or cab car service, Baily Car Service through driving a livery that I put myself through City College and became a teacher after graduating. So, and that's, I know that my story is a story of many of our brothers and sisters who are here, so I know that, you know, unfortunately, the Commissioner and will fail because we have the number to pass in 2014 on both sides but we didn't do it. I remember that day in the morning,

I call a press conference that we have the number, let's vote and we start the vote and now we're paying the consequences to both industry. To the family traditional black car service, to the livery basis and to the yellow taxi. So, we cannot ...

CIRA ANGELES: Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: I'm sorry. We cannot go backward now but, you know, by not putting the cap in 2014 and looking at the livery basis, their friends as we also as part of the solution. We do believe that we should create our livery base type of license, that we should also give them, allow them to increase the number for those who only will be adding new one only limited to the livery basis. So I know that the solution to this crisis besides, you know, the yellow taxi for me is personal so to also fight for the traditional black car as also for the livery bases because the big ones they will survive. Uber will be here. Lyft will be here. There's a market for everyone but the prices of successful should not be destroying the little one.

CIRA ANGELES: I believe that the cap was a one size fits all and we have shown that we have

not grown exponentially that way. We have grown alongside demands and given the fact that the cap was put in place and over 30,000 licenses are off the street. I think we have enough to prove that congestion is not going to be a problem and we will work directly with the transportation committee and the TLC to address those concerns.

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank you and I appreciate also that as, as TLC was a partner you know during the discussion together with the leadership of the Taxi Alliance Academic Sector, private sectors in the Counsel and they're working around the yellow taxi medallion task for, I also have seen how the Commissioner have been consistently pressing in the livery and black car taxi task force that we have right now even though at some point myself and having there my staff do legislation is always there so I also appreciate. We just want to move from the recommendation to the action. So again as we will hold that to our meeting very soon with City Hall to talk about what other things could be done besides this initiative that already is implemented by City Hall. We also like and will



continue working around the livery and black car medallions. So thank you Cira.

CIRA ANGELES: Thank you Chairman.

JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

COUNSEL: We will now hear from Rose Imp of CUNY, followed by Lionel Morales, the New York City Black Car Fund followed by Avik Kabessa of Carmel and the Livery Roundtable. Rose Imp, you may begin when the Sergeant calls time.

SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

ROSE IMPERATO: Thank you Chair. Thank you Council Members. My name is Rose Imperato and I am a concerned citizen here in New York City along with, I can't even imagine the number, the thousands and tens of thousands of concerned citizens as we have learned horrifying details and educated ourselves about this issue over the last six, seven years that this has been happening and as a consequence of that, I have actually gone down to the 24/7 protest that's going on right now several days over the last 20 days and have offered help and my voice as a concerned citizen and I had somebody come up to me yesterday and say I, I support you but you're not going to be able to save these drivers,

you're not going to get them out of poverty. The City Council isn't going to be able to help them. And I said why did you say that? And he said because the banks have already gotten their money and banks are way more powerful and I'm here to day I believe in my City Council. I believe that you care. I know most of you. I've seen you in action and you care.

SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

ROSE IMPERATO: I'll wrap up Sergeant. I feel like, uh, you won't be talked about in the news if the banks win again. That's old news. Everybody expects it like this guy who said this to me yesterday but you will make the news if you are the heroes here. If you step up and say okay. This is a difficult thing to do we're going to get it done. We're going to make sure that these driver's live. That they survive, that they get out of poverty. That his horrifying scenario and New Yorkers Magazine. I don't know if people read this magazine. Can you see what's right here? It's a yellow. Okay, this cab they did a cover to say, magic formula, all of these things equal New York. All these things equal New York. I know Chairman you've

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2 spoken to my students about leadership and diversity  
3 and many of these cab drivers they have access.  
4 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Sorry.  
5 Thank you and sorry miss.  
6 ROSE IMPERATO: Yes. I'll just ta two  
7 seconds.  
8 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank  
9 you.  
10 ROSE IMPERATO: These cab drivers have  
11 accents don't let immigrant cab drivers with accents  
12 be squelched and that their voice are not worth  
13 hearing and I believe in you. You can make history.  
14 You can make news. Please City Council do the thing.  
15 Thank you very much.  
16 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE  
17 COUNSEL: Thank you and apologies for  
18 mispronouncing your name. We will now hear from  
19 Lionel Morales followed by Avik Kabessa followed by  
20 Qudratallah Saberry. Lionel Morales you may begin  
21 when the Sergeant calls time.  
22 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.  
23 LIONEL MORALES: Good afternoon Chair  
24 Rodriguez and members of the Transportation  
25 Committee. My name is Lionel Morales and I'm the

communication and external affairs specialist for the black car fund. Chair Rodriguez is very familiar with the fund but for those who aren't, the fund was create by New York State Statute in 1999 with the purpose of providing worker's compensation workers to black car drivers throughout New York. Over the years, the fund has grown to over 500 member base and we cover an estimated 100,000 drivers throughout New York. We are also proud to have added many additional free health and wellness related benefits including 24/7 telemedicine coverage, vision coverage, dental insurance, prescription, urgent care and diagnostic imaging discounts, mental health and wellness program that's administered by the Drivers guild and an additional \$50,000 death benefit above what is mandated by state law if a driver dies while on the job. We have created an invaluable safety net for drivers but unfortunately all the benefits in the world can't change the fact that the traditional black car industry has been decimated by the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, take a look at the congestion search for hard revenue brought to the city by industry compared to 2019 and early 2020 they search is now being generated by the ...

SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

LIONEL MORALES: Used to be 5%. I can probably finish in like 30 seconds thank you. This figure doesn't tell the whole story. Ahead of the pandemic, traditional black car bases were down as much as 95% in business which high volume were down 80%. Since then, traditional black car bases have only recovered between -- are still down 40% to 45%.

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. Thanks a lot.

JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. You can submit the rest of the testimony that you've written. Thank you so much. We will next hear from Avik Kabessa followed by Qudratullah Saberry followed by Md Z Islam. Avik Kabessa you may begin when the Sergeant calls time.

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: And we will give Avik three minutes, Avik but one not second more. You have three minutes.

AVIK KABESSA: Thank you very much Chairman.

SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

AVIK KABESSA: Good afternoon. My name is Avik Kabessa I'm a member of the Livery Roundtable

and the estate of Car Mail. And we really don't mind using our tax dollars to help the taxis but what I'm here to emphasize is that we also delivery and the for hire traditional need help. Unfortunately what I heard today is the TLC Commissioner three times praising the decline of the for hire vehicle as means of increasing the value of the yellows. This is not the way, this is not the rule of the TLC to prefer one group over the other, so I'm going to urge the City Council to intervene and make sure that the right goal of helping executive of this oversight hearing sees relief, taxi medallion relief and supporting the black car and livery service be the outcome of this call. And our solutions are very, very simple. I think that the Chair you mentioned it. We did not cause the congestion. We did not cause the overflow of vehicles. We should not be penalized for it and Cira from the Livery Base Owners Association mentioned we, the taxis do not serve the areas we do. All we are asking the City Council is to force the TLC or to assist the TLC or to encourage the TLC or do whatever needs to be done with the TLC. We offered that solution almost two years ago and a year ago. We would like a restricted livery or

traditional for hire permit to be added on a moderate level that cannot be dispatched by the high volume service. Therefore the high volume service cannot sort of find a backdoor to more vehicles so we can service our need. We reject 50% of our customers, we say sorry no car and they have to go and pay 300 times what we charge with Uber and Lyft. So, we urge the Commission, the City Council, the part of this passage of the relief of the taxi which we will gladly participate that they were being conditions of allowing a restrictive permit for the traditional bases, livery, so that they cannot be dispatched by high volume and the second thing. Because of this cap many people which was their first entry to this industry rented a car and for years they are paying for a rental car. They know they want to make it their livelihood. They want to make it their business but they are forced to keep on renting and paying exuberant money to renters because they cannot obtain their own permit. So, we would ask the City Council to please 1) issue the restricted license to help us, it's a moderate; 2) allow those who rent vehicles over a year to decide to buy to get a

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2 permit. Thank you very, very much for the time,  
3 Chair, Chairman.

4 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank  
5 you.

6 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE  
7 COUNSEL: Thank you. Thank you for your  
8 testimony. We will now hear from Qudratulla Saberry  
9 followed by Md Z. Islam followed by Gerson Fernandes.  
10 Qudratulla Saberry, you may start when the Sergeant  
11 calls time.

12 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

13 QUDRATULLA SABERRY: Good afternoon.  
14 Thank you for letting me participate in today's  
15 session. My name is Saberry and I'm a driver for 34  
16 years. I've been driving for 34 years and I don't  
17 have any retirement. I lost because the value of the  
18 medallion came down and we know that the reason that  
19 medallion came down is the decision of the City. It  
20 also showed that you know anybody who did it did it  
21 but at this point time I'm 70 years old. I cannot  
22 drive more than maybe 7 to 8 hours and how can I pay  
23 that \$1600 a month for the bank. The MRP is not  
24 working for us because it lets the bank raise our  
25 payment, monthly payment up to \$2000.



SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

QUDRATULLAH SABERRY: Yeah, I can survive only for \$800 a month at this age and cannot be more than that. If it's more than that I will have to go for bankruptcy and that, the City plan that it takes me back to the part of bankruptcy again. I have to go for bankruptcy. That's it.

JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

COUNSEL: Thank you.

QUDRATULLAH SABERRY: Thank you very much.

JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony. We will now hear from Md Z. Islam followed by Gerson Fernandes followed by Suves Bairagi. Md Z. Islam, you may begin when the Sergeant calls time.

SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

COUNSEL: We, we are unable to hear you can you please make sure that your speakers are on?

MD Z. ISLAM: Can you hear me?

JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

COUNSEL: Yes. We can hear you now. Sergeant if you could restart the clock, please. Thank you.

MD Z. ISLAM: Thanks for giving me the time. I'm an owner driver and a member of Taxi Worker Alliance. I believe that this country has an opportunity. This country is in hope but now this country is the nightmare for me. I trusted the City. I trusted the TLC but they failed. They failed me but they inflicted the price. I bought the medallion. The medallion price goes down. We already lost our nine brothers including three owner drivers. How many bodies do we need? Now it's time to clean up your own hand. You should come a step up and take action to save our own lives. If this is the time you should do something. Now that is done, it is not working for us. We need to actually believe the medallion should be as part of market value and the payment should be below \$800 then we can survive. We can ...

SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

MD Z. ISLAM: ... we can send our kids to school. Thank you.

JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your testimony. We will now hear from Gerson Fernandes followed by

Suves Bairagi followed by Augustine Tang. Gerson Fernandes you may begin when the Sergeant calls time.

SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

GERSON FERNANDES: My name is Gerson Fernandes. I'm a yellow medallion owner. I'm driving a yellow cab from 2000. I'm 67 years old. I've with the New York City Taxi Alliance. Our leader is Ms. Desi. I bought a medallion because at that time it was a good way of earning money, taking care of my family and paying the bills. There were 30,587 yellow taxis. In 2014, the City and TLC allowed Uber, Lyft and other companies to infiltrate the taxi business. That's when the taxi business was in a mess or all. In two or three years, the Uber, Lyft, etc. had about 110,000 cars on the road, driving was a mess and there was no business for any of us. I don't mind Uber, Lyft joining the competition but the City and TLC need to regulate. Because of this our medallion size went down and very little business for the yellow taxi.

SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

GERSON FERNANDES: It was difficult for me to pay my bills. Please help me. Without debt

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2 forgiveness you can talk to our leader, Ms. Desi and  
3 she will enlighten you on how with this procedure.  
4 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE  
5 COUNSEL: Please finish up.  
6 GERSON FERNANDES: Just a little bit. I  
7 love driving my yellow taxi and enjoy my job. Thank  
8 you very much for the time to speak.  
9 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE  
10 COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.  
11 GERSON FERNANDES: Thank thank.  
12 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE  
13 COUNSEL: We will now hear from Suves Bairagi.  
14 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank  
15 you. And I'm sorry for that.  
16 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE  
17 COUNSEL: I'm sorry Chair.  
18 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: It's all  
19 right. Saying that I appreciate knowing (INAUDIBLE).  
20 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE  
21 COUNSEL: Chair I'm sorry, we're unable to hear  
22 you.  
23 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Being  
24 able to all share (INAUDIBLE).  
25

1 COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION 117

2 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

3 COUNSEL: Chair, I believe we're having some  
4 technical difficulties with your mic.

5 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ:

6 (INAUDIBLE) New Yorkers. So, you know, working  
7 together we should be able to put a resolution to  
8 this crisis but our solidarity to you (INAUDIBLE).

9 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

10 COUNSEL: Thank you Chair. We will now hear from  
11 Suves Bairagi followed by Augustine Tang followed by  
12 Harjit Singh. Suves Bairagi, you may begin when the  
13 Sergeant calls time.

14 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

15 SUVES BAIRAGI: Good afternoon everybody.  
16 Hello? Hi. Are you hearing?

17 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Yes, we  
18 can hear you.

19 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

20 COUNSEL: We can hear you, please continue.

21 SUVES BAIRAGI: Good afternoon everyone.

22 I'm a Suves Bairagi I'm a professional taxi driver.

23 I have been in this City 23 years as a taxi driver.

24 We are here to introduce on top of our, on behalf of  
25 City Mail House. I think everybody knows why we are

1 COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

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2 here. Our demand to want especially I want to know  
3 where is my money? \$100,000 I give to the City 2014.  
4 My family want to know. This society want to know.  
5 I paid \$6,000 every month for this medallion from  
6 2014 to 2017 and still I have debt.

7 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

8 SUVES BAIRAGI: More than \$700,000 on my  
9 shoulder. Please I, extra time please. I am very,  
10 very sick now. I have, I had surgery last May 9,  
11 2021. I bought this medallion at \$851,000. After I  
12 bought this medallion.

13 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

14 COUNSEL: If you could please, if you could  
15 please sum up.

16 SUVES BAIRAGI: Please additional time,  
17 please?

18 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Okay.  
19 One more minute.

20 SUVES BAIRAGI: I am very, very sick now.  
21 I have very last 9/2021. I bought this medallion  
22 \$851,000. After I bought this medallion, within one  
23 month thousand Uber, Lyft came on the street.  
24 Medallion price goes down. It is completely  
25 manipulated our city. Everybody knows except the

male, only the males know why because we are immigrant. I want to mayor, you remember, today, you mailed, only immigrant borders. We respect. You have to respect us. We, we want to expecting like this, no respect, no justice, no peace. I want to follow up all of my friends who suicide for debt. I, I am not.

CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank you sir. Thank you.

JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your testimony. We will now hear from Augustine Tang followed by Harjit Singh, followed by Mohammed Tipu Sultan and I just want to remind everyone that if your testimony is longer than the one minute allotted please submit written testimony to [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov) and it will all be considered. Augustine Tang you may begin when the Sergeant calls time.

SGT. LUGO: Starting time. 2:40:59

AUGUSTINE TANG: Hi. My name is Augustine Tang I'm 37 years old and I've been a taxi driver for six years. I inherited a medallion from my father and also a \$530,000 loan. For what this City's plan will give me is it would make, my, my

lender is Marble Gate and it will make my monthly payment \$1600 and it would drop it down to \$275,000. I for one, I know that I won't be able to manage this monthly mortgage because of how much high expenses that comes with taxi cab, along with the fees, congestion surcharge. On average, let's just say I remember TLC commissioner was saying that on average people are grossing \$7,500. I'm assuming that's gross because there is no way people are making \$7,500 with the amount of traffic that has been in the City as of late and it's just going to be getting worse and it's \$2000 of that is going straight to congestion surcharges and also the taxi improvement charge and you are talking about ...

SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

AUGUSTINE TANG: You are talking about \$1600 with that and additionally with \$700 car payment, \$300 liability insurance it's going to be very difficult to make ends meet.

JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

COUNSEL: Please, please sum up.

AUGUSTINE TANG: Yeah, so basically I really urge the City Council to really understand how much that goes into the medallion and the DOT New



York Taxi Alliance as planned. For us, for many of us we are all really struggling really and on average a lot of these medallion owners own \$25,000 in credit card fees because of what the city.

JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

COUNSEL: Thank you. Thank you so much. We appreciate your testimony. We will now hear from Harjit Singh followed by Mohammed Tipu Sultan followed by Jose Herrera. Harjit Singh you may begin when the Sergeant calls time.

SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

HARJIT SINGH: Six years ago my father and a couple of hundred South Asian (inaudible) came and called on the City for our livelihood and the medallions crushing. Those years of inaction from the City and TLC caused my family \$3000 a month, \$36,000 a year and over the course of five years cost \$180,000 and we still owe \$500,000 today. So for those that say take the current form of the program and wait I say no we can't. For every month we wait, we are figuratively burning money by payments on under water, unmodified loans. The City's proposal modifies the loan as high as \$330,000. Taxi Worker's Alliance ...

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2 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

3 HARJIT SINGH: ... reduces us to \$145,000.

4 The value is only \$100,000. If you don't believe me,  
5 check the TLC website to where the current  
6 foreclosure is for September of 2021. The rest I'll  
7 submit in writing.

8 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

9 COUNSEL: Thank you very much yes. If you could  
10 please submit it to your written testimony. Thank  
11 you for your testimony. We will now hear from  
12 Mohammed Tipu Sultan followed by Jose Herrera  
13 followed by Vinod K. Malhotra. Mohammed Tipu Sultan,  
14 you may begin when the Sergeant calls time.

15 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

16 MOHAMMED TIPU SULTAN: Can you hear me?

17 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Yes.

18 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

19 COUNSEL: We can hear you. Just begin.

20 MOHAMMED TIPU SULTAN: Hello. Hi. Good  
21 afternoon and thank you Tipu and he gave me his sign.  
22 I'm driving my cab 31 years and my age is 61. My  
23 payment at \$3942.43 and I plus other expenses and I  
24 keep my medallion and I driving a cab. I'm very  
25 much, good service all over the world in my taxi and

2 I tried to get the most from the public and the  
3 public they like and I tried to get.

4 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

5 MOHAMMED TIPU SULTAN: And you know,  
6 please help me and I speak little English and I try  
7 to get the word to you. You know and my payment is  
8 too much and I can't afford that. I want a new car  
9 and \$1000 plus and I can pay that, but you know.

10 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

11 COUNSEL: Thank you very much. Thank you very  
12 much for your testimony. We will now hear from Jose  
13 Herrera followed by Vinod Malhotra followed by Chime  
14 Gyatso. Jose Herrera you may begin when the Sergeant  
15 calls time.

16 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

17 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Jose  
18 Herrera are you, are you there?

19 JOSE HERRERA: Yes. Hello.

20 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

21 COUNSEL: Please begin we can hear you now.

22 JOSE HERRERA: Okay. I drive a taxi 35  
23 years and they right is forced to pay a mortgage  
24 because there a lot of competition. I'm sorry. And  
25 there are too many taxis compared to the tourists.

1 COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION 124

2 Forget it, this business is destroyed right now.

3 That's all I had to say right now. That's it.

4 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

5 COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your testimony.

6 We will now hear from Vinod Malhotra followed by

7 Chime Gyatso followed by ...

8 VINOD MALHOTRA: Hello.

9 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

10 COUNSEL: Please hold a minute followed by Tilak

11 RJ. Vinod Malhotra you may begin when the Sergeant

12 calls time.

13 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

14 VINOD MALHOTRA: Hello. Good morning.

15 Hear me?

16 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

17 COUNSEL: Yes. We can hear you.

18 VINOD MALHOTRA: All right good morning

19 all CMs thanks for holding the hearing. This is

20 really very, very important and a necessity for life

21 savings medallion owner or not who really are at no

22 fault due to COVID. Sir, we don't want bankruptcy.

23 The medallions are bigger things. We love this

24 iconic taxi permit. I don't know if you love you

25 must come up real (INAUDIBLE) by the NY (INAUDIBLE).

1 COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION 125

2 Sir, as you know I've been to so many hearings. It's  
3 a long time when I saw there's not any output, look  
4 to protect our medallion after feeling like most  
5 hearings like say to me I decided to go for  
6 bankruptcy so do bankruptcy the lost hours, \$100,000  
7 to be spent on loan payment. This \$100,000 is equal  
8 to \$1 million for us ...

9 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

10 VINOD MALHOTRA: We work very, very,  
11 hard. Sir, I have three kids, they are going to  
12 college so I not see any real, how can I observe,  
13 survive them or who's going to pay that expense. So,  
14 the rest of my friends that don't let them go to  
15 bankruptcy so thank you very much for your time.

16 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

17 COUNSEL: Thank your testimony. We will now here  
18 from Chime Gyatso followed by Tilak RJ followed by  
19 Wain Chin. Chime Gyatso you may begin when the  
20 Sergeant calls time.

21 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

22 CHIME GYATSO: Hello. Yes. Everyone.  
23 Good afternoon. My name is Chime Gyatso. I'm  
24 driving a taxi in 2000. I bought a medallion like  
25 2009. Since then I was enjoying the American dream

and since after 2014 like you know TLC give a  
(INAUDIBLE) class so then after our vision has  
totally gone done so you know like according to the  
TLC plan that doesn't work for us. \$1600 we cannot  
pay. So according to the TWYA plan please with that  
plan we can work and then you know like the mirror at  
the TLC throw us in the Hudson River. Please you've  
got to save us from the Hudson River. Save us from  
the Hudson River. So you know nine drivers already  
suicide. Now I think this is my turn, my turn, I'm  
like this because of this medallion epic time with my  
...

SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

CHIME GYATSO: Please help us. Please  
help us. Help us please.

JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your testimony.  
We will now hear from Tilak RJ followed by Wain Chin  
followed by Balkar Singh. Tilak RJ you may begin  
when the Sergeant calls time.

SGT. LUGO: Time expired. Time starting.

TILAK RJ: Thank you. Good evening  
Council Member to having me. My name is RJ Tilak.  
My medallion number is 6F20. I am a 73 year old

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2 driving taxi for 34 years. I am a member of Taxi  
3 Worker's Alliance. Having learned today, paying  
4 \$2772.00 that means \$33267 a year. Now I have a loan  
5 with my department but since the pandemic I stay home  
6 with my taxi with insurance every day for \$3465  
7 yearly for two years now. I can't go to work for  
8 some health issue. I am waiting for debt  
9 forgiveness.

10 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

11 TILAK RJ: For \$125,750 then I can  
12 survive. Give me two offers, first payment \$754 for  
13 three months then \$20,000 from TLC and my loan will  
14 be down to \$275,000 and \$1650 and ...

15 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

16 COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your testimony.  
17 If you could please submit the rest in writing, we'd  
18 appreciate it. Thank you. We will now hear from  
19 Wain Chin followed by Balkar Singh followed by  
20 Pabitra Saha. Wain Chin you may begin when the  
21 Sergeant calls time.

22 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

23 WAIN CHIN: Hi my name is Wain Chin. I  
24 am a medallion owner. (INAUDIBLE). The TLC plan  
25 doesn't go far enough. We need a back up to the plan

so that all can survive. And because of these plan I still pay the, I will still be paying \$2000 a month plus my expense, operating expense, gas, cost me over \$4000 a month in my operating expense. So, is the Chairwoman saying we making \$7000 a month. I have \$2000 left, how am I going to my rent and food. So, it doesn't make sense. The numbers doesn't add up, you know, we need payment no more than \$800 a month so we can survive. So bring it, bring the principal down and they payment down, that's all we're asking. Let us survive.

SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your testimony. We will now hear from Balkar Singh followed by Dorothy Leconte. Balkar Singh you may begin when the Sergeant calls time.

BALKAR SINGH: My name is Balkar Singh. I'm driving like 32 year and my payment at this time is \$2735 and I don't like the TLC plan and I want to keep my medallion and the city plan is no good. I want to pay only \$800 plus other expenses and I have children and family. Please, City Council, please save our life. You can save us. City and TLC. TLC



wants to destroy everything. Please save the taxi industry you the good, he the bad. God bless you. Please save our lives, nobody listens. TLC Chairwoman never comes here. Mayor never comes here. Nobody wants to come here. Please Mr. Rodriguez, Mr. Chairman, God bless you and all your City Council Committee. Please save our lives. We are immigrants. I live here like 35 years. I drive 32 year. Please save our lives. We are immigrants. We are all color men and woman. Please save our life.

SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

BALKAR SINGH: Thank you sir. Thank you very much.

JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your testimony. We will now here from Pabitra Saha followed by Dorothy Leconte followed by Randal Wilhite. Pabitra Saha you may begin when the Sergeant calls time.

SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

PABITRA SAHA: Yes. Good afternoon everybody. All of the respected person, Chairperson, TLC commissioner and Senator members, Council Members, all of them. So I cannot explain my whole story more than Ms. Desi has explained everything and

I like to support her and this is the always, always can say and the rest of business end of yours and all of the official people, please try to see us and what you can do, let us know. Previously, there was so many, I mean, so many kinds of when meetings were going on and we are all in front of the City Hall 24 hours, 7 days a week so please help us.

SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

PABITRA SAHA: Thank you.

JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your testimony. We will now hear from Dorothy Leconte followed by Randal Wilhite followed by Mohammad Islam. Dorothy Leconte you may begin when the Sergeant calls time.

SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

DOROTHY LECONTE: My name is Dorothy Leconte. I'm in this fight from the beginning. I understand the Commissioner means. She thinks she means all good things for us but it's not because at my age 65 starting a yellow cab, driving a cab since 1987 that makes 35 years. I was expecting to retire. I did not expect to go back a business that I have right now to turn it as a sweat shop. It's not a business for me it's a job. If I want to buy a job I

will not buy a yellow cab right now. So I can afford \$1748 a month but they only think about the medallion. What about our private life? We have other expenses on our household life. What it is? There's nothing for us.

SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

DOROTHY LECONTE: The medallion. So please I adapt the back half of the city and I hope the City Council will help us out with this. Thank you.

JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your testimony. We will now hear from Randal Wilhite followed by Mohammed Islam followed by the second Mohammed Islam. Randal Wilhite you may begin when the Sergeant calls time.

SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

RANDAL WILHITE: Good afternoon. My name is Randal Wilhite and I'm a staff attorney at the New York Legal Assistance Group. I am testifying today in my personal capacity and not on behalf of my life. Since TLC announced its Medallion Relief Program in March 2021 NYLAG Attorneys and I personally have spent countless hours speaking with the industry's

different lenders about their willingness to participate in a relief program. I am testifying today because I am deeply concerned about a pattern of misrepresentations that the TLC has been making about the success of this program. I only have time to provide one example today but I look forward to following up with written testimony. In its statement of basis and purpose of the proposed rules for the relief program published in mid-August the TLC stated the TLC owner driver resource center has worked with over 700 medallion owners and a dozen different lenders on renegotiating loans. Lenders have participated in the process and have offered restructuring and forgiveness terms that would meet the required parameters of the proposed rules.

SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

RANDAL WILHITE: This is a completely fabrication. When this statement was published at most two lenders had made any specific commitments to provide amounts of loan forgiveness through restructurings that would allow borrowers to qualify for grants under the program. Instead multiple lenders have expressed or indicated that they are not interesting in participating in the program at least

2 with respect to any significant number of borrowers.  
3 Another lender, one of the largest in the industry  
4 has been so disinterested.

5 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

6 COUNSEL: If you could please summarize and then  
7 submit the rest in writing.

8 RANDAL WILHITE: Thank you I urge you in  
9 the strongest possible terms to investigate the  
10 administration of this program, look beyond the  
11 misleading press leases and beyond the testimony of  
12 the Commission. This program has never made sense.  
13 Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank  
15 you.

16 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

17 COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your testimony.  
18 We will now hear from Mohammed Islam followed by  
19 Mohammed Islam followed by Tariq Munir. Mohammed  
20 Islam you may begin when the Sergeant calls time.

21 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

22 MOHAMMED ISLAM: Yeah, my name is  
23 Mohammed Islam. I'm a taxi driver. I am angry with  
24 Taxi Worker Alliance from City Hall. I am highly  
25 recused to your savers to use the type of taboo

following this fund. Why do I say this? Only one month missed payment they took my medallion. I am suffering for a month, five members in my family. Please do not work for lender. Work for immigrant hard working taxi driver. I do not want suicide or bankruptcy. I want lovely taxi driver for TLC. Please, you have power, you have power, please do something for us. Debt forgiveness. Please do something. We want a life. We had a dream. Thank you very much. Thank you for helping us. All of members, I am very excited in front of you guys. Please help us. Have a good day.

JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your testimony. We will now hear from Mohammed Islam #2 followed by Tariq Munir followed by Ibrahim Diallo. There is another Mohammed Islam. Please begin when the Sergeant calls time.

SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

MOHAMMED ISLAM #2: Hi. This is Mohammed Islam I have been trying my yellow cab for 22 years. My current loan is \$536,000 Monrugate. Offering my \$275,000 to restructure under the TLC plan. I have the TLC and City inflect medallion place. My loan

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2 MYTWF offers that proposal is \$145,000 that is \$800.

3 I want to City Bank stopped. I cannot afford that

4 TLC plan. So I wonder debt forgiveness. I want

5 justice. I want ...

6 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

7 MOHAMMED ISLAM #2: ... my life back.

8 Thank you so much. Help us. Thank you. Bye.

9 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

10 COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your testimony.

11 We will now hear from Tariq Munir followed by Ibrahim

12 Diallo followed by Nina Kodashi (SP?). Tariq Munir

13 you may begin when the Sergeant calls time.

14 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

15 TARIQ MUNIR: Hi. Good afternoon this is

16 Tariq Munir. The TLC gives a plan. That's not an

17 affordable plan. IT's for us. I worked 10 hours but

18 cannot make money for a living. Taxi Worker's

19 Alliance are the representative that we give suggest

20 a plan and that she's working on it. That is a very

21 good plan to make the balance down like \$145,000 and

22 monthly payment will be like \$800. This proposal is

23 very good but taxi drivers, taxi owners, this

24 proposal is like for me and other driver's. In this

25 way I can save myself from bankruptcy. Please help

owners so they can judge it the rest of their life.

Thank you very much.

JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your testimony.

We will hear from Ibrahim Diallo followed by Nina Godoshi followed by Erhan Tuncel. Ibrahim Diallo, you may begin when the Sergeant calls time.

SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

IBRAHIM DIALLO: Hi. My name is Ibrahim Diallo. I am a staff attorney at the New York Taxi Worker's Alliance. You've heard a lot of stories today from drivers from experts from their advocates. I wanted to just focus on the objective measurement of whether this plan is working and I think anyone who looks at it will come to a conclusion that the TLC is just putting a Band-Aid on this crisis. The Chair herself recognized that the most important measurement of resolving this problem is whether the drivers can afford the monthly payments. Last time she was here in front of you all she said and I'm quoting here "My goal is to work with the council and drivers to find a solution to reduce driver monthly payment less than \$1000 a month." That's what she told this Council before. Now the TLC has come up



2 with a plan where they are saying it's going to cost  
3 anywhere between \$1500 to \$2000 a month. That is 50%  
4 to 100% more than what the Chair herself said the  
5 goals should be.

6 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

7 IBRAHIM DIALLO: If I could wrap up  
8 quickly.

9 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE  
10 COUNSEL: Yes.

11 IBRAHIM DIALLO: So now the TLC is  
12 recognizing that the problem with this plan and they  
13 are saying again make another commitment that they  
14 are going to subsidize loans. How long will this --  
15 the subsidy be for a year. Will every driver get  
16 this? Is the TLC are they making another empty  
17 promise to work for us and has lived through a  
18 series of broken promises. There was a better  
19 solution that does not cost as much. You should  
20 adapt a plan or call on the TLC and the mayor to  
21 adopt another plan. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank  
23 you.

24 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

25 COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your testimony.

We will now hear from Nina Godoshi followed by Erhan Tuncel followed by Nizam Ahmed. Nina Godoshi, you may begin when the Sergeant calls time.

SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

COUNSEL: Nina Godoshi are you there? If someone could please unmute Nina Godoshi. Okay. We will come back to Nina Godoshi. It seems there might be some technical difficulties there. So let's move on. We will now hear from Erhan Tuncel. Erhan Tuncel you may begin when the Sergeant calls time.

SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

ERHAN TUNCCEL: Hi, my name is Erhan Tuncel. I'm a yellow medallion taxi owner driver of 22 years. I gave my best years to the taxi industry and I did so with the expectation of being taken care of in my golden years. That's what the City of New York made us believe. I will turn 62 next March. I'm one of those almost senior owner drivers whose light at the end of the tunnel has been put out by the complacency of our regulators. We need a real solution and that solution lies in the proposal by the taxi worker's with a city guarantee. A proposal which puts the owner drivers back on the road making

a living wage. I'd like to end my testimony with a quote by Benjamin E. Mayes. The tragedy of life is not found in failure but complacency. Not in you doing too much but doing too little. Not in you living above your means but below your capacity. The means have been provided by the federal government. Now we need this great center of ours to live up to its full capacity and the end, and end this horrible nightmare.

SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

ERHAN TUNCEL: I'd like to point out time is of essence. \

JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

COUNSEL: Thank you very much. Let's try and see if Nina Godoshi, are you available? Are you able to testify?

SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

COUNSEL: Okay. We will try you again at the end of the public testimony. We will now turn to Nizan Ahmed followed by Val George followed by Joan Bottex. Nizam Ahmed, you may begin when the Sergeant calls time.

SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

2 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

3 COUNSEL: Okay. My apologies. It does not look  
4 like Nizam Ahmed is with us or his on the panel, so  
5 let's go to Val George. Val George you may begin  
6 when the Sergeant calls time.

7 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

8 VAL GEORGE: Hi everybody. Where to  
9 start? I don't know. We'd be shameful if we, all of  
10 us make an effort to save the yellow taxi which  
11 everybody knows that it's one of the landmark of the  
12 New York City. Would you live without the Statue of  
13 Liberty or the Empire State Building or Times Square?  
14 We need to do that. It's a historical moment and the  
15 history and the City will be thankful to us. Please  
16 adopt the New York Taxi Worker's Alliance plans.  
17 Also, professionals, the CEO the financial officer of  
18 the New York City, the comptroller said this plan is  
19 absolutely viable and realistic. Please look at it.  
20 If you have a question calls the meeting.

21 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

22 VAL GEORGE: Thank you. That's all I  
23 need to say. Thanks very much.

24 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

25 COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your testimony.

Okay. I see that Nina Godosh is on the screen so.

Nina Godoshi, you may begin when the Sergeant calls

time and you are unmuted. Please make sure to unmute  
your mic.

SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

COUNSEL: You are, Nina Godoshi you are still

muted. You should receive a message that asks you to  
unmute your phone. Are you able to unmute? Okay.

You are still unmuted. Someone should be asking you  
if you would like to unmute your phone if you could

do that? Okay. It appears that we are still having  
some technical difficulties. I apologize for that.

Okay. Nina we will come back to you because we do  
want to hear your testimony. So, we will try and

sort out those technical difficulties. Let's turn

now to Joan Bottex followed by Momad Hossain followed

by Mofuzol Islam. Joan Bottex, you may begin when  
the Sergeant calls time.

SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

JOAN BOTTEX: My name is Joan Bottex and

I'm speaking to you on behalf of my husband, Eton

Bottex who drove taxi for 45 years. The yellow cab

was his income to support his family but due to

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2 medical issue coupled with aging I had to lease his  
3 medallion. The initial lease income was \$3200 month.  
4 I think as the industry crashed his income declined  
5 to \$1500 and to \$950 pre-pandemic. Loan payments of  
6 \$3500 pre-pandemic and a loan balance of \$550,000.  
7 On 10/06/2021, the leasing company White and Blue  
8 sent a letter stating monthly payment will be \$200  
9 due to the medallion crisis. Since March of 2020, we  
10 have had no income from White and Blue. Please  
11 accept our New York Taxi Alliance proposal so that  
12 drivers can have the quality of life they deserve.  
13 As of this moment, my husband has nothing. There are  
14 drivers who have the same situation. Please  
15 understand our struggle and ...

16 SGT. LUGO: Time expired.

17 JOAN BOTTEX: Thank you for listening.

18 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

19 COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your testimony.  
20 You will now hear from Mamad Hussain followed by  
21 Mofuzol. Mamad Hussain, you may begin as soon as the  
22 Sergeant calls time.

23 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.

24 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

25 COUNSEL: My apologies, is it Shokowat Hussain.

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2 Shokowat Hussain, you may begin when the Sergeant  
3 calls time.  
4 SGT. LUGO: Starting time.  
5 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE  
6 COUNSEL: Shokowat Hussain if you could unmute  
7 your mic when you receive the request to unmute and  
8 then we will be able to hear you. Okay. Okay we  
9 will try you again in a little bit. Let's go now to  
10 Mofozol Islam followed by Sammy Khan. Mofozol Islam  
11 you may begin when the Sergeant calls time.  
12 SGT. KOTOWSKI: Time starts now.  
13 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE  
14 COUNSEL: Okay let's move on to Sammy Khan.  
15 Sammy Khan you may begin when the Sergeant calls time  
16 and please when you are asked to unmute your mic  
17 please accept that.  
18 SGT. KOTOWSKI: Time starts now.  
19 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE  
20 COUNSEL: Sammy Khan if you are there, please  
21 unmute your mic. Okay. We will proceed with Sheshir  
22 Roy followed by Soton Khan. Sheshir Roy please begin  
23 when the Sergeant starts time.  
24 SGT. KOTOWSKI: Time starts now.  
25

2 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

3 COUNSEL: Okay. We will move then on Soton Khan.  
4 If Soton Khan is still on the panel, please unmute  
5 your mic when the Sergeant calls time.

6 SGT. KOTOWSKI: Time starts now.

7 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

8 COUNSEL: Okay. Let's see if we can go back to  
9 Nina Godoshi and I apologize for any technical  
10 difficulties we may be having. Nina Godoshi are you  
11 able to unmute your mic now? If you're unable to  
12 unmute your mic we do want to hear everyone's  
13 testimony so please submit it. Again, you can submit  
14 it via email to [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov) and you can  
15 do that up to 72 hours after the hearing. Okay. If  
16 I have inadvertently missed anyone that is registered  
17 to testify today or who was on the panel and I have  
18 yet to call your name, please use the Zoom Raise Hand  
19 Function and you will be called on in the order that  
20 you have raised your hand. Okay I see that Jaslin  
21 Kaur has raised, has a raised hand. Jaslin Kaur  
22 please begin your testimony when the Sergeant calls  
23 time.

24 SGT. KOTOWSKI: Time starts now.



JASLIN KAUR: Good afternoon. Thank you so much. My name is Jaslin Kaur. I'm the daughter of a 62 year old taxi medallion owner driver in Queens and I'm about to share what I have shared many times over. In 2014, when the medallion markets crashed, I was made to drop out of university so my family went in to \$60,000 down on student loan debt, \$50,000 down on medallion debt, many thousands in credit card debt and three years back on property taxes. To put it plainly many more drivers than the nine who took their own lives in the past years will not survive this debt crisis, 94% of drivers are immigrants many who work more than 12 hours a day and what the City has done from speculation on fragile markets, allowing Uber and Lyft into the city is disgraceful, horrific and orchestrated. The City backed guarantee plan for the New York Taxi Worker's Alliance is key and without it drivers are at the mercy of their lenders. TLC has even yet to garner buy in from enough lenders to make their plan viable.

SGT. KOTOWSKI: Time expired.

JASLIN KAUR: I will wrap up. The average debt of \$500,000 under their plan would still \$300,000 amount for many drivers. So, I want to know

where is the dignity in having just a little bit less debt than you did seven years ago and who else do you need in addition to Senator Schumer the incoming and outgoing controllers, 12 member of the New York Congressional delegation to tell you that the New York Taxi Worker's Alliance Plan is out.

JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your testimony. We have a hand raised from Galina Kaminker. Galina Kaminker, you may start your testimony when the Sergeant calls time.

SGT. KOTOWSKI: Time starts now.

GALINA KAMINKER: Hi. My name is Galina Kaminker and I'm a medallion owner and I'm a member of a few medallion owners in my family but today I want to speak up in regard to my mother. I understand everybody is talking about driver owners. My mother is not a driver, she is a 90 year old woman who was left from my father who was a driver owner and who tried to build a backup for her retirement. He is gone, my father. My mother is 90 years old left with six medallions all together. She is not entitled to any rescue program or relief program because she has more than 5 but he's in debt, big

debt. Right now her social security which is \$700 a month. She is not getting any money from management because of the pandemic crisis and everything. She is actually going, the bank is going after her, they are putting a judgment on her. My question is what do people who are 90 years or even 70 years have no income. Cannot pay their debt have to live that long because she's important because she has no money to pay. What I'm asking you is I'm sure she's entitled to restitution. The City owes it to us.

SGT. KOTOWSKI: Time expired.

GALINA KAMINKER: They took the money from us. They used it to close the loop holes that we would find but now she needs to be rescued and you know the restitution is restitution. TLC will not help her and I have to pay her expenses every month because otherwise she will be on the street with \$700. Tell me if you are capable of living in New York City. She used to pay, the taxis was her retirement plan.

JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your testimony. Thank you very much for your testimony. It appears that we have one additional hand raised. Tilak RJ if

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2 you have not testified already please start your time  
3 when the Sergeant calls time.

4 SGT. KOTOWSKI: Time starts now.

5 TILAK RJ: Can you hear me?

6 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

7 COUNSEL: We can hear you.

8 TILAK RJ: Hi good afternoon Council  
9 Members, I speak on behalf of my brother. My brother  
10 has a medallion since 1994. His loan is over than  
11 \$500,000. After the 20 TLC has loaned it will be  
12 \$275,000 and \$1600 every month. How we will survive?  
13 We cannot live like this the rest of our life. The  
14 City should support of a union plan. Thank you.

15 JESSICA STEINBERG ALBIN, COMMITTEE

16 COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your testimony  
17 and thank you to all that testified today. I will  
18 now turn it back over to Chair Rodriguez for closing  
19 remarks. Chair Rodriguez.

20 CHAIRPERSON YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank you  
21 Jessica for the great job that you did conducting you  
22 know, this portion of the hearing. Thank you to the  
23 Commissioner for also staying with us and listening  
24 to everyone. I got to give credit for her to not  
25 only a livery representative but to be with us. I

appreciate it. We will continue this conversation.

Thank you to the Taxi Alliance. Together we have the

responsibility to bring the industry back. Let's do

it in the name of those individuals that

unfortunately were lost. Let's do it for our

families and let's do it for the future of New York

City. Thank you and with that the hearing is

adjourned. Sergeants okay to close. Okay I will be

ending the webinar.

C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date November 20, 2021