

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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OFFICE OF THE D.C. TAXICAB COMMISSION

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FULL COMMISSION MEETING

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WEDNESDAY
JANUARY 14, 2015

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The Commission met in the Public Hearing Room, 2235 Shannon Place, S.E., Washington, D.C., at 10:00 a.m., Eric Rogers, Interim Chairperson, presiding.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

ERIC ROGERS, Interim Chairperson
CYRIL CROCKER, Commissioner
ANTHONY MUHAMMAD, Commissioner
BETTY SMALLS, Commissioner
STANLEY TAPSCOTT, Commissioner

STAFF PRESENT:

JUANDA MIXON

JACQUES P. LERNER, ESQ., General Counsel

C-O-N-T-E-N-T-S

Call to Order
by Eric Rogers, Interim Chair. 3

Roll Call
by Juanda Mixon, Secretary 3

Opening Remarks
by Eric Rogers, Interim Chair
and Commissioners. 4

Vote on Items 1 and 2 - Clarify Wait and Hourly
Rates and Increase Wait and Hourly Rates
by Eric Rogers, Interim Chair.10

Vote on Item 3 - Limit Use of Taxicabs for
Private Vehicle Dispatch
by Eric Rogers, Interim Chair.13

Vote on Item 4 - Clarify Procedures to Appeal
License Denials and Establish Procedures for
Suspension and Revocation
by Eric Rogers, Interim Chair.16

Government Communication and Staff Reports
by Juanda Mixon, Secretary18

Public Comment Period
by Attendees20

Adjournment
by Eric Rogers, Interim Chair

1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 (10:09 a.m.)

3 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Good morning
4 everyone. Let's get this meeting started. My
5 name's Eric Rogers, Interim Chair of the DC
6 Taxicab Commission. So I'd like to call this
7 meeting to order.

8 But first, I'd like to take a moment
9 of silence for us to reflect on everything that
10 we're doing and that we're doing everything well
11 for the citizens of the district and whatever
12 thoughts folks may have.

13 So let's just take a quick moment of
14 silence. Okay. Madam Secretary, can you call
15 the roll to make sure that we have a quorum?

16 MS. MIXON: Yes. Commissioner Burns?
17 Commissioner Cohn? Commissioner Crocker?

18 COMMISSIONER CROCKER: Present.

19 MS. MIXON: Commissioner Ferguson?
20 Commissioner Muhammad?

21 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Here.

22 MS. MIXON: Commissioner Smalls?

1 COMMISSIONER SMALLS: Here.

2 MS. MIXON: Commissioner Tapscott?

3 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: Here.

4 MS. MIXON: Commissioner Rogers?

5 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Here.

6 MS. MIXON: Chairman, a quorum is
7 present.

8 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Wonderful, so
9 now we can get down to some business. Well
10 first, I just want to start off by giving some
11 opening remarks and just wanted to thank everyone
12 for their support.

13 I am the new Interim Chair of the
14 Commission. I've been in the position, I guess
15 let's say nine days now, started last Monday.

16 So it's definitely been a very
17 exciting time in learning new processes and
18 looking out for the drivers because one of the
19 main things that is of concern to me and one of
20 the main things that I'll be pushing for is to
21 assure a fair and equitable taxicab industry,
22 with a focus on the drivers because they

1 definitely are the lifeblood of the industry.

2 And I also want to thank Mayor Bowser
3 for the opportunity to serve you, as I mentioned.
4 These are dynamic times in a taxicab and vehicle-
5 for-hire industry.

6 And again, my commitment so that it's
7 on record, everyone knows, is to establish a very
8 inclusive process. I'm a firm believer that I
9 may have great ideas.

10 The Commission may have great ideas,
11 but the public is really where I'm looking to get
12 most of the ideas on how to improve our
13 processes, improve our system and ensure the
14 economic vitality of the taxicab industry.

15 There will be many ways that I'll be
16 doing that from just riding with drivers, just
17 being out in streets, also establishing several
18 working groups, some formal, some informal so
19 that I can hear from drivers, cab company owners
20 and the like just to get their perspective on
21 what we can do to help your business and to help
22 you make money in a fair and equitable way.

1 I've always operated this way. My
2 door is generally open unless I'm out doing
3 something I shouldn't be doing, which is mainly
4 smoking a cigarette. I do smoke cigarettes.

5 But it's of paramount importance to me
6 for us to work with you, the riding public,
7 taxicab owners and taxicab companies to, again,
8 ensure that we have a fair, open and transparent
9 process.

10 But with that said, let's get down to
11 some business. Well, actually, do any of the
12 commissioners have any opening remarks, anything
13 that they would like to say? Mr. Muhammad? No,
14 really? Okay.

15 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: No, not yet.

16 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Not yet? Okay.
17 Mr. Tapscott?

18 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: Welcome. I
19 hope you find enjoyable process with the Taxicab
20 Commission, Number 58 some years prior, and I
21 plan on working with you and welcome. You know
22 what I'm saying, so welcome.

1 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: I appreciate
2 that. Commissioner Smalls?

3 COMMISSIONER SMALLS: Well, I'd like
4 to say welcome to you and to say that I'm
5 relatively new also on the Taxicab Commission,
6 look forward to working with you because I think
7 the taxicab drivers are our number one priority.
8 And I'm sure you will follow through.

9 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Yes, I will or
10 my name isn't Eric Rogers. Well, let's get down
11 to business. I do have a more formal opening
12 statement that does impact some of the rules and
13 regulations that we've been working on.

14 Last week, the DC Taxicab Commission
15 withdrew proposed rulemaking to impose a quota on
16 the number of licensed of taxicabs.

17 The quota would formalize and
18 effectively extended the existing moratorium on
19 new H-tags, which is actually a moratorium on
20 taxicab vehicle licenses under DCTC regulations
21 in Title 31, the gateway to receiving H-tags from
22 DMV.

1 The moratorium has been in effect for
2 about five years. The withdrawal of the quota
3 marks the start of an ongoing review of all major
4 DCTC regulations and programs to ensure they
5 reflect the priorities of the new administration.

6 Those priorities include not only
7 helping the industry to achieve a fair,
8 competitive position with the new private
9 vehicles-for-hire but also making sure the
10 agency's regulations are fair to its clients.

11 DCTC believes the size of the industry
12 is a fundamental issue that should not be cast in
13 stone without first taking a comprehensive look
14 at taxicab vehicle licensing, including listening
15 to longstanding claims about the issuance of H-
16 tags.

17 For these reasons, the Commission is
18 not supportive of new regulations for so called
19 modern taxicab associations or MTAs. The vehicle
20 owners who might join MTAs were carved out of the
21 quota, not only giving up hundreds of new
22 licenses but also reserving all these licenses

1 for non district residents.

2 The Commission will consider emergency
3 and preparedness rulemaking to withdraw the NT
4 regulations at its next meeting. The MTA rules
5 should not be relied upon by vehicle owners.

6 DCTC will schedule a meeting with
7 affected owners to be held within the next two
8 weeks. Please be sure to check the Commission's
9 website for the announcement.

10 Also, folks can email me at
11 eric.rogers2@dc.gov if they would like further
12 information. If the MTA rules are withdrawn,
13 they may be proposed again in the future.

14 But that would come after the next
15 step, which is a full consideration of matters
16 related to the issuance of H-tags. As it's done
17 in the past with other complex issues, the
18 commissioners referring these issues to the panel
19 on industry.

20 The panel will research and
21 investigate the relevant policy, legal and
22 factual issues concerning vehicle-for-hire

1 licenses and will issue a public report by June
2 15th of this year containing its findings and
3 making recommendations for any appropriate
4 rulemaking.

5 The panel will consider common
6 justifications for seeking new H-tags, the
7 existing moratorium and previously proposed
8 quota.

9 We have a need for more vehicle
10 accessible and fuel efficient vehicles, the
11 ability of taxicabs to fairly compete with
12 private vehicles-for-hire and other matters as it
13 deems appropriate.

14 Although the panel's work will not
15 guarantee anyone a new H-tag, it will give those
16 who seek tags a great opportunity to guide and
17 inform DCTC's licensing policies.

18 Please, again, watch the Commission's
19 website and DC Register in the coming weeks for
20 more information about the panel's proceedings.
21 And I do encourage all DCTC clients in the
22 general public to fully participate.

1 So again, be looking out for the
2 meetings and the like because we do, I do want to
3 hear from you guys as it relates, and I want the
4 panel to be informed by the public's sentiment,
5 ideas on how we can create a new, innovative and
6 dynamic vehicle-for-hire industry in the District
7 of Columbia.

8 Any questions, comments, concerns from
9 the Commissioners? Okay. So now let's move on
10 to our main agenda, as amended. So commissioners
11 will look at their agenda.

12 I would like to call for a vote on
13 Item Number 1 and Number 2 in combination. I'll
14 let our general counsel explain the rationale.

15 MR. LERNER: Item 1 would be an
16 emergency rule that would take effect
17 immediately, if approved, which would correct a
18 recent final rulemaking, which inadvertently
19 changed the wait rate to \$35 in Chapter 8. The
20 rule will clarify that the rate is \$25 per hour.

21 The second item, which is related to
22 the first, is a proposed rule to change the wait

1 rate, increase it to \$35 an hour, which would
2 then make it the same as the hourly rate. So
3 both time rates in Chapter 8 would be the same.

4 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Is there a
5 motion on the floor to combine the two items into
6 a single vote?

7 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Moved.

8 COMMISSIONER CROCKER: Seconded.

9 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: The item has
10 been properly moved and seconded by Commissioner
11 Muhammed. All in favor, please say aye.

12 (Chorus of ayes)

13 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: All opposed?
14 I believe we have a unanimous vote on that one.
15 Madam Secretary.

16 MS. MIXON: Okay. For the vote
17 determination, Commissioner Burns? Commissioner
18 Cohn? Commissioner Crocker?

19 COMMISSIONER CROCKER: Yes.

20 MS. MIXON: Commissioner Ferguson?
21 Commissioner Muhammad?

22 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Yes.

1 MS. MIXON: Commissioner Smalls?

2 COMMISSIONER SMALLS: Yes.

3 MS. MIXON: Commissioner Tapscott?

4 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: Yes.

5 MS. MIXON: Commissioner Rogers?

6 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Yes. So, Madam
7 Secretary, just to be clear so that we have a
8 properly executed vote, this is a vote to number
9 one, combine the two items --

10 MS. MIXON: Yes.

11 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: -- and then we
12 will take a second vote on the actual
13 rulemakings?

14 MS. MIXON: Yes.

15 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Okay. Is there
16 a motion to move, Commissioner Tapscott moved it,
17 and it was seconded by Commissioner Smalls.
18 Madam Secretary, please call the vote.

19 (Off microphone discussion)

20 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Sorry. And
21 again, we are voting to approve one and two,
22 Number 1, which is an emergency rulemaking for

1 Chapter 8 to clarify the waits as \$25 per hour.

2 And then we are voting to approve
3 publication of a proposed rulemaking for Chapter
4 8 to increase the wait rates to \$35 an hour.
5 Understood? Very clear?

6 MS. MIXON: Okay, yes. Commissioner
7 Burns? Commissioner Cohn? Commissioner Crocker?

8 COMMISSIONER CROCKER: Yes.

9 MS. MIXON: Commissioner Ferguson?
10 Commissioner Muhammad?

11 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Yes.

12 MS. MIXON: Commissioner Smalls?

13 COMMISSIONER SMALLS: Yes.

14 MS. MIXON: Commissioner Tapscott?

15 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: Yes.

16 MS. MIXON: Commissioner Rogers?

17 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Yes. Okay.

18 Item Number 3, which is a vote to approve
19 publication of final rulemaking for Chapter 8 and
20 18 to require dispatch of public vehicles-for-
21 hire to comply with the requirements of this
22 title and limit the use of taxicabs for private

1 vehicle dispatch to keep them available for
2 street hails by wheelchair passengers.

3 Mr. General Counsel, could you go into
4 further explanation?

5 MR. LERNER: Yes, these are final rule
6 to amend Chapter 8 to require that a public
7 vehicle-for-hire, subject to taxicab, must always
8 comply with all applicable rules for that class
9 of service regardless of any service that it is
10 performing.

11 And it is also a final amendment to
12 the caps rules in Chapter 18, which clarifies
13 service priorities and requires that the caps
14 vehicles can only be used as public vehicles-for-
15 hire.

16 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, sir.
17 Any questions? Is there a motion on the floor to
18 move this item for a vote?

19 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: So moved.

20 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Okay. Second?

21 COMMISSIONER CROCKER: Second.

22 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Okay. Madam

1 Secretary, we have a properly moved and seconded
2 motion. Please call the roll.

3 MS. MIXON: Commissioner Burns?
4 Commissioner Cohn? Commissioner Crocker?

5 COMMISSIONER CROCKER: Yes.

6 MS. MIXON: Commissioner Ferguson?
7 Commissioner Muhammad?

8 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Yes.

9 MS. MIXON: Commissioner Smalls?

10 COMMISSIONER SMALLS: Yes.

11 MS. MIXON: Commissioner Tapscott?

12 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: Yes.

13 MS. MIXON: Commissioner Rogers?

14 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Yes. Okay.

15 Thank you. And the final item that we have to
16 vote on is a vote to approve final rulemakings
17 for Chapter 4, 7, 10, 13 and 15 to clarify
18 procedures to appeal denials of licenses and
19 establish procedures to suspend or revoke
20 reciprocity operating privileges.

21 Mr. General Counsel, can you further
22 explain?

1 MR. LERNER: Yes, these are final
2 rules for multiple chapters. They create new
3 procedures to appeal any type of license under
4 Title 31, regardless of what is called.

5 They would be considered under new
6 procedures, and in addition, it would create a
7 new enforcement tool for the Office of Taxicabs
8 to allow the office to suspend or revoke the
9 operating privileges of drivers from Maryland or
10 Virginia who come to the district and violate the
11 reciprocity rules.

12 Those drivers would now be subject to
13 a new tool, which would allow the office to seek
14 suspension or revocation in front of OAH, which
15 if violated would then have those drivers, if
16 they continue to operate in violation of an order
17 which was sustained, they would be illegal
18 operators subject to all the penalties for
19 unlawful operator, unlawful vehicle.

20 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, sir.
21 Any questions? Comments, questions? Yes, sir.
22 Commissioner Muhammed?

1 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Since we have
2 established that the commissioners who are not
3 here, could we not read their names and go to
4 only the ones that are here?

5 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: I think as a
6 matter of formality we still have to include
7 their name and record them as absent for the
8 official record, but I defer to the general
9 counsel on that.

10 MR. LERNER: I agree.

11 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: So just to
12 ensure that we have a complete record of who's
13 here, who's not and who voted on what, I think
14 that's the appropriate way.

15 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Okay.

16 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Okay?

17 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Yes.

18 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, sir.
19 You have the item before you. Is there a motion

20 --

21 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Moved.

22 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: It's moved. Do

1 I hear a second?

2 COMMISSIONER SMALLS: Second.

3 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: The motion of
4 the item has been properly moved and seconded.
5 Madam Secretary, please call the role for a vote.

6 MS. MIXON: Commissioner Burns?
7 Commissioner Cohn? Commissioner Crocker?

8 COMMISSIONER CROCKER: Yes.

9 MS. MIXON: Commissioner Ferguson?
10 Commissioner Muhammad?

11 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Yes.

12 MS. MIXON: Commissioner Smalls?

13 COMMISSIONER SMALLS: Yes.

14 MS. MIXON: Commissioner Tapscott?

15 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: Yes.

16 MS. MIXON: Commissioner Rogers?

17 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Yes. Okay.

18 And let's move on to Item 4 in the agenda,
19 Government Communications and Staff Reports.

20 Madam Secretary, do we have any communications
21 from the government or any staff reports?

22 MS. MIXON: Not this time.

1 (Off microphone discussion)

2 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: And bear with
3 me folks as I'm learning the rules of procedure
4 on how to appropriately do things. So I'm just
5 going to step back to all of the four items that
6 they've all been properly moved, seconded and
7 voted on and recorded by the secretary as
8 adopted, so that everything is clear.

9 I promise you the next meeting will go
10 a little bit more smoothly with the procedural
11 stuff, but I'm sure you guys don't mind because
12 we're almost done here.

13 So again, Madam Secretary, you
14 communicated to the Commission that we do not
15 have any government communications or staff
16 reports?

17 MS. MIXON: That's correct.

18 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Okay,
19 wonderful. Now let's move down to Item 5, which
20 is public comments. Just a notice to all folks,
21 members of the public are invited to participate
22 in the public comment period.

1 Please keep your comments, if you are
2 registered, and I don't think we have any
3 registered folks, to five minutes and two minutes
4 for non-registered speakers.

5 So right now, the Commission will open
6 up the floor to any public comments on anything.
7 Please step over to the mic, and please be gentle
8 with your comments.

9 MS. MOHAMMED: Good morning, everyone,
10 and welcome to your new position.

11 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: One second,
12 before you start --

13 MS. MOHAMMED: Yes.

14 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: -- could you
15 please identify yourself for the record --

16 MS. MOHAMMED: I most certainly will.

17 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: -- and spell
18 your name for the record?

19 MS. MIXON: And also sign in.

20 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: And sign in.

21 MS. MOHAMMED: All right. My name is
22 Valencia Mohammed, V-A-L-E-N-C-I-A, M-O-H-A-M-M-

1 E-D. I am a freelance journalist. I work for
2 the media, black press, for over 20 years, but
3 I'm here now as a citizen.

4 A lot of us have seen this Uber thing
5 running around. I'm just wondering, do they come
6 under the Taxicab Commission? Do they work
7 independently, and they just do their own thing?

8 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Well, it's
9 definitely, as I mentioned, dynamic times in the
10 industry, and I'll let the general counsel go
11 into further detail over our legal authority over
12 Uber.

13 As I'm sure you're aware, the City
14 Council engaged in a very public fight or public
15 process I should say, debate, concerning private
16 vehicles-for-hire.

17 And in October, if I'm not mistaken,
18 September, October actually passed legislation
19 that did create some form of regulatory scheme
20 that includes Uber and other ride sharing
21 services.

22 But I'll let the general counsel go

1 into further detail on the actual legislation and
2 how it impacts the Commission.

3 MS. MOHAMMED: Just I wanted to, part
4 of my second question was do you have an impact
5 study as to how it is affecting the licensed
6 public vehicles-for-hire?

7 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Well, let's
8 answer your first question first, and then I'll
9 go to your second question.

10 MR. LERNER: Ma'am, I would suggest
11 you take a look at the legislation that the
12 chairman is referring to and that preponderance
13 of what they call the layover period. We don't
14 exactly know when it will go final because it
15 depends on legislative dates.

16 But I would recommend that you look
17 for it. It's the vehicle-for-hire amendment,
18 Vehicle-For-Hire Innovation Amendment Act of
19 2014. That's pending, and it's available online
20 at DCLIMS, the Legislative Information Management
21 System, I believe.

22 If you type DCLIMS into Google, and

1 then look for it using probably the word
2 innovation, you may find a few unrelated things
3 with the word innovation. You can then find that
4 act pending before Congress.

5 MS. MOHAMMED: And that's your
6 response. I need you to summarize that.

7 MR. LERNER: We generally in the past,
8 we don't generally answer questions. I
9 understand the chairman wants to engage further
10 than that. I can't. I'm not in position to give
11 legal opinion.

12 (Off microphone discussion)

13 MR. LERNER: But I think in general
14 it's fair to say that certain aspects of
15 different company's operations and the class of
16 company that you're referring to, some fall
17 within certain aspects of things that the
18 Commission can do and does already.

19 And then there are certain things, a
20 number of things that are altered by that pending
21 act and we'll be revisiting a future rulemaking,
22 in fact, that I believe will be coming up for a

1 vote at the February meeting.

2 They'll be proposed and probably
3 emergency rulemaking to conform Title 31 of the
4 DCMR, which is our title, to the new act because
5 it makes multiple amendments in the act, which
6 will then affect the rules.

7 So there are changes that are coming
8 consistent with the public policy decisions the
9 Council has already made.

10 MS. MOHAMMED: If one of those
11 personal vehicles-for-hire violates something
12 that normally a cab, a public taxicab, okay,
13 would get a ticket from one of our TCDC guys,
14 whatever you call those things.

15 But you know what I'm talking about,
16 the ticket writers, would they at this particular
17 time, the TCDC police officer or whatever,
18 officer cannot render any violation to them
19 whatsoever?

20 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: We do have some
21 authority, but what I suggest that you do is I
22 can set up a meeting with our general counsel and

1 myself so we can go through more clearly exactly
2 what our authorities are and what the new
3 legislation means for the vehicle-for-hire
4 industry.

5 We do have, always have the ability to
6 fine and seek other enforcement actions against
7 anyone that violates Title 31. So in response to
8 your question, if say an Uber driver accepts an
9 illegal street deal, our DCTC folks, the police
10 officers as you referred to them, we do have the
11 authority to go after them and fine them pursuant
12 to our regulations.

13 MS. MOHAMMED: Okay. I'll be more
14 than happy to send an email to request a meeting
15 with you. Also, I would like for you to, since
16 you said that you have the authority to issue
17 such tickets that you also have a number, the
18 number of the tickets and the citations that have
19 been issued to those private vehicle-for-hire
20 groups. Okay. Thank you very much.

21 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: You're welcome.
22 Any other questions, comments? Please come on

1 up, sir. Take your time.

2 MR. ROUZBEH: Mr. Muhammad, good
3 morning.

4 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Good morning.
5 Please identify yourself for the record.

6 MR. ROUZBEH: My name is Rouzbeh,
7 victim.

8 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: And spell your
9 name for the record.

10 MR. ROUZBEH: R-O-U-Z-B-E-H. I'm a
11 victimized cab driver like all these guys. Thank
12 you for serving city. Thank you for being civil
13 servant that doesn't get any recognition.

14 Thank you for allowing them to elect
15 you. Thank you for allowing them to rob you.
16 Now, I received a text message that was, I shall
17 be paying two drivers.

18 So this Eric Rogers, who is he? One
19 of the drivers said he's a stupid and dishonest.
20 Both of them said a stupid idiot no crime, but
21 dishonesty is stop it because these guys are fed
22 up.

1 They are going to do something to some
2 of this relent. Now, what are your authorities
3 concerning Uber drivers on the street? You don't
4 want to publicly said it, huh?

5 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: No, I'm just
6 waiting for you to finish your comment so that I
7 can respond.

8 MR. ROUZBEH: Okay. Tell me.

9 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Again, the City
10 Council of the District of Columbia passed new
11 legislation that's --

12 MR. ROUZBEH: Passed it when?

13 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Passed in
14 September or October of last year.

15 MR. ROUZBEH: Did it get published?

16 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Yes, it did get
17 published --

18 (Simultaneous speaking)

19 MR. ROUZBEH: Okay.

20 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Let me finish.
21 Let me answer your question. It went through all
22 the rules of the City Council. It was published

1 in the District of Columbia Register.

2 There were public hearings to which
3 many folks testified. Let me finish. So, the
4 City Council has made a public policy decision
5 dealing with public and private vehicles-for-
6 hire.

7 At the next meeting, what I will do,
8 I will have out here for everyone copies of the
9 legislation. So, as a result of that, we have to
10 amend this book, Title 31.

11 (Simultaneous speaking)

12 MR. ROUZBEH: Let me interrupt. There
13 is a such think as Title 31, or that's arbitrary?

14 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Again, the City
15 Council of the District of Columbia properly
16 passed legislation that regulates the vehicle-
17 for-hire industry, number one.

18 Number two, it is now pending before
19 Congress because every legislation that the City
20 Council passes has to sit for a layover period,
21 usually 30 days, legislative days, in the
22 Congress of the United States.

1 That is what's occurring right now.
2 Assuming that there's no action taken by
3 Congress, then it will become final. The Mayor
4 of the District of Columbia and the Council Chair
5 of the District of Columbia have signed it.

6 So once it becomes, once it's enacted,
7 once it's actually official, the law is the law,
8 then we have direction, by the law, to amend this
9 to conform with the legislation.

10 Now specifically to your point, which
11 I feel is about Uber and other private vehicles-
12 for-hire, one of the things that I said when I
13 first came in, again, I'm nine days in.

14 And I do take offense that I'm
15 dishonest and that I'm --

16 (Simultaneous speaking)

17 MR. ROUZBEH: Oh, I can show you the
18 text messages.

19 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: -- stupid. I
20 can guarantee you, ask any vendor in this city
21 whether I'm dishonest or stupid. I regulated the
22 vending industry in this city and went from and

1 took it from a dishonest and broken system to a
2 system that's fair and equitable.

3 I did not write the policy decisions.
4 You want to know about the policy decisions, but
5 when you go into DCRA right now and you apply for
6 a vending license, you know what the rules of the
7 game are.

8 And that's what I'm here to do right
9 now, to ensure that everyone knows what the rules
10 of the game are. So --

11 MR. ROUZBEH: Well, the guy on your
12 lefthand side, is he an attorney?

13 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Yes, sir.

14 MR. ROUZBEH: Would you ask him to
15 explain the Rule Number 4 to laymen and laywomen,
16 yes? Explain this.

17 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Item Number 4?

18 MR. ROUZBEH: Chapter 4, 7, 10, 13,
19 15. What didn't you put half a dozen other
20 chapters?

21 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Because the
22 issue is, to be truthful with you, I'll explain

1 it to you, is that we have a lot of folks who are
2 coming out of state working on DC streets, taking
3 money from your pocketbook who are doing bad
4 things.

5 So we want the ability to go after
6 those folks from taking money out of your
7 pocketbook and give, and get the ability to
8 snatch, as I like to say, but suspend or revoke
9 their license for violating, as you say, this
10 book right here.

11 So Item Number 4 is to the benefit of
12 you guys to ensure that there's a fair and
13 equitable system.

14 MR. ROUZBEH: Now, your DCTC enforces
15 inspectors --

16 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Yes, sir.

17 MR. ROUZBEH: -- that have criminal
18 backgrounds, some of them as bad as, and robbery
19 background. And they have the authority of
20 police power to revoke cab drivers' license on
21 the street, impound their vehicle on what ground?

22 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Let me respond

1 to it this way. If you feel that any employee of
2 the Taxicab Commission is committing anything,
3 waste, fraud, abuse, let me know.

4 Again, my email is eric, E-R-I-C dot
5 Rogers, R-O-G-E-R-S-2 at DC.gov. Email me so now
6 there's an official record that you communicated
7 with the Commission that you will have.

8 And I promise you that I'll look into
9 it, but one thing I will not have and one thing I
10 will not allow as long as I'm in charge is any
11 malfeasance, any misfeasance or anything that
12 impugns the integrity of these rules and this
13 Commission. I guarantee you that.

14 MR. ROUZBEH: Do us a favor. Next
15 meeting, thank you Mister for showing up. Next
16 meeting, I want you to come up with a list of
17 DCTC hack inspectors who don't have criminal
18 records. Thank you. I don't have anything else.

19 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: All of our DCTC
20 hack inspectors go through a thorough background
21 check.

22 MR. ROUZBEH: No, they did not.

1 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Yes, they do.
2 Now, if you have a particular issue with how a
3 particular inspector influenced or did something
4 to you, let me know.

5 I'm giving you the opportunity now in
6 an open session that if you have an issue, let me
7 know. One thing I will not allow in any of these
8 meetings are baseless accusations.

9 If you have an accusation, lodge it.
10 I will review it, investigate it. If need be, I
11 will get the Federal Bureau of Investigation
12 involved.

13 I will get the DC's Inspector
14 General's Office involved, the DC Auditor,
15 whomever it's appropriate, an enforcement agency
16 to ensure that our operations are legitimate.

17 So if you have a particular complaint
18 against a particular inspector, or if you just
19 see a general policy of how we're enforcing
20 certain rules, let me know.

21 If you don't let me know, I can't fix
22 it. Again, the one thing I'm not going to have,

1 because I'm, like I mentioned before, I'm very
2 open. I'm very honest.

3 If you have a concern, you come to me.
4 My door is open. If you want to schedule a
5 meeting, you can schedule a meeting. But come
6 with the facts.

7 I'll come back to you with the facts
8 and let you know what we did so there's an open,
9 fair and transparent process because all these
10 baseless accusations and name calling, I'm not
11 having that.

12 I understand that maybe in the past
13 there were certain personalities. Well, this is
14 a new personality that's open and fair. So if
15 you want to talk to me, you can talk to me.

16 Talk to your drivers. I sit outside
17 with your drivers every single morning while
18 they're standing outside in the cold so that I
19 can hear their perspective.

20 Every day when I take a cab, I talk to
21 the drivers to let them know who I am and what I
22 can do for them. So if you have a concern, come

1 to me and talk to me. Okay?

2 MR. ROUZBEH: They're not my drivers.
3 There is slavized civil servants, and they all
4 know it. They are working for nothing. They're
5 underclass, underprivileged, underpaid, kicked
6 around by ruthless criminals who have armed
7 robbery convictions in the past in numerous
8 estates.

9 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Understood.

10 MR. ROUZBEH: I don't have anything
11 say. And they all know that. Anyone who
12 disagrees with me, put your hand up. Thank you.

13 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, sir.
14 I appreciate it. I do appreciate your comments.
15 And you have my email, right? Are you going to
16 send me something so that we can talk?

17 (Simultaneous speaking)

18 MR. ROUZBEH: -- DC Board. Are you
19 not a member of DC Board?

20 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: All members,
21 all general counsels in the District of Columbia
22 have to be barred in the District of Columbia.

1 Any other questions, comments, concerns?

2 Please, come on up. Please identify
3 yourself for the record and sign in and spell
4 your name, too, please.

5 MR. GEBRESELASSIE: All right, my name
6 is Addis Gebreselassie. On behalf of our
7 association --

8 MS. MIXON: Spell it, please.

9 MR. GEBRESELASSIE: I do have the
10 longest name, so G-E-B-R-E-S-E-L-A-S-S-I-E,
11 Gebreselassie. So you call be Addis, A-D-D-I-S.

12 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Addis?

13 MR. GEBRESELASSIE: Yes.

14 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, sir.

15 MR. GEBRESELASSIE: On behalf of our
16 association and affiliated with Teamster,
17 welcome. It is a good start, which is like
18 transparency and openness just to work with us.

19 We have a lot of issues. It is not
20 like a time to address all of them now. We want
21 you just to be open like you said and continue
22 that way so the drivers have a door to come and

1 contact directly with you and whatever problem
2 that we have on our association or on a Teamster,
3 we are gladly come and solving the problems.

4 It is a good start, so we just want to
5 say congratulations and welcome. Thank you.

6 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, and
7 let's schedule a meeting in the next week or so
8 and sit down. Bring your concerns and some of
9 your members. My office is very small, so I
10 can't accommodate all of them.

11 MR. GEBRESELASSIE: Okay.

12 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: But seriously,
13 let's sit down. Let's talk. I want to hear what
14 you have to say and what your concerns are
15 because as we move forward in improving the
16 industry, well, you're the industry.

17 You're the drivers. So I need to know
18 exactly what it is you want, how the rules are
19 fair or unfair and all that stuff. So, again,
20 I'll say it again. I'll say it again and say it
21 again.

22 I'm open. My door is open, and since

1 I'm new, my schedule's kind of light. So
2 definitely come on in.

3 MR. GEBRESELASSIE: Okay.

4 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: And I'd love to
5 sit down and talk with you guys.

6 MR. GEBRESELASSIE: Absolutely. Yes,
7 I mean previously it was Chairman Linton, always
8 the door was open. Their staffers are very much
9 helpful. I'm not taking any credits away from
10 anybody.

11 But we wanted that continue and we
12 just have all problems need to be solved and a
13 better solution for our drivers. So, thank you.

14 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Okay. Any
15 further comments? Don't be shy. Come on up.

16 MR. SETEGM: My name is Degfae, D-E-G-
17 F-A-E. Last name is S-E-T-E-G-M. I'm from
18 United Ventures Consortium. My question is
19 regarding the wheelchair accessible, which is the
20 6 percent, which is passed and especially in our
21 case, we don't have any rental cars.

22 By virtue of those people who have

1 their licenses after 2006, where our name is on
2 that registration, and because of that we are
3 expected to have a 6 percent wheelchair access.

4 And I don't know how this will be
5 practical. How do we take the pace number from
6 one of the drivers and change it, too, and
7 regarding the caps program, it is funded
8 donation.

9 And also they are issued a H number.
10 In this case, we requested to get a H number even
11 if we are, required it to have. We are willing
12 to have those wheelchair accesses, the 6 percent.

13 But there is no way how we can force
14 one of our drivers to change their numbers to the
15 H tag. And other one is the office manner at the
16 DCTC, DC Taxicab, always when you come for any
17 kind of purpose, office meetings or something
18 like that, most of our members, our company have
19 like 1000 members.

20 And most of them are not treated
21 respectfully, which we don't like it. And this
22 is hard for them. It's added now. First, it was

1 there was no security, the metal detector
2 screening.

3 The abuse start from that. It goes
4 all the way to the office, and you are always,
5 most of our drivers are treated respectfully.
6 And I want this thing to be taken care of and to
7 make improvement because this is not fair because
8 we came here to do business.

9 We pay. It is not a free service, so
10 that's what my suggestion. Thank you.

11 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: But on your
12 first issue dealing with the wheelchair and H-tag
13 issue, I'd like you to speak with John Scott.
14 John, raise your hand over here. Do you see him
15 over here?

16 MR. SETEGM: Yes.

17 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: So he can talk
18 to you more directly about the specific issue.
19 As it relates to our customer service, and I'm
20 changing our mantra to client services because
21 you're right.

22 You are our business partners. You

1 have continuing relationship with us, and you are
2 entitled to respect when you come in. So I've
3 already started some modest improvement in our
4 driver services center.

5 And hopefully you'll be seeing some of
6 those over the coming weeks, and if you or any of
7 your members have been treated unfairly, let me
8 know because that's unacceptable.

9 We're business partners. You're a
10 professional. We're professionals, and we will
11 treat you as a professional. And again, if you
12 hear anything different or if your experiences
13 are anything not like I'm representing now, let
14 me know and I will take care of it.

15 Last week I sat down in the center
16 just to see how we interact with our clients, and
17 again, saw some areas of improvement. And I've
18 already made those suggestions.

19 So over the coming months, you will
20 see more and more improvements at least in the
21 customer facing aspect of your relationship with
22 us because your time is money.

1 You shouldn't have to come in one day
2 and be told that you can't be provided services
3 or the rules have changed and you don't have the
4 appropriate documents and the like.

5 We will make sure, I will make sure
6 that all of those instructions are in the
7 language that folks prefer. We do have an
8 obligation to do that.

9 So you'll be seeing a lot of our
10 applications and forms and stuff in some of the
11 main languages of the industry. You will be
12 seeing better packaging of information so that
13 it's clear for drivers to understand their
14 requirements and what we need.

15 And then if the unfortunate happens,
16 and they still don't have it, at least a clearer
17 understanding of what they need to come back to
18 us with so that they can complete their
19 transaction because I don't want you to have to
20 sit in here any longer than you have to.

21 You need to be out there making some
22 money, and the longer I keep you in here because

1 of silenced communication and the like, that's
2 less money in your pocket. And I can't have
3 that.

4 And my whole reason for being here is
5 to help you. The first way and easiest way is to
6 make sure you're in and out. So you definitely
7 have my commitment on that.

8 MR. GEBRESELASSIE: Thank you.

9 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Okay.

10 MR. GEBRESELASSIE: Thanks.

11 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: All right, sir.

12 All right, don't be shy. Come on up. Come on.
13 Just come on up and say hello. Nobody? If you
14 want to. You sure? You don't want to?

15 All right, any other? Officially, any
16 other comments, concerns, questions? Okay.

17 Well, hearing none, oh there's another? Come on
18 up, sir.

19 MR. YIKUNO: Good morning. My name is
20 Ephrem Yikuno, E-P-H-R-E-M, Y-I-K-U-N-O. I'm the
21 business manager for Grand Cab and Travelers
22 Taxicab Company. I just would like to say

1 welcome, Mr. Commissioner.

2 And the concern that we have, I share
3 what the gentleman just shared about the 6
4 percent wheelchair accessible vans. We have been
5 going back and forth with Commissioner Linton and
6 John.

7 We have, yes, the concern we have is
8 I share the concern with my fellow driver that
9 shared about the 6 percent wheelchair accessible
10 vans that we have to come up with, we have the
11 same problem.

12 The problem we have is we don't have
13 the H-tags to fit it. We are more than happy to
14 comply, but we do not have the H-tags. And the
15 time is not good enough to comply. It's a little
16 bit rushed, so we just want you to look into
17 that.

18 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: And just if I
19 can respond to that one point, that is why I
20 remanded to the panel on industry to look at that
21 issue, to look at it holistically, not just in
22 car mounts dealing with specific segments, more

1 specific areas or industry parts.

2 We'll give it to the cab companies.
3 We'll give it to independent drivers and so on
4 and so forth. But I've referred it to the panel
5 on industry, and I invite you to participate.

6 Make your comments known, and if you
7 don't want to do it in that more formal way, if
8 you and your association were to send me some
9 documents or your official position, I'll
10 definitely make sure that the panel has that.

11 Now the General Counsel has some
12 additional information that he can give you
13 concerning the 6 percent that may be --

14 MR. LERNER: We did, in addition to
15 what the Chairman has said I believe in the last
16 meeting, there was a proposed rulemaking. And I
17 don't recall the set chapters that it would be
18 in, maybe in Chapter 5 or 6, to allow the office
19 to provide an extension, administratively, of
20 that time.

21 I think that that time is now. I
22 think we're, it would be a 60 day extension.

1 It's not, this is not final yet. They're at some
2 stage of proposed.

3 I believe they were voted approved in
4 December, and I just don't know where they are in
5 the rulemaking process. But they will, at some
6 point, at least be up for a vote.

7 I could be wrong. Perhaps they've
8 actually been voted, and we're just pending
9 publication. But that exact issue that you're
10 talking about with this, hard to comply with the
11 6 percent wheelchair accessible fleet for
12 December 31st of last year. Is that what you're
13 talking about, sir?

14 MR. YIKUNO: Yes, sir.

15 MR. LERNER: Right. That exact
16 specific issue is the subject of those proposed
17 rules. And again, I don't know exactly where
18 they are in the process off the top of my head.

19 But if you watch the DC Register and
20 also you can call Mr. Scott, John Scott, the
21 gentleman right there, and you can talk to him
22 because his office is he's the head of

1 operations.

2 He'd be able to work with you once
3 those rules are in, actually processed some kind
4 of an extension under those procedures once
5 they're in place. Okay?

6 MR. YIKUNO: Yes, I just want to make
7 sure that if there's any revision on the deadline
8 --

9 MR. LERNER: Could you repeat that,
10 sir?

11 MR. YIKUNO: The deadline.

12 MR. LERNER: The deadline?

13 MR. YIKUNO: Yes.

14 MR. LERNER: I recommend you talk to
15 Mr. Scott here. I think he's working on this
16 right now. I suggest you speak with him after
17 the meeting.

18 MR. YIKUNO: Okay. Otherwise, I'd
19 like, we used to have a very good communication
20 with Mr. Linton, Commissioner Linton, and we just
21 want to continue that good relationship with you,
22 Mr. Commissioner.

1 And we have some other issues that
2 we'd like to discuss with you. I just want to
3 say thank you. This is an urgent issue that I
4 have to mention. That's why I'm bringing that to
5 your attention.

6 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: I appreciate
7 it, and just call my office. Let's schedule a
8 meeting, and let's talk it through.

9 MR. YIKUNO: All right, thank you.

10 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Okay. All
11 right, okay, very good. Uh oh, here we go. Come
12 on, sir. I see you behind the podium.

13 MR. DEMISSE: Good morning.

14 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Good morning.
15 Identify yourself for the record, and spell your
16 name.

17 MR. DEMISSE: My name is Abraham
18 Demisse. Member of the Commissioners --

19 MS. MIXON: Would you spell your name,
20 please?

21 MR. DEMISSE: A-B-R-A-H-A-M, last name
22 Demisse, D-E-M-I-S-S-E. I am a cab driver and a

1 member of the group that is seeking replacement
2 H-tag. I have been a DC cab driver for 13 years.

3 In our group, we have a driver who
4 drove for up to 40 years. I have returned my H-
5 tag to DMV years ago. I turned it because I was
6 hospitalized. The practice of returning the tag
7 when the cab is not in service is not new.

8 However, it has been then dating back
9 many decades. And so long as one had a valid
10 operator's license, a replacement tag was issued.
11 While we understand the taxi industry is
12 undergoing changes, those changes should not be
13 used to push us out of our profession.

14 For some of us, this is the only
15 profession we know. Additionally, we should not
16 be stripped of our H-tags simply because we
17 followed decades old industry practice, nor
18 because the Taxi Commission applied policy meant
19 to prevent the influx of new cabs to us when in
20 fact we were operating before the policy was
21 adopted.

22 In the coming weeks, you'll receive

1 our report where we explain in detail, in great
2 detail how industry policy has gotten us into
3 this deeply unfair situation.

4 In the meantime, we ask you to begin
5 thinking about what step you can take to ensure
6 we can get a replacement tag and serve the public
7 as taxi owner operator again. Thank you so much.

8 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Well, I
9 definitely appreciate your comment. Excuse me,
10 and I truly do invite you because in the few days
11 that I've been here that's why I wanted to create
12 or remand this H-tag issue to the panel on
13 industry because I've been hearing from a lot of
14 drivers, cab companies and the like, about past
15 policies and how it negatively impacted drivers
16 and companies and the like.

17 And for us to solve the problem, we
18 need to partner. So I look forward to the report
19 that's coming from your group, but I do invite
20 you, when the time is right, to participate in
21 that public process so that we can get this H-tag
22 issue straight.

1 The one thing about myself that folks
2 will come to learn is I don't like issues to be
3 longstanding, so we're going to figure it out.
4 We're going to resolve it.

5 We're going to solve it. It'll be a
6 public process. Some may win. Some may lose,
7 but at least everyone's voice and opinion will be
8 heard. And then we're going to be done with it.

9 I don't like to keep revisiting issues
10 time and time again, only if we've made a
11 significant error or mistake. Then obviously we
12 should. But, like I said, within the next six to
13 nine months we're going to solve this H-tag issue
14 so that everyone knows the rules of the game.

15 You can like the rules. You can not
16 like the rules. That's your democratic right,
17 but it's been a long time coming, in my opinion,
18 in straightening it out, folks like yourself with
19 that particular issue and just in general the
20 moratoriums and quotas on licenses and the like.

21 We're going to get some finality to it
22 and just be done with it and then move towards

1 working in the new industry because let's be
2 honest, Uber's out there and other private
3 vehicle-for-hires are out there.

4 And as near as I can tell for the near
5 future, they're going to be there. So we have
6 to, as an industry, adapt and figure out the best
7 way to adapt.

8 Now, the Commission has taken on some
9 initiatives to try to mitigate some of those
10 concerns with the DC Taxi Act that's coming out,
11 or at least it will be beta tested in the very
12 new future sometime this summer and the like, and
13 then some other ideas that we may have and
14 including, excuse me, as part of the act to make
15 the industry more competitive with Uber and other
16 private vehicle-for-hires.

17 But let me just say this as, so folks
18 understand. My policy thinking is that the
19 bottom line for me is ensuring that, it might
20 sound cliché, but I firmly believe it, that
21 drivers are able to earn a living wage period.

22 The best way that I can do it is how

1 we're going to do it. I mean the best way that
2 we can do it collectively as a Commission, that's
3 what we're going to do.

4 Now in that process, who knows where
5 it will turn out? With any democratic process
6 someone will lose. The majority will win. In
7 any process dealing with the industry, perhaps
8 some drivers may decide that I don't want to do
9 this anymore.

10 And others may understand how to reap
11 the benefits, but the one thing that I do, I
12 would challenge the drivers to be thinking about
13 over the coming months as we go through this
14 process is think about the new models of how
15 people want to be driven from Point A to Point B.

16 And think about how you can adapt to
17 how you can meet that market. There's a reason
18 why Uber is wildly successful regardless of
19 whether it's fair or unfair, regardless of
20 whether or not the Commission has exercised its
21 authority appropriately or not.

22 There's a market out there of

1 thousands and thousands and tens of thousands of
2 people who want those services.

3 So my challenge and my challenge, my
4 drivers is to help me think of a way and better
5 ways that you can compete outside of what we're
6 doing now because obviously what we're doing now,
7 as I'm hearing from you and hearing from other
8 drivers, you're not getting the money.

9 And the bottom line is you're doing
10 all this to make money, and we have a fiduciary
11 responsibility as a Commission to look out for
12 the economic vitality of the industry.

13 But the industry has to adapt. The
14 industry can't remain the same and expect the
15 government to orchestrate the rules for it to be
16 the same, just as any business, especially in
17 food retail businesses, if the folks don't like
18 your cheeseburger, you change your recipe and you
19 come up with a new cheeseburger to meet your
20 demand and to meet what the public wants.

21 So, as we go through this, keep that
22 in mind because your market is changing. The

1 demographics in the market is changing.

2 We're doing everything that we can to
3 ensure that the market is fair and competitive
4 and that you have the ability through hard work
5 and all the American ideals to make a living.

6 But you have to adapt to the new
7 market. Now, I'm going to be your guidepost, if
8 you will. I will be your partner in doing that.

9 I've had conversations with my
10 counterparts in San Francisco and New York seeing
11 some of the thinking that they have in trying to
12 move the taxicab industry forward into the 21st
13 century.

14 But I need your help. I don't want to
15 be a fiat. Okay. This is how it's going to be
16 done. That doesn't work because in the end, if
17 you're uninformed in the process, uninformed in
18 the decision making, even if the decision making
19 is beneficial for you, there always will be that
20 distaste in your mouth that the process was
21 unfair.

22 So really take my word seriously. I

1 need you guys to work with us to figure out how
2 we can create a dynamic vehicle-for-hire
3 industry. But we have to partners in this.

4 And we have to think differently. We
5 have to think outside of the box. It can't be
6 just don't let Uber in. The City Council's
7 already made their public policy determination
8 that they want them in the market.

9 They've already done that. That's
10 done. We can't change that yet. But we can't
11 change that yet. So since the public policy
12 aspect of it has been established, now it's time
13 for us to readjust ourselves through Title 31 to
14 ensure that your pocketbooks aren't hurt.

15 That's my bottom line, and that's my
16 focus. That's my goal. So anything that you
17 hear me doing. Anything that the Commission
18 under my tenure is doing is for that purpose.

19 And we can have a robust debate. We
20 can be professional in our debate. And I'm not
21 in for hollering and screaming because I'm not
22 going to holler and scream at you.

1 I don't expect it to come back because
2 we're professionals, and we all have opinions.
3 And we can talk as professionals amongst each
4 other and get something accomplished.

5 MR. DEMISSE: I just want to say we
6 understand. Our group definitely understand, and
7 we are, like you said, we have to adapt. We are
8 adapting, and we definitely understand the
9 commissioners, they are doing their best to
10 modernize the taxi industry.

11 And we are for it. We support you on
12 that. We are just saying we don't want to get
13 pushed out because we followed the regulation,
14 Title 31, where it says when your car is not in
15 service, return the tag immediately to the DMV.

16 And we did accordingly to the Title
17 31, and all we're saying in this, we don't want
18 to be a victim because of that, that we are with
19 you. We are behind you, everything you are doing
20 to modernize the taxi industry.

21 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you.

22 MR. DEMISSE: Thank you so much. I

1 appreciate that.

2 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: All right, very
3 good comments. Don't be shy. Come on. Come on
4 up.

5 MR. TEFERI: Good morning.

6 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Good morning.

7 MR. TEFERI: First of all I would like
8 to --

9 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Identify
10 yourself for the record, sir.

11 MR. TEFERI: Okay. My name is Kahsay,
12 K-A-H-S-A-Y. Last name T-E-F-E-R-I. Okay.
13 Thank you. First of all, I would like to express
14 my feeling how much you are welcome and willing
15 to tell us I need to talk to us.

16 That is clearly giving a chance to
17 just always giving an opportunity to express our
18 feeling. To start with, and just first of all to
19 welcome chair. I would like to say okay,
20 welcome.

21 First of all, I'm a resident of
22 Washington, DC. I've been driving more than 35

1 years. When I wanted, according, we have the
2 same company and same room as Abraham.

3 We have been doing this like according
4 to the title, like I return my tag. I'm a
5 resident of Washington, DC. I'm a voter. I'm a
6 US citizen. I follow all reading what I am
7 supposed to do.

8 I went to DMV because when the car I
9 give to donation and I have all these receipts
10 and documents, when I am finished everything I
11 done, I return it back to the DMV according to
12 Title 31, 506.2.

13 It says that whenever you don't have
14 your car, this other or return or whatever it is,
15 out of service, you have to return it back to
16 DMV.

17 So we follow or I follow myself to do
18 that according to the law. After I finish
19 everything in the process, after I have even one
20 stop to give my tag, everything they told me that
21 everything is changed, without notice, without
22 giving any information, having nothing.

1 If I knew that, I would not be turning
2 back my tag, even giving the donation. I want to
3 do to insurance company. I told her that the
4 only things I return back is just not to pay H-
5 tags without car.

6 That's only reason. Otherwise, if I
7 know that I would keep the tag, even I would pay
8 rather than giving, you know how much we pay of
9 renting to this time? Our rent, since 2012 as is
10 today, every week \$200.

11 I want my car to transfer my tag, and
12 after they refused me for two years I am doing
13 still renting. Eventually, the rent is go up
14 more than \$250. I mean as long we don't have an
15 opportunity.

16 We have a family. We have
17 responsibility. I mean we been going with this
18 taxicab association with this life. How are we
19 going to change our life?

20 Let's say I pay \$200 for a week and
21 \$800 a month for the top of that is rent. On the
22 top is afford child thoroughly. How am I going

1 to support this?

2 If I can get an opportunity to return
3 back my tag so that I can work with my own, with
4 all 20 and I have my car. I can transfer to my
5 car. It should be easy for us.

6 I mean I would appreciate that if you
7 can cooperate with this situation. A lot of us,
8 we are almost disabled. I can say that we are
9 about to be homeless if you continue like this.
10 I appreciate the time, and thank you again.

11 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you very
12 much for the comments, and again, I invite you as
13 well to participate in the panel on industry's
14 meetings because that's exactly the issue they're
15 going to be looking at.

16 So your comments are definitely
17 appreciated, and I know the panel would love to
18 hear. And we're going to work it out. In the
19 next six to nine months, the issue will be
20 solved.

21 I guarantee you that. Okay. Don't be
22 shy folks. Come on, share you comments. And I

1 can feel it bubbling. How about you with the
2 scarf, the colorful scarf over that? You've got
3 something to say, don't you? No? Okay, all
4 right. Okay. Further comments? All right.

5 MR. FREEMAN: I have one.

6 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Come on up.
7 Come on. Get it out. I know it's been bubbling.
8 Just identify yourself for the record, and spell
9 your name.

10 MR. FREEMAN: Gregory Freeman, G-R-E-
11 G-O-R-Y, F-R-E-E-M-A-N. I'm a taxi driver, and
12 really I just really need some clarification so
13 I, I'm about to, guess I'm about to get caught up
14 where some of the guys speaking at.

15 My car is a 2004, and I was told that,
16 I got, received a letter where the car come off
17 the street. It's supposed to come off the, the
18 2004's come off the street in January.

19 Now my question is, and my car have
20 260,000 miles. I am going to be getting a new
21 car. I realize that in order for me to keep up
22 in the industry, and I'm not knocking nobody.

1 I'm really here just trying to get me some
2 clarification for my own peace of mind.

3 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Okay.

4 MR. FREEMAN: So, if my car passed
5 inspection in November, and my tags is not due
6 until June, do my car have to come off the
7 street? Or since I'm getting ready to get a new
8 car, where I don't have to tell nobody about what
9 we just be coming through the slow period.

10 And January is not a time where, I
11 don't have the money to get a new car in January.
12 But my tags, I need to know how long can my car
13 be on the street, or do it need to come off the
14 street now or when the tags is due?

15 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Understand, why
16 don't you speak with John Scott over there?
17 He'll give you personal direction on your
18 individual situation on what you need to do.
19 He's right over there.

20 MR. FREEMAN: Okay.

21 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: So you said
22 you're already going to get a new vehicle or you

1 have a new vehicle?

2 MR. FREEMAN: Well, I have over
3 260,000 miles on my car. My car runs still good,
4 but I do plan to get a car, a new taxi. But
5 January, February, you know what I'm saying.

6 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: I understand.

7 MR. FREEMAN: So what I need to know
8 is do my car have to come off the street right
9 now, or do I go, can I go until my tags or I
10 figured with the tags and inspection or the tags
11 or inspection one is due. I just need to
12 clarification.

13 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Well, Mr. Scott
14 can give you that clarification --

15 MR. FREEMAN: Okay.

16 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: -- and work
17 your personal situation to ensure that you're
18 one, compliant but then, two, you can time when
19 you're going to buy your car with when your --

20 (Simultaneous speaking)

21 MR. FREEMAN: Yes, that's what I'm
22 trying to get caught up, so I don't get caught

1 up.

2 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: All right.

3 MR. FREEMAN: Thank you.

4 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: But you're
5 going to get a wheelchair or a clean efficient
6 vehicle car? Is that what you're trying to get?

7 MR. FREEMAN: I haven't made up my
8 mind just what I'm going to get yet, for the
9 record.

10 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Now you know
11 that if you have an energy efficient vehicle, I
12 guess it's a CNG natural gas vehicle or even a
13 hybrid and you may need a wheelchair accessible,
14 gives you one more time but two, an H-tag. Now
15 that will do though, so --

16 (Off microphone discussion)

17 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: -- yes, they
18 just get, yes get more time on the road. So keep
19 that in mind in your financial consideration of
20 how you are planning your business because it is
21 your business.

22 MR. FREEMAN: Yes.

1 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Your cab is
2 your business, that there may be certain benefits
3 afforded to you by switching to a wheelchair
4 accessible or an energy efficient vehicle.

5 But again, I don't know your personal
6 financial situation. That's between you and your
7 bank and all of that, but all I'm saying is --

8 MR. FREEMAN: Can I get a loan?

9 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Well, there's
10 a brother out there I saw with --

11 (Simultaneous speaking)

12 MR. FREEMAN: Okay. All right, thank
13 you very much.

14 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, sir.

15 MR. LERNER: Again, just to amplify
16 what the Chairman already said, there are now
17 permanent rules or final rules in Title 31.

18 If you have an existing tag, and
19 you're replacing the vehicle for any reason,
20 maybe you're replacing it early if you choose to,
21 or you're replacing it by the deadline which Mr.
22 Scott can clarify for you, sir.

1 Anyone who has a tag right now, you
2 have a vehicle, you have a tag, if you replace it
3 with the best vehicle, one that's most fuel
4 efficient, it's a new vehicle that's also
5 wheelchair accessible, you are eligible for a
6 transferable tag.

7 That's a tag that continues. It could
8 be transferred from person to person. There's
9 some value in that. You should look at the new
10 rules. Mr. Scott can give you some amplification
11 on that point.

12 But that's something new. It's in the
13 rules, and Mr. Scott can explain it. You may
14 wish to consider that, but certainly going above
15 the regular gas car that's not wheelchair
16 accessible, you get more time on the road.

17 If you go all the way to the top, you
18 get this new vehicle license and tags that are
19 transferable.

20 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: So did you guys
21 hear that? So there's some opportunities.

22 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Can I ask a

1 question?

2 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Yes, sir.

3 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: With the
4 transfer of tags, can companies transfer tags to
5 individuals --

6 (Off microphone discussion)

7 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: I'll keep that
8 in mind. Yes, sir.

9 MR. HUMBLER: Yes, my name is Vernon
10 Humbler. I wasn't going to make a comment. I
11 just wanted to come and meet the new chairman.

12 MS. MIXON: Can you still spell your
13 name please, sir?

14 MR. HUMBLER: Okay. My name's Vernon
15 Humbler, V-E-R-N-O-N, H-U-M-B-L-E-S. When you
16 said something about hybrid vehicles, I was one
17 of the first cab drivers in the city that had a
18 hybrid vehicle.

19 I had to come before the Council to
20 get special permission because the hybrid vehicle
21 was a Ford Escape, and it was considered a truck.
22 So I had to get special permission.

1 So after that, that Ford Escape
2 vehicle, hybrid vehicle, it wasn't a good cab,
3 front wheel drive vehicle, it didn't last. So
4 then I looked into buying a CNG vehicle.

5 And I happen to have a professor in my
6 car from one of the universities, and he said you
7 should look into that. It's cleaner, but you're
8 going to spending more because you won't get as
9 many miles per gallon.

10 But then I looked at it even further,
11 there are no CNG fuel stations in the area. The
12 nearest one was Columbia Run, and I went to visit
13 it. And it had closed.

14 And the nearest one from there was
15 Baltimore, Maryland, and you needed special
16 permission to even go there. So then I think I
17 contacted Councilmember McDuffie's office.

18 And while he was putting that new
19 store up there off of Lincoln Road, off of South
20 Dakota Avenue, I said why don't you all mandate
21 that they put a CNG fuel station there.

22 But after that I lost contact with

1 him, but it's not as simple. First of all, it's
2 the cost of the vehicle and secondly fuel
3 stations and thirdly, you're going to spending
4 more for fuel because you won't get as many miles
5 per gallon with the clean natural gas vehicles.
6 I just wanted to bring that to your attention.

7 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Well, you
8 brought an interesting point that I wasn't aware
9 of, the lack of fueling stations. So maybe I
10 will I have a conversation with District
11 Department of Public Works.

12 There's a fueling center right there
13 on West Virginia Avenue where the snow plows, all
14 those folks are.

15 And maybe we can enter some
16 partnership, DCTC and DPW to get you guys on an
17 account system but to figure out maybe a
18 mechanism for taxis to access that facility, the
19 cap at DPW and so on and so forth.

20 So I'm going to look into that, and
21 I'll report back at the next meeting. So at
22 least you don't have to go all the way up to

1 Columbia or --

2 MR. HUMBLE: Well, they closed the
3 one in Columbia.

4 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: They closed it?

5 MR. HUMBLE: Yes, you have to go a
6 little further north, but anyway --

7 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Is there one at
8 National Airport, I hear, or is that one closed,
9 too?

10 MR. HUMBLE: I couldn't find it on
11 the website. First, I started Google searching,
12 and then I actually tried to go physically see
13 it, touch it.

14 I didn't see one as close as National
15 Airport, no way. I mean that would be convenient
16 almost, but certainly Baltimore would not be.

17 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Well, let me
18 look into seeing how, where the resources or the
19 assets that are in the city that are government
20 assets.

21 Maybe we can work something out, not
22 making any promises, but I'll definitely explore

1 it because I don't want you having to burn up a
2 half a tank a gas just to go get some gas, come
3 back and all that good stuff.

4 MR. HUMBLER: The other part of it is
5 the financing of the vehicle. So, that's it
6 right now. Thank you, sir.

7 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: I'm humbled by
8 your comments, Mr. Humblers.

9 MR. HUMBLER: Thank you, sir.

10 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: All right.

11 MR. HUMBLER: All right, bye bye.

12 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Oh, now
13 everybody wants to talk now. What happened?
14 First you all are quiet. Now you want to talk.
15 Wonderful. Yes, sir.

16 MR. ABADI: My name is Abebe, A-B-E-B-
17 E.

18 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Talk into the
19 mic.

20 MR. ABADI: A-B-E-B-E. Last name A-B-
21 A-D-I. Because I just heard something, so I
22 would like to raise a question about that. I

1 think the counselor said if you buy fuel
2 efficiency that limit is going to be more.

3 I read that regulation. I think you
4 are talking about 609.4. In that regulation for
5 MPA cars or to all District cabs which says if
6 you have gasoline car, it's four year, handicap
7 access of gasoline, eight years. If you have
8 hybrid, six years, handicap hybrid, I think nine
9 years. Is this for all DC cabs, 609.4?

10 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Yes. Those are
11 the --

12 MR. HUMBLE: So as of January, if I
13 have to buy a cab, it has to be like 609.5 says,
14 it has to be less than one year after the
15 expiration, and it has to be less than hundred
16 miles. Is that correct?

17 MR. LERNER: Sir, let me ask you to
18 do, you're correct, 609, that's where the vehicle
19 retirement rules are. In fact, they've been
20 there for a very long time.

21 They've been amended twice now over
22 the last three months, but what I would suggest

1 you do if you have any specific questions like
2 the one that you have, I would suggest that you
3 speak to Mr. Scott right after the meeting.

4 He could speak to your specific
5 circumstances so that you get an exact answer for
6 your particular needs.

7 MR. ABADI: Yes, this is a problem.
8 I mean I am not going to say because of drivers
9 that it was good. This was a problem we had in
10 the Commission.

11 First of all, when they published the
12 regulation, they publish it one day prior to the
13 hearing. We can't even testify. And it does
14 need to be changed.

15 If we have a hearing, first you need
16 to publish the agenda three, four, five days.
17 The drivers partly can read and prepare themselves
18 to testify. Second, while we are something in
19 vote of you, Commissioner Linton told me to come
20 and talk to you when I ask him a question.

21 When I call the office to have
22 appointment with you, nobody give me appointment.

1 Mr. John, I appreciate you. Anytime I want him,
2 he's available.

3 But some questions it goes beyond him
4 that need to be answered by the counsel or by the
5 commissioner. I'm willing to talk to Mr. John,
6 but this has to be clear to drivers because
7 drivers don't, that regulation is for MTA.

8 I know you're going to do the MTA,
9 which is more than Taxicab Association. Even
10 not, the first they're going to ask Commissioner
11 Linton, he told me read Chapter 10.

12 That Chapter 10 is MTA, but he tried
13 to tell me 609.4 is not for the whole cabs.
14 609.4 attachment was ten ten.

15 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: So maybe what
16 I'll do, just hearing some of the concerns from,
17 and still speak with Mr. John, Mr. Scott on your
18 individual issue, is a lot of changes have been
19 happening over the last year or so.

20 Rules have been removed, moved, moving
21 day to day. So let me ask you this. What is the
22 best way for information to come out to you guys?

1 Do you want it on our website? Do you want to
2 create an email Listserv?

3 I mean we have the public way that we
4 do it, notification in the register and so on and
5 so forth, but on a more personal level so that
6 you're fully aware of what we're doing, what
7 we're considering and the like, what's the best
8 way for, what's the best way to communicate with
9 you?

10 Do you want me to create like an email
11 Listserv so as you guys give me your email
12 addresses, and we'll send you like a little
13 weekly or biweekly update on what's going on?

14 Do you want something more formal
15 where I just have open hours where you just come
16 and sit with me and my staff once a week, once
17 every two weeks? Tell me what's best for you.

18 MR. ABADI: I think a driver wants to
19 be in his cab, that in the best thing is to have
20 all companies email. Then send email to the
21 companies. The companies has to be responsible
22 to inform the drivers or to post whatever

1 information you send to them.

2 The other thing when you have hearing,
3 please post the agenda at least three, four days
4 prior to the hearing.

5 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Okay.

6 MR. ABADI: Not the front item like
7 this, the detailed agenda. This doesn't tell me
8 anything.

9 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Well, this is
10 what I --

11 (Simultaneous speaking)

12 MR. ABADI: I want to know what is in
13 Chapter 4.

14 (Simultaneous speaking)

15 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: -- has the same
16 thing, so --

17 MR. ABADI: How I'm going to testify?
18 What do I know about Chapter 4? What do I know
19 about Chapter 8?

20 (Simultaneous speaking)

21 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: So this is what
22 I'll do. When we have items that are proposed or

1 rules, I can only speak to rules, we will, when
2 we post our agenda on the website, we'll also
3 post the rules.

4 MR. ABADI: Yes.

5 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: We haven't done
6 them.

7 (Off microphone discussion)

8 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: So, in talking
9 to my lawyer, obviously there's some, so what I
10 will do is with the agenda, have a more
11 descriptive, what do you call it, text, words and
12 stuff on exactly what it's doing as opposed to
13 the title and stuff like that.

14 So at least that way you're more
15 informed about what we're doing here. Is that
16 fair?

17 MR. ABADI: Thank you.

18 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Okay.

19 (Off microphone discussion)

20 MR. MOMEN: Good morning. My name is
21 Mohammad Momen, from Silver Cab Company.

22 MS. MIXON: Spell it, please.

1 MR. MOMEN: Momen, M-O-M-E-N.

2 MS. MIXON: And also spell how you
3 spell Mohammad.

4 MR. MOMEN: M-O-H-A-M-M-A-D.

5 MS. MIXON: Thank you.

6 MR. MOMEN: Good morning everybody.
7 Congratulations. Welcome to the Board.

8 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you.

9 MR. MOMEN: I have a different issue
10 than the cab drivers, and all of my fellow cab
11 companies' owners. My issue is I have a problem
12 with that new cruising light.

13 If we can concern about that cruising
14 light because we do have a problem. There have
15 been approved two companies, which one is Pro-
16 Lite, and one is the Treble.

17 The Pro-Lite is not going to provide
18 for us anymore cruising light unless we have to
19 buy 100 of them. And that 100 of them is a big,
20 big money.

21 In these days regarding those economy
22 crisis, we cannot afford to buy 100 cruising

1 light. And those cruising light, we do have a
2 big problem with those ones.

3 If we can change that one and make it
4 a kind, a regular cruising light instead of that
5 one, which is that is anymore worth it. And if
6 it's going to cost a big money, \$400 to those
7 poor cab drivers.

8 And I would like to concern about the
9 cruising light. We can put another like the
10 whole vision cruising light. What's wrong with
11 that one? Nobody, and there's not any kind of
12 report of those cruising light or any customer or
13 any public notice by the Taxi Commissioner or
14 government they can concern about that light.

15 That light is not important to us to
16 be on high or on call or on waiver. Cruising
17 light is to show this is a vehicle-for-hire as
18 long as cruising light on the top, it says taxi
19 or on top that is enough, not to be that vague.

20 Especially it's going to be a big
21 problem in another one to three months when the
22 rain comes, when the water damage that chips,

1 computerized chips of the cruising light, it will
2 create big problem.

3 In this kind of economy time and
4 business is very, very slow, and Uber or Sidecar
5 or Lyft or another companies taking the business
6 from the poor cab driver.

7 They cannot afford to buy another \$400
8 for the cruising light instead have to buy for
9 \$50. Why should we go buy another \$400? So I
10 would like to concern about that one, if we can
11 get a relief of that cruising light and we put
12 the regular one. Number two --

13 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: I'll let my
14 general counsel respond to the legal authority or
15 the legal requirement of having uniform cruising
16 lights, and then we'll --

17 MR. LERNER: Sir, I would like to let
18 you know that in the legislation from 2002, which
19 was the Taxicab Service Improvement Amendment Act
20 of 2012, one of the so called modernization
21 requirements of the Council, this is public
22 policy.

1 It's in the law is that the Commission
2 is charged with putting the uniform lights on all
3 the cars. They have to be same. They are
4 required to be that way, and that's what the
5 Commission did.

6 That's what's been enacted, and the
7 dome lights are pretty much on every car, 99.9
8 percent is what I want to say. So that's a
9 statutory requirement that the Commission is not
10 allowed to change so it's in compliance with the
11 law.

12 And there are safety and enforcement
13 reasons for having it that way, but at least
14 that's what the law is.

15 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: In your
16 specific case, though, dealing with the actual
17 installation and maintenance of it, I do invite
18 you to talk with my ops guy because maybe we can
19 go and have a conversation with some of the
20 installers and take a look see on how they're
21 doing it.

22 Essentially if, in three or four

1 months after you put it in you're starting to
2 have some maintenance issues and the like, and
3 we're requiring you to have these things, we
4 could definitely work towards that.

5 But as I read the law and as I
6 understand from my, the interpretation of my
7 general counsel, the argument would have to be
8 with the City Council to change the law, which
9 then gives us the authority to change the rules
10 to allow something that you want.

11 But right now, I know we don't have
12 that authority. I'm not a Council member and
13 none of us are Council members.

14 MR. MOMEN: Sir, the commissioner,
15 they rule. They pass the law, and they send it
16 to their City Council to approve it.

17 I request the Chairman and the panel
18 and the commissioner to review that one and go
19 back to see it, which is we are not, as a company
20 owner and as a company union member, I am not
21 going to deny the modernization.

22 You can see picture as the whole

1 United States cab industry. Do you see it
2 anywhere else? Everywhere else in United States
3 of America --

4 (Simultaneous speaking)

5 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Don't --

6 MR. MOMEN: Yes, it is dome light, but
7 not like this one.

8 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: It might not
9 necessarily be this particular style --

10 MR. MOMEN: That is right.

11 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: -- but since,
12 because what you're asking me to do is ask every
13 cab driver in the city now to spend more money
14 because we don't have a whole lot of money. I'm
15 sure you got a solution. What's your solution?
16 Go ahead.

17 MR. MOMEN: The solution is whenever
18 the new car comes and their dome light, we have a
19 problem with the companies, the manufacturer. We
20 cannot buy 100 dome light, otherwise they are not
21 going to sell it less than 100.

22 And that is not \$100. It is not

1 \$10,000. It is more than \$120,000 to \$150,000
2 plus shipping. It is not that easy money to go
3 pay for 100. The dome light, which is not going
4 to work anymore, instead have to put another
5 \$400.

6 We can approve to the Taxi
7 Commissioner, this dome light is not working.
8 Can I have a permission to put another dome
9 light?

10 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Right now we
11 don't have that authority, but I will take what
12 you're saying into consideration and think it
13 through. I'm not going to make, give you a yes
14 or no answer right now.

15 (Simultaneous speaking)

16 MR. MOMEN: I understand. It is a
17 concern that's --

18 (Simultaneous speaking)

19 MR. MOMEN: And number two, I did
20 appeal, I did ask the City Council, and I'm going
21 to ask, I will repeatedly ask the City Council,
22 the Commissioner, everybody regarding the salvage

1 cars. I --

2 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Which cars?

3 MR. MOMEN: The salvage car.

4 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Okay.

5 MR. MOMEN: There is nothing wrong
6 with the salvage car. We would like to bring the
7 salvage car back to the industry. There are so
8 many reason to benefit the industry and those
9 poor cab driver.

10 They cannot afford or they cannot buy
11 a new car for \$22,000 and up. They can buy the
12 same age of the car but salvage for \$10,000 to
13 \$12,000, so they save a big, big amount of money.

14 And that is going to go into
15 inspection. One is the salvage or FBI
16 inspection. They check the car regarding
17 everything. Number two, it goes to their
18 District of Columbia inspection so the car goes
19 twice for inspection.

20 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Well, remember,
21 the DC inspection is only emissions and a basic,
22 basic safety check.

1 So if you have a established
2 destruction, which I'm considering like flooded
3 or you get one of those cars when the hurricane
4 goes through and floods out the city and stuff,
5 and so on and so forth, yes, there's some
6 mechanical issues potentially with those cars
7 that a normal inspection won't catch.

8 I mean it's something that you, I
9 guess it's a risk that you'll take. But now this
10 one I can pretty much say that we probably are
11 not going to do.

12 There's a reason why salvage cars and
13 older cars are not on the road because there is a
14 potential for them to be unsafe, and we have an
15 obligation to give our riding public, as much as
16 we can, comfortable, safe rides.

17 Now, like I said, what I'm committed
18 to doing is looking at all of our rules as it
19 relates to replacing vehicles and so on and so
20 forth in the panel on industry.

21 And I invite you to come and make
22 these comments there, so they can be in the

1 consideration of how we appropriately regulate
2 the vehicle age but make it so that it is a fair
3 balance between the affordability for you, so
4 that you can make more money, and safety and to
5 be truthful with you just the aesthetics of the
6 vehicles because part of your client base are
7 inventioneers and hoteliers.

8 And in my conversations with the hotel
9 convention industry and so on and so forth, they
10 prefer for their folks more modern cars. Well,
11 those are the ones that are going to be paying
12 you the most money because they're going back to
13 the airport and other places like that outside of
14 the downtown folks and the like.

15 So again, I will do my level best to
16 make anything that we do, our rules and like
17 affordable, but at the same time, the industry
18 has to adapt and sacrificing the quality of the
19 vehicle for entrance into the market may not be
20 the way that we want to go or that I want to go
21 because, as you said, because I'm paying the
22 salvage car, I got a 15 year old car.

1 It looks great, but my heat pump
2 won't, not the heating pump but something broke,
3 and it stopped in the middle of an important trip
4 that I had to take for my mom.

5 So, I hear you. I'm with you, but in
6 this particular one, there's some others that
7 we've got some common ground on, but --

8 MR. MOMEN: Well, I'm not asking to
9 put the old model salvage car, the latest model
10 salvage car.

11 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Oh, the latest,
12 okay --

13 MR. MOMEN: Yes.

14 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: -- I see what
15 you're saying.

16 MR. MOMEN: 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015.

17 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Okay.

18 MR. MOMEN: Those cars --

19 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: So a salvage
20 type --

21 MR. MOMEN: Salvage title.

22 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: -- but it's a

1 modern car.

2 MR. MOMEN: Yes, that, for example,
3 2013 Toyota Prius or Toyota Sienna or Ford Taurus
4 or Ford Crown Victoria or whatever the modern is.

5 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: I understand
6 what you're saying.

7 MR. MOMEN: It has a low mileage,
8 20,000.

9 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: I get it.

10 MR. MOMEN: Regarding the appear,
11 regarding, everything is computerized. If there
12 is anything wrong, the engine light is on there.
13 The inspection will not pass it

14 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: I understand.
15 Now I understand more of what you're saying.

16 MR. MOMEN: The salvage inspector,
17 they are checking the car neck to neck 100
18 percent. If they are not good, they will not
19 allow us to go through the inspection or put them
20 back on the road.

21 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: I guess then
22 what I'll do is I'll take it under consideration

1 now that I more fully understand what you're
2 talking about --

3 MR. MOMEN: Yes.

4 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: -- and report
5 out at the next meeting what my findings are and
6 maybe give some clue as to where we're going.
7 But more than likely my explanation is to remand
8 this particular issue to the panel on industry
9 when they're looking at all of these things on
10 how to make the system more vibrant.

11 (Off microphone discussion)

12 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Okay.

13 MR. MOMEN: Okay. I have one, another
14 concern.

15 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Hey, your two
16 minutes are up. Didn't I say --

17 (Simultaneous speaking)

18 MR. MOMEN: I'm going to get --

19 (Simultaneous speaking)

20 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: -- two minutes
21 --

22 MR. MOMEN: I'm not like individual.

1 I'm as a member of the union. I have another
2 concern regarding those poor cab driver.

3 Everywhere in our jurisdictions, Fairfax, Falls
4 Church, Arlington, Prince William County, Prince
5 George County, Montgomery County, all around the
6 United State of America, the cab industry, they
7 do charge luggage.

8 They do charge extra passenger. Why
9 not in DC? Everywhere else they do charge for
10 luggage. Everywhere else they do charge for
11 extra passenger but not poor cab.

12 DC cab driver cannot charge. They can
13 carry around four people with one price. When
14 you travel to any airline, they do charge you're
15 going to get a six year or seven years.

16 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Or six months.

17 MR. MOMEN: Or six months. If you go
18 to the train, if you go to the restaurant,
19 there's no free ride.

20 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: No, I'm with
21 you, and that is one thing that I've heard very
22 loudly and clearly from drivers. And we are

1 considering proposed rules to do something
2 similar to --

3 (Simultaneous speaking)

4 MR. MOMEN: Not only for the extra
5 passenger. It should be charged luggage, too.

6 The poor cab driver, an old man 60, 65 years --

7 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Well, do like
8 I do when my girlfriend's mother wants me to help
9 her put up something, get the hands like this and
10 oh, my back is hurting. I can't help you.

11 Sometimes you're going to have to do
12 a little customer service and explain your
13 situation to your client because you are being
14 hired by a patron to say hey, I have certain
15 limitations. This is what I can do, and this is
16 what I won't do.

17 (Off microphone discussion)

18 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: I understand.
19 I do hear your issues, but for the surcharge for
20 additional passengers and the like --

21 MR. MOMEN: And the luggage.

22 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: -- I'm looking

1 at. I will look at also the luggage thing. I
2 can't promise you anything on luggage. I can
3 reasonably say that something will probably be
4 coming out to give you increased fares,
5 surcharges for, I don't know the amount yet, for
6 additional passengers and the like.

7 But I'll take into consideration, or
8 the Commission will take into consideration
9 luggage. But, and then perhaps even though the
10 rules don't allow you to do that, you're
11 businessmen.

12 So you know how to manipulate and
13 maneuver in the public domain. So my suggestion
14 so that you don't run afoul of Title 31 is to use
15 those great communication skills that you have
16 that are legal and compliant to let your riders
17 know what you can and what you can't do, what
18 your obligations are and aren't. But I want,
19 yes, sir?

20 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: I believe
21 these are old rulemaking to increase \$1 for each
22 additional passenger.

1 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: We didn't do it
2 yet.

3 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: Okay.

4 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Remember, we
5 were going to do it in February. We have to post
6 it and publish it and all that stuff.

7 MR. MOMEN: And the last one --

8 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Another one?
9 I thought you said the last one was the last one.

10 MR. MOMEN: I came with ten, but I
11 will go with four.

12 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: All right.

13 (Simultaneous speaking)

14 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Go very quickly
15 because --

16 (Simultaneous speaking)

17 MR. MOMEN: The last one is regarding
18 the communication every two years the cab and the
19 rate must increase. That is regarding the
20 percentage. We have a long time a panel.

21 I was one of the panel member, how to
22 increase what percentage we increase the rate. I

1 was one of the panel, but the last six or seven
2 year they took out that panel.

3 So, there is no increase. Every two
4 years we should increase. The rent goes up. The
5 vegetable price goes up. The food price goes up.
6 Everything goes up, but the poor cab driver rate
7 never goes up.

8 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Understood.
9 Well, I'm letting my lawyer explain some of the
10 legal stuff that we have already done as it
11 relates to the rates and then I'll come back in
12 with my own personal philosophy.

13 MR. MOMEN: Thank you.

14 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Jacques?

15 MR. LERNER: Yes, sir, I believe you
16 may be speaking to the two year rate review
17 that's mandatory in the statute. Is that what --

18 MR. MOMEN: Yes.

19 MR. LERNER: you're referring to?
20 Yes, so the Commission has been doing, and I know
21 they did it, it was done two years ago. And it
22 was just completed.

1 And that report, I think, was
2 presented at the, or approved at the November
3 meeting, unless I'm mistaken. It's actually, and
4 I think that's available on the website.

5 And you can speak to Neville Waters,
6 our information officer if you want to get a copy
7 of that. That report, pursuant to the mandatory
8 review, reflects everything that was done by the
9 Commission in fully reviewing all the rates for
10 this time.

11 And then it'll be done again. It has
12 to be done every two years. And those are for
13 the meter rates, of course, not affecting any
14 other rates including the dispatch rate, which
15 are presumptively at \$0 as set by the dispatch
16 services.

17 (Simultaneous speaking)

18 MR. MOMEN: But we need it soon.

19 (Simultaneous speaking)

20 MR. LERNER: -- something that he'd
21 like to say.

22 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: I don't view

1 the Commission in these days coming up, what do
2 they use to look at the fare?

3 MR. LERNER: I can get you a copy of
4 the report. You did receive it, but I can go
5 over it with you if you like.

6 It actually does look at a number of
7 things, including looking at other jurisdictions,
8 the urban area, two-thirds of a square area, the
9 history of the rate making, competitive position
10 with other services.

11 Various things were looked at that was
12 in the report pursuant to the review, which you
13 were given.

14 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: In the past,
15 I'm only speaking past we've had a count of the
16 people, companies to look at this because number
17 one, you were taking the rate of a government has
18 over the years.

19 There are a rate, and when we did it
20 the last time that the panel did, they look at
21 how much it costs to repair a car. How much does
22 it cost nowadays to put brakes on an automobile

1 versus the day two years ago?

2 How much gas? They take an overall
3 look meaning they have AAA involved in the last
4 one. I'm just wondering how do we do these
5 things now.

6 MR. LERNER: The Chairman can address
7 going forward what the Commission may want to be
8 doing, but in terms of looking just backward
9 because he explained what had been done, what had
10 been done between the two years ago and the more
11 recent report that came out, review and report
12 there was the Service Improvement Act, which
13 abolished the panel that you're talking about or
14 that panel that considers those things.

15 That panel was actually abolished in
16 the statute because it was a statutory panel. It
17 doesn't exist anymore, so that's why the
18 procedure changed, the process for doing the
19 review changed. Going forward, the Chairman can
20 address that.

21 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Yes, going
22 forward since obviously this is one of the main

1 concerns of drivers. I have no issues
2 reestablishing some public process similar to
3 what you're describing Commissioner Tapscott,
4 where all interested parties can have a say so in
5 any increases or decreases.

6 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: Right.

7 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Because don't
8 forget, everyone's thinking it's all going to go
9 up. It may go down.

10 MR. MOMEN: Excuse me. We'd like to
11 increase. We don't like decrease.

12 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: No, I
13 understand that, but you have to consider, too,
14 general economics. So as your price goes up,
15 your demand will go down.

16 So hopefully the balance that you try
17 to find is either neutral or relatively positive.
18 But again, we're in a different industry now.
19 You have a lot of --

20 (Simultaneous speaking)

21 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: -- like
22 cigarettes?

1 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Huh?

2 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: I believe it
3 will be like cigarettes. It started at \$0.85.
4 They're up to \$10.

5 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: And then look
6 what happened.

7 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Then the rate
8 stopped.

9 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Yes, they did.

10 (Simultaneous speaking)

11 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: But my point is
12 that in order to be competitive, you have to
13 change your thinking. If your rates go up,
14 there's a perception in the public, the driving,
15 the riding public of taxicabs, which I'm willing
16 and to a certain degree able to try to change.

17 So that's number one. And that
18 perception is that you are too expensive. That's
19 why I'm going to Uber. And Uber capitalized on
20 that with their little advertisements and this,
21 that and the other saying hey, we're cheaper than
22 a taxi.

1 But lo and behold, they introduced
2 this other new concept called surge price and
3 demand pricing. So in reality, it either nets
4 out or Uber may, if you do all things equal, may
5 be a little bit higher.

6 I don't know. I'd have to do the math
7 and look at the statistics. The point of it is
8 is you have riding public who may choose, may not
9 but may choose to seek alternate forms of
10 transportation if the prices are too high.

11 But the converse, think of it like
12 this. The reason why people love Walmart and why
13 it's one of the most successful business
14 enterprises in the country is because their
15 prices are cheaper than Safeway, cheaper than
16 Giant, cheaper than Target, cheaper than Kmart,
17 if Kmart is still around.

18 But you're getting volume. So in
19 thinking and readapting to this new business
20 model that's out there, think about all the
21 different ways that you can increase your
22 pocketbook.

1 And it's not just increasing rates.
2 It may be. I'm not saying that it is or it
3 isn't, but it may be also decreasing your rates
4 and marketing that fact to say hey, we're cheaper
5 than Uber and we have better insurance.

6 MR. MOMEN: We are.

7 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: But the public
8 perception is not there. And it's up to you guys
9 as you're out there and conversating, having
10 conversations with the riding public to mention
11 to them, ask questions.

12 Hey, do you use Uber? Did you know
13 that we're cheaper than Uber? And then prove it
14 to them. Say hey, because it would cost you \$15
15 with Uber going from Point A to Point B.

16 But I'm only charging \$11.50, and
17 that's including the surcharge. So my point is
18 that as we go through this process, and as we go
19 through this exercise over the six to nine
20 months, think very carefully about what you want
21 because I'm not wedded to one way or the other.

22 It's the beauty about coming in new.

1 I'm relatively neutral. I do know economics. I
2 do know the new generation of folks that are
3 coming into the city who don't have cars who use
4 public transportation in all formats what they
5 believe and what they want.

6 And in order for us to compete, you
7 have to think of all financial models, lowering
8 prices to a certain degree to compete to get the
9 business in, all types of things.

10 So my point is everything is on the
11 table. Let's look at this with a clear eye.
12 Talk about it as we've been saying and figure out
13 what's best for the industry.

14 But don't preclude one particular
15 approach over another just because that's the way
16 things have been done, and we're just used to the
17 annual increases and so on and so forth because
18 the business might not be there.

19 So yes, you're making more money, but
20 you're still losing money because your rate of
21 loss might be less, which might be what you want.
22 If that's what the cab community wants, that's

1 fine.

2 Then I'll put it forward, and we'll
3 deal with it. But don't come yelling at me that
4 you're not making enough money if we did do
5 something like that.

6 But my point is let's have a further
7 conversation about that. Maybe on the February
8 11th meeting I'll give some formal proclamation
9 or what have you to reestablish some system so
10 that we can look at, and it's every two years.

11 I don't see why we couldn't look at it
12 every six months, maybe not change the fares
13 every six months, but at least we'll have more
14 real time data that when the appropriate time to
15 look at fare and rate adjustment, we'll have more
16 information as opposed to a compilation, is that
17 cool?

18 MR. MOMEN: Thank you.

19 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Is that cool?

20 MR. MOMEN: That's cool.

21 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: All right, sir.

22 Oh, now everybody wants to talk. Yes, sir, with

1 the lovely hair, purple tie.

2 MR. CHUBBS: Good morning.

3 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Good morning,
4 sir.

5 MR. CHUBBS: I'm E.J. Chubbs,
6 Independent Cab Number 69. I gotten in here kind
7 of late and didn't know you all had moved. I'm
8 over at the other building and then all this.

9 A couple things I want to talk on,
10 maybe I'm allowed to or not. One of them is the
11 age limit on the cars. Okay, but I just wanted
12 to reiterate what he was talking about the rate.

13 What you said make a lot of sense. We
14 would automatically have a rate increase. If you
15 give us the additional passenger and the luggage,
16 you all want us to update our fleet and take care
17 of our fleet, but you pick up three people, let's
18 say four people.

19 They stack your trunk. I mean some
20 use tie downs. I don't use them, and you gets
21 nothing for it. You're wearing your trunk out.
22 You're wearing your car out.

1 You're not getting anything for it,
2 but my main concern is on this age thing.

3 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: On the what?

4 MR. CHUBBS: I've been driving --

5 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: That's what
6 he's saying, age?

7 MR. CHUBBS: On the age, car age. Can
8 you hear me okay?

9 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Yes.

10 MR. CHUBBS: Okay. I've been driving,
11 serving the city for 50 years, and I feel I've
12 served it well. But the rules and regulations
13 that they have made, it have put half of the
14 older gentlemens out of business.

15 Mr. Tapscott can testify to that. I'm
16 just amazed at the number of guys that comes by
17 and tell me, say well Mr. Chubbs I'm not going to
18 see you anymore because I can't afford this.

19 And I'm on social security. I just
20 used my car to subsidize my social security, and
21 that's me, too. I drive an '04 Lincoln Town Car.
22 I normally drive Lincoln Town Cars for my

1 clientele, okay.

2 Now they tell me that's not available.
3 I'll put that '04 Lincoln Town Car, and any of
4 the guys in here know me, on any 2015 you put out
5 there other than saying it's new, okay.

6 But the main concern is I know back in
7 the day you couldn't get a taxicab financed.
8 Okay. All of my encounters I have bought a new
9 car, paid for it, put it into the cab and take
10 the old ones out.

11 To give you an example, I have an '04.
12 I bought a brand new '08 Lincoln Town Car, the
13 top of the line. I have 78,000 miles on it,
14 \$40,000 I invested. Now they tell me I can't
15 utilize that.

16 I mean I just used my car, like I
17 said, to subsidize my social security. I've
18 spent \$1000 with this cruising light, this meter
19 thing, and all of this stuff, we don't make that
20 kind of money. We don't work like that.

21 To give you another example, I went up
22 the other day. I don't work the street. I work

1 at one hotel, and it was slow. I said well, I'll
2 go out and run a couple jobs.

3 I ran the first job. It was \$5.12.
4 So I dropped them, and I got another guy. He
5 wasn't going nowhere, \$5.14. Then I picked up
6 one more job, \$8.28. What I'm telling you, I pay
7 5 percent of each one of those jobs.

8 What do I make with a \$5.12 job? Pay
9 5 percent. Then I got to wait to get that. I
10 mean the rules and regulation that they have
11 enacted have put us older guys out.

12 These rules should be grandfathered
13 in. All rules and every thing and everybody all
14 the senior citizens, they give you a discount or
15 something. I mean you got to have some leeway.

16 I don't say treat me, well, I do say
17 treat me better than the man just starting five
18 years ago. I've served this city well. Now I
19 don't, what I tried to do as less as I have to
20 do. But like I said, but I need it.

21 I'll give you another example. I have
22 a brother who started me in the taxi business.

1 He had been driving a cab for 60 years. He had a
2 '99 Mercury Grand Marquis, had 25,000 miles on
3 it.

4 Okay, because he don't have a wife
5 because he lost his wife years ago. He sit in
6 the house. He gets, sometimes he likes to go out
7 and run two hours or he might want to go out one
8 day.

9 He had to go out of business because
10 he couldn't afford to paint his car, buy that
11 cruising light, buy the meters and everything to
12 operate the meters.

13 And what I'm saying, you all say you
14 don't discriminate. The rules and regulation
15 that you all have passed, you have discriminated
16 on the black drivers.

17 The reason I say that because the only
18 drivers are the black drivers, and I can give you
19 ten within the last year have, not because they
20 wanted, but they can't afford it.

21 They invest like I'm telling you about
22 my \$40,000 Lincoln. Luckily, I have paid it.

1 But if I had to go and buy a car now, I can't pay
2 for a car because I don't work.

3 I'm not able to work. I have, I can
4 go out and work a day, work three or four hours,
5 so these regulations should be grandfathered in,
6 or you all should have some consideration for
7 guys who have served the city, have served it
8 well when you didn't have all of these Ubers, all
9 of these vans.

10 We're the ones that kept the city
11 afloat. That's something that you really should
12 take under consideration. Okay?

13 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: I definitely
14 will, and I do appreciate your longevity and
15 years of service. I really do. As a native
16 Washingtonian and as a virtual native of east of
17 the river, I lived a little bit in a LeDroit in
18 my younger, younger, younger years.

19 MR. CHUBBS: Okay.

20 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: So I do
21 appreciate everything that you're saying as 41
22 years old now. As I've grown up through the city

1 and seen some of the changes in the city.

2 So I definitely hear you. My role is
3 not to nickle and dime any driver. My goal is to
4 make our system as fair and as profitable as we
5 can within the confines of the law for folks just
6 like yourself.

7 I'm not trying to push anybody out of
8 the business. Economics may do that. That's
9 just the nature of living in a capitalistic
10 society. But that is not the intention.

11 And that is not the overt rule of
12 anything that we do. Now, my general counsel is
13 informing me, and bear with me as you see him in
14 my ear. I am learning.

15 MR. CHUBBS: Okay.

16 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: I'm learning
17 the processes, learning our rules and figuring
18 out the interplay between what our rules are, how
19 it affects you and how to best serve you as a
20 Commission.

21 So I try not, please don't take it as
22 any sign of disrespect, the back and forth. But

1 he's just trying to help me to understand in what
2 I want to do, how everything comes to, how
3 everything lines up.

4 MR. CHUBBS: We appreciate you
5 allowing us the opportunity to weigh our, express
6 our concern. Previous, we couldn't do that,
7 okay. I mean, and not to cut you off, but I'm
8 going to lose my train of thought.

9 One other thing, they tell you
10 everything I try to get, I used to be active in
11 the Taxi Commission. They used to think I was a
12 commissioner.

13 I didn't miss no meeting until the
14 last administration, and I find it was a losing
15 case. It wasn't no value for me to attend. But
16 all of us, especially us senior citizens, we
17 don't have that Internet system.

18 We don't have all this stuff if you
19 want to get information, you got to go up there
20 and find out something. We don't have all that.

21 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Well, just to,
22 one thing that I had been and my attorney

1 reminded me of is one thing that I was thinking
2 of for individuals like yourself to help keep
3 some money in your pocket and to help you use the
4 asset that you paid for, that's paid off, is new
5 rules to allow you to lease your vehicle to other
6 drivers.

7 So that way at least you can have some
8 residual income. Again, it's just a thought.
9 I'm not saying that it will go that way or not,
10 but these are the types of things that I'm
11 thinking of.

12 Mr. Tapscott is saying no, don't do
13 it. But perhaps that something we can explore.
14 Again, I'm open to all ideas that might help
15 individuals like yourself, individuals like Mr.
16 Mohammad, the other one, again to make the system
17 as fair as we can.

18 Again, I'm not going to please
19 everything, so let's get that upfront. Not
20 everybody's going to be satisfied, but again, I'm
21 going to keep saying this.

22 I'm going to keep the process open,

1 let you know what I'm thinking, hear reflections
2 back and forth, and then we'll make a decision.
3 But I didn't want you to lose your thought. But
4 I wanted to get that out, so that you know.

5 MR. CHUBBS: Okay. Then one other
6 thing. It used to be a time when we made rules
7 and regulations. We made them so it was
8 beneficial to the riding public and beneficial to
9 the operators.

10 We didn't just make all rules for the
11 general riding public and thought nothing of the
12 people who was serving the general riding public,
13 and I find here lately it's not concern about us
14 workers.

15 It's just what's best for the general
16 riding public. I know we have to service. I
17 know we have to give them a service and the
18 things that they want.

19 But the way that the things are made
20 to do, it just costs us big dollars. I gets no
21 return on my dollar no more. This is the thing.
22 I gets no return, and I'm not the only one.

1 When I say me, I'm representing all of
2 my fellow drivers. But I'm really concerned
3 about the senior citizens. They're older
4 drivers, like I was telling you about my brother.

5 He had been driving cabs here for 60
6 years. It's not that he wanted to give it up.
7 He didn't have a choice. He couldn't afford it.
8 If he go out and invest all that money, I don't
9 know when he could even just recoup that money
10 back and that money we don't have.

11 We don't have the ready money to
12 invest, just same thing like I'm saying. I would
13 be happy to take my '04 out and put my '08 in,
14 which have 78,000 miles, the top of the line.

15 And I have invested for that. Now
16 they tell me no because we don't want nothing on
17 the streets that's seven years old. When they
18 started to make these regulation, the first rule
19 that they made and changed that you could drive
20 your car 500,000 because the cars are made like
21 that now.

22 Then somebody came up and said no,

1 400,000. If that rule went in effect, it
2 would've been great for us senior citizens
3 because we don't put no mileage on our cars in a
4 year to amount to anything.

5 But to tell me now my '04 need to come
6 off the street simply because it's an '04, okay,
7 and to tell me I can't put my '08 in simply
8 because it's an '08.

9 Okay. Then they say well you can get
10 a waiver. Well, here's again, cost me \$150 to
11 get the waiver. Then it costs me another \$50 at
12 the taxi office. So you're still tying my hand.

13 You're making me spend money that I
14 don't have, or you're making me spend money that
15 I can't recoup. So this is my concern.

16 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Well, I
17 definitely appreciate your service to the city.

18 MR. CHUBBS: Thank you.

19 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: And to folks
20 like me who have lived in the city forever and
21 ever. And I definitely take your thoughts into
22 consideration and anything and every rule that we

1 discuss and that we decide to put forward
2 because, again, I'm not trying to put anybody out
3 of this. I want you to work as long as you want
4 to work.

5 MR. CHUBBS: That's right.

6 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: And we're going
7 to try to make this system as fair as we can to
8 that end, all right?

9 MR. CHUBBS: See, I'm only 79. I'm a
10 young man. I'm not ready.

11 (Simultaneous speaking)

12 MR. CHUBBS: -- in the rocking chair
13 yet.

14 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: You got the
15 hair, I can tell you --

16 (Simultaneous speaking)

17 MR. CHUBBS: Yes, my hair don't match
18 the dam. I just have one more question.

19 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Yes, sir.

20 MR. CHUBBS: I know you have a lot of
21 things on your plate and a lot of things to do,
22 but previous we could talk to the Chairman.

1 The last Commission no conversation,
2 if you didn't get up there and say what you got
3 to say in two minutes or three minutes, you go up
4 on that whatever they call it, Internet or
5 whatever it is and get the information.

6 Are you going to be a closed door
7 person, or are you going to be able, are we going
8 to be able to talk with you? I know you can't
9 talk to everybody because you say look, can you
10 give me five minutes.

11 But if I have something, or to turn it
12 around, I think I can be of service if you have
13 any questions or anything that you would might
14 want to ask or say. I think I may be, I would be
15 able to fill you in on something.

16 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: I know you will
17 be.

18 MR. CHUBBS: Okay.

19 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: With 50 years
20 of service, I would hope that you could give me
21 some guidance.

22 MR. CHUBBS: Right.

1 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Been doing this
2 for 50 years.

3 MR. CHUBBS: Right.

4 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: And I'm just
5 doing it what, nine days? So yes. I do have an
6 open door policy. I'm trying to think of a new,
7 more formal way to just be present.

8 Maybe once a week I'll just sit down
9 here, unofficial meeting or what have you and
10 then for a couple hours folks just come in and
11 just talk with the Chairman.

12 Say what's on their mind. I'll tell
13 you what's on my mind because again, this is an
14 open process.

15 MR. CHUBBS: That would be a good
16 thing because all we want to do, we want to be
17 good servants because we got a lot of
18 competition. But we don't want to have to dollar
19 ourselves to death.

20 (Simultaneous speaking)

21 MR. CHUBBS: And all our dollars and
22 we get no return on our dollar.

1 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: I'm with you.

2 MR. CHUBBS: Thank you.

3 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, sir.

4 MR. CHUBBS: Thank you for your time.

5 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Chairman

6 Rogers?

7 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Yes, sir.

8 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Some of these
9 fees that he spoke of, that's the first time I
10 heard of that fee, \$150 for a reinstate. This
11 Commission had nothing to do with a lot of the
12 fees.

13 In that regard, if we had nothing to
14 do about, do with the entire, everyone who has
15 come in from the year and a half, you should
16 reevaluate. You should reevaluate them and maybe
17 replace a lot of them.

18 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, sir.
19 More questions coming? Okay, number one, well
20 no, you already had yours Mr. Momen, so you'll go
21 last. Number one, number two, number three.

22 MR. TADESSE: Hi. My name is Alame

1 Tadesse, A-L-A-M-E. Okay. I'm going to answer
2 one of your questions.

3 MS. MIXON: Please give the last name
4 also.

5 MR. TADESSE: T-A-D-E-S-S-E.

6 MS. MIXON: Speak into the mic.

7 MR. TADESSE: Okay. I'm going to
8 answer one of your questions, and I have one
9 question. Okay. You asked what is the best way
10 to communicate with us.

11 The best way to communicate with us to
12 put out newsletter every two weeks. In the past,
13 the biggest problem was information.

14 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Okay.

15 MR. TADESSE: And if you put out
16 newsletter in two weeks and put it in the
17 companies, it can, the drivers would know all the
18 new regulations, what you are thinking, and they
19 can give you input also.

20 And my second question is in the past
21 Commissioner, he has no connection with drivers
22 whatsoever. It was so confrontational in this

1 Taxi Commission.

2 I would like to know what kind of
3 management style you're going to have. Are you
4 going to treat us like small business, or are you
5 going to micromanage everything like he used to
6 do?

7 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Well, my style
8 if you haven't figured it out by now is kind of
9 talkative I guess. But it is a very, I'm a
10 collaborator. I have my own ideas.

11 I have my own approaches, but I never
12 think that anything that I come up with or would
13 think to folks, as I like to say, I have no pride
14 in authorship. We're a team.

15 So my approach is team based. I'm
16 here to serve you. That's what the statute says.
17 That's what the regulations say. So I take that
18 very seriously.

19 Will we always agree? No, but I'm
20 going to let you know I just don't agree with
21 that. I don't think it should be that way, and
22 this is my reason why.

1 And then you tell me, Eric, I don't
2 think you're right. And this is my reason why.
3 We have an honest, fruitful, productive debate
4 and we make a decision.

5 So my management style is internally
6 in the agency is I'm a, I'd like to say a nice
7 manager that I allow folks the opportunity to
8 succeed, but allowing folks the ability to
9 succeed you have to give them the ability to
10 fail.

11 I want folks to try new things. I
12 want my staff to think of new ways of doing
13 business. I want my folks to step out there, and
14 I'll support them.

15 And it's the same thing in my
16 communication and my dealings with the drivers.
17 I want you to be able to come to me. I want the
18 ability to be able to go to you and say hey, this
19 is what I'm thinking. What do you think?

20 And not have, obviously there's
21 certain times when what I say is the law and
22 rules and so on and so forth. But I want folks

1 to understand, too, that I'm not going to say a
2 daydreamer.

3 But I think a lot. And sometimes I
4 talk aloud while I'm thinking just to spark some
5 ideas and conversation so that we can get to an
6 end goal. But one thing I can't stand is going
7 back and forth, back and forth, back and forth,
8 back and forth where you know my position.

9 I know your position. We're not going
10 to change our position, and it's just a waste of
11 time. I'm about solving problems and figuring
12 out how to get things done and that method is
13 through collaboration and leadership.

14 Now, there are going to be occasions
15 where I guess by statute and by regulation where
16 I may have to do something quick, fast and easy
17 to either head off a disaster or something like
18 that, dealing with regulations and the like.

19 But in general, like we're doing now,
20 tell me what you think. I'm telling you what I
21 think, and then we'll go to work. You have a
22 small business. In my previous capacity, I was a

1 business licensing manager for the city over at
2 DCRA.

3 So I've dealt with the vendors and
4 their small business interests. I deal with
5 professionals and the professional licensing
6 administration and occupational professional
7 licensing.

8 So I'm used to dealing with small
9 business owners and their individual concerns and
10 how to mesh that into a general policy that
11 benefits all.

12 So that's what I'm going to be
13 bringing my approach here in working with all of
14 you guys here, present and the ones who aren't
15 present. So if you see me on the street, make
16 sure you pick me up.

17 And say hey, Chairman Rogers, saw you
18 walking. Do you want a ride? I'll pay the fare
19 because I want to rap to you. I want to tell you
20 what's on my mind. That's fine.

21 I keep giving out my email, so I'll
22 give it out again. Send me emails. I've got two

1 homes now to accept emails, and neither one of
2 these are personal. These are both government
3 emails, government funded.

4 Let me know what you think. Send me
5 an email. So again, it's Eric, E-R-I-C dot
6 Rogers2@DC.gov. And Rogers is spelled like Mr.
7 Rogers, Roy Rogers, Buck Rogers, basically no D
8 in the name.

9 And then we can communicate, but like
10 I said, we're not always going to agree. As long
11 as you come with that expectation and
12 understanding that I'm not always going to agree
13 with you.

14 You're not always going to agree with
15 me, but we're going to be professional and
16 respectful with each other, we'll do business all
17 day long.

18 MR. TADESSE: Okay. I have two more
19 short things. I also write for a newspaper. I'm
20 from Ethiopia. Would you be able to give me time
21 for an interview?

22 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Certainly.

1 MR. TADESSE: Okay, so I will email.

2 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Okay.

3 MR. TADESSE: And my other last
4 thought is on the price. My thought on the price
5 is we cannot reduce price in this condition, but
6 we have to look for a way to cut our expenses.

7 Maybe you should think that way
8 because while so much expenses, so we can talk
9 about that.

10 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: I'll definitely
11 look at that.

12 MR. TADESSE: Thank you so much.

13 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Looking at some
14 of the fee --

15 (Simultaneous speaking)

16 MR. TADESSE: Yes.

17 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Okay. And my
18 general counsel is telling me that we have some
19 pending rules to lower some of our administrative
20 fees.

21 MR. TADESSE: Very good.

22 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: So I have to

1 look at that and see exactly how it is laid out.

2 MR. TADESSE: Yes, we can help on that
3 because we are on the streets all the time. We
4 know what's happening.

5 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: But I need you
6 all to be my allies.

7 MR. TADESSE: Yes, instead of
8 increasing the price because with Uber, there's
9 \$3 difference. So if you increase on top of that
10 \$3 difference, it would be difficult.

11 But if we see how we can reduce the
12 price, our expenses like maybe pay us pay
13 expenses. It could be our paperwork or ticket,
14 whatever. We can compete, and we can think about
15 that.

16 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Let's discuss
17 it.

18 MR. TADESSE: Thank you so much.

19 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: You have my
20 email, so send me an email when you want to set
21 up the interview.

22 MR. TADESSE: How soon can you do it?

1 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Like I said
2 earlier, since I'm kind of new, my schedule's
3 kind of open.

4 MR. TADESSE: Very good.

5 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: But talk with
6 our PIO. He's not here right now, Neville
7 Waters. Send me an email. I'll forward it to
8 him. He'll square away everything.

9 MR. TADESSE: I know him.

10 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: You know him.
11 Okay. Then speak with him. We'll square up some
12 time, and we'll do it.

13 MR. TADESSE: Very good. That was
14 number two. You already got to speak, got to let
15 these other folks speak. Number two and then
16 number three and then four and then we'll close
17 it out with you. Okay? Is that fair? All
18 right.

19 MR. CHAKA: Welcome, Mr. Commissioner.

20 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you.

21 MR. CHAKA: My name is Assafa Chaka,
22 A-S-S-A-F-A and Chaka like Chaka Khan. I have

1 one question, one suggestion and one wish. The
2 question is about the dispatch system as we're
3 required.

4 Each company is required now for this
5 year, 6 percent of his fleet will be wheelchair
6 accessible. And along that I think there's a
7 dispatch system requirement.

8 Are we now constantly required to have
9 a central dispatch, which is a front dispatch
10 system? Each company, is it required to have
11 that with the dispatch wheelchair accessible?
12 That's my question. Okay.

13 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: So while he's
14 checking --

15 MR. CHAKA: I can continue, yes. My
16 suggestion is about the customer service, on the
17 customer service.

18 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Want to hear
19 the answer, or do you want to --

20 MR. CHAKA: Okay.

21 MR. LERNER: Go ahead and actually
22 you're finishing your second part, if you want to

1 --

2 MR. CHAKA: That's okay.

3 MR. LERNER: Okay. On the subject of
4 the wheelchair percentages, any questions will be
5 directed to Mr. John Scott, the Chief of
6 Operations.

7 And as to central dispatch, the
8 statute requires central dispatch, which we
9 interpret as either a digital dispatch or
10 telephone dispatch.

11 If you're talking about dispatch for
12 all wheelchair accessible vehicles, that's not
13 been reflected in rulemaking yet. Whether that
14 is or not will be up to, or how it gets handled I
15 believe may be a statutory requirement, is
16 something that the Commission would have to look
17 at for appropriate rulemaking in the future.

18 MR. CHAKA: All right, thank you.
19 Thank you. My suggestion about the customer
20 service is, as you said, we have some
21 mistreatments at the front desk.

22 And I don't want to say in general

1 that all customer service employees are like
2 that, but we like to see a name tag on the
3 employees.

4 And we can positively or if we have
5 complaints, we can specifically direct our
6 complaints or appreciations to you. So we need
7 some tags on the employees.

8 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: That's a good
9 suggestion.

10 MR. CHAKA: The other one is my wish.
11 My wish is for the cab drivers. I feel like all
12 of the cab drivers, I feel that we are not well
13 or as it should be. We are not well represented
14 in the Commission.

15 And so Commissioner, if we have extra
16 seat, or I want you to think about that. We need
17 a current driver representative who really knows
18 the real problem on the road who can communicate
19 with all cab drivers, who working from the bottom
20 up with suggestions and on the regulation
21 represent us.

22 We need someone from bottom to be

1 represented as a seat with you.

2 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: We have two.

3 MR. CHAKA: I know. I have, but
4 extras. That's my wish. If there is extra seat
5 with Mr. Stanley we need someone with a current
6 driver with him to be here to show our part.
7 That's my suggestion. Thank you.

8 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Well, if I'm
9 not mistaken, there is a vacancy on the
10 Commission. I could be wrong. I think it is an
11 industry. It is an industry person.

12 So what you can do is contact the
13 Mayor's Office of Boards and Commissions. They
14 have a website. It's obc.dc.gov. They actually
15 have an application form online.

16 So you can fill out the application
17 form for the board that you would like to sit on.
18 And then they do whatever review that they do and
19 contact you and say bring you in for an
20 interview.

21 I think you have to go through a
22 vetting process, taxes and all that type of

1 stuff. And then your name gets put forward to
2 the Mayor because it is a mayoral appointee.

3 It gets put forward to the Mayor to
4 make a determination. So it's obc.dc.gov, Office
5 of Boards and Commissions, and apply. And I
6 extend that invitation to any driver.

7 They're obviously residency
8 requirements. I should know this, but I don't
9 know this. I don't know if every member of this
10 board has to be a resident or just a member of
11 the industry.

12 But they can inform you of all those
13 requirements and the like. So please, it seems
14 like you're very interested in it, so why don't
15 you go ahead and try?

16 MR. CHAKA: I'm not suggesting
17 personally, but I feel like --

18 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Okay.

19 MR. CHAKA: -- a couple of us want to
20 be expressed, their viewpoint.

21 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Okay.

22 MR. CHAKA: Thank you.

1 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you,
2 appreciate it. The brother that was over there
3 in the corner. Thank you. Come on up. He'll be
4 our second to last one and then he'll be our last
5 one. Okay.

6 MR. RAZZAQ: Hi.

7 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: How are you?

8 MR. RAZZAQ: My name is Abdul Razzaq,
9 and I'm driving from --

10 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Spell your last
11 name.

12 MS. MIXON: Spell it, please.

13 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Spell your name
14 for the record.

15 MR. RAZZAQ: Abdul, A-B-D-U-L, and
16 last name is R-A-Z-Z-A-Q. And I'm driving from
17 2003. And my car got in accident in late 2006,
18 and it was declared totaled.

19 So I surrendered the tags, and after
20 that I tried several times. And I followed the
21 rules, but I've never been able to get the tags
22 back. And the company suggested me that you can

1 get the tag in another name, and they just, your
2 tags.

3 And I'm paying every single thing for
4 those tags from 2007, early 2007. And then from
5 the last few weeks I received a phone call, and I
6 have the message in my phone.

7 And they told me that we decided to
8 take \$50 from you every week from previous week,
9 and they have not given us any letter, anything.
10 And now they are charging \$3400 a year. And just
11 few days --

12 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: For what, if
13 you don't mind me asking?

14 (Off microphone discussion)

15 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Oh, the union.
16 Okay.

17 MR. RAZZAQ: And just few days when
18 they started charging me, just a few days back I
19 paid \$500 something for the tags. So the
20 collaboration of cab companies and with the Cab
21 Commission, in the last few years until very
22 recently, I can give you the names and tag

1 numbers.

2 Those were issued to, the drivers were
3 very new drivers. And tags are issued to them,
4 and if you check on that, you will see the
5 hundreds of examples of that, hundreds of them.

6 And that's between the collaboration
7 of Cab Commission and cab companies. And now I
8 don't know like should I tell it to the
9 inspector, bring it up to you, but I have a few
10 examples.

11 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Well, you've
12 told me, but if you do feel that the Commission
13 or an employee of the Commission has done
14 something illegal or improper, I invite you to, I
15 almost direct you to go to the Office of the
16 Inspector General and make a note --

17 MR. RAZZAQ: Okay. I will.

18 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: -- because we
19 need to run a clean operation.

20 MR. RAZZAQ: Sure.

21 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: It may be that
22 there was a misunderstanding of the rules and the

1 like. Maybe we didn't communicate it clearly
2 enough, and people kind of got caught up.

3 But if you have evidence of
4 malfeasance, misfeasance or any improper
5 handling, let the Inspector General know. Let me
6 know because, like I said, I'm not running a
7 crooked ship.

8 We have port. We've already set sail,
9 and we're going to reach our destination with no
10 tidal waves.

11 (Simultaneous speaking)

12 MR. RAZZAQ: It is hundreds in number,
13 hundreds --

14 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Okay. Do that
15 for me. Do this for me. My email is Eric, E-R-
16 I-C dot Rogers2.

17 MR. RAZZAQ: Can I have your card
18 please?

19 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: I'm so new I
20 don't even have cards yet. That's why I just
21 keep saying it over and over again. But Eric, E-
22 R-I-C dot Rogers2@dc.gov. Send me all the

1 information that you have.

2 MR. RAZZAQ: Okay.

3 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Okay?

4 MR. RAZZAQ: Okay.

5 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Appreciate
6 that, brother.

7 MR. RAZZAQ: Yes, thank you.

8 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Second to last
9 and then you. You might as well sit over there
10 so that folks know that you're ready.

11 (Off microphone discussion)

12 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Yes, sir.

13 MR. MAHNINE: Good afternoon ladies
14 and gentlemen. My name is Yusuf Mahnine, M-A-H-
15 N-I-N-E. And I'm a taxi driver. So the reason
16 I'm here, so I'm going to talk about the same
17 problem he has.

18 So I'm driving with a company, and
19 after 2006, there is new rules. Everybody has to
20 be with a company to drive a taxi, because we
21 live in Virginia.

22 So I have to be under a company to get

1 the tax, it's me and the owner of the company.
2 Both of us are on the checks. So recently, so I
3 was surprised that the owner of the company, he
4 told me to have, I have to pay him \$50 extra for
5 the tags.

6 I mean I told him is this a new rule
7 by the Commission, DC Cab Commission or just you
8 come and did that. So I said you didn't give us
9 any note. And he didn't give me an answer.

10 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: What company
11 are you with?

12 MR. MAHNINE: Lincoln. So I'm driving
13 Lincoln 60. So he did not give me the insurance.

14 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: No, the name of
15 the company, not your car, the name of your
16 company.

17 (Simultaneous speaking)

18 MR. MAHNINE: Lincoln's also --

19 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: The Lincoln
20 Company? Okay. I'm sorry, sir.

21 MR. MAHNINE: So, I want to buy the
22 insurance, and they denied to give me the

1 insurance. They say unless you pay the \$50,
2 we're not going to give you the insurance.

3 So I try first time, second time,
4 third time, and I say give me something. Show me
5 that it's legal, I will pay you the \$50. Is it
6 all the company's doing that, or just you?

7 So I went and I check with other
8 companies. They're not doing it. So what
9 happened yesterday, so they call me in the
10 morning and they said bring me the tag.

11 If you're not going to pay the
12 insurance, bring us the tag. I said the tag
13 doesn't belong to you. I get it from the DMV. I
14 pay all the fees. I pay everything, so I'm going
15 to return them to the DMV.

16 So by 9 o'clock yesterday I went
17 outside to get something from my car, the tags
18 are gone. They stole the tag from my taxi
19 yesterday. So I don't know what to do.

20 I mean, they just have their own
21 regulation. So they do whatever they want. And
22 there is nobody to protect us. I'm going to go

1 back to the same issue you was talking about.

2 So you asked for evidence. So like he
3 said, after 2006 everybody was driving, after
4 2006 he's supposed to be with a company. So
5 there is his name and the name company on the
6 registration.

7 So many of the drivers now, many of
8 them, they pay money to get their name, only
9 their name on the registration, which is illegal.

10 MALE PARTICIPANT: I got a problem
11 with the same company.

12 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead. I'm
13 listening.

14 MR. MAHNINE: Yes, I'm sorry.

15 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: No, go ahead.
16 You're just trying to give me some history,
17 background so that I understand your condition.
18 Yes, sir.

19 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: Is Lincoln
20 with Schaeffer?

21 MR. MAHNINE: Yes. I'm not sure. I
22 heard they merged, but I went to him and I ask

1 him. Did you merge with him? He said no. He
2 show me a lease. Schaeffer is the landlord, and
3 him is the leaser.

4 So he show me the paper. He sit only
5 the Lincoln. Part of the Universal and the other
6 one, he sold them to Schaeffer, but Lincoln's
7 still under his name.

8 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: Lincoln is
9 owned by Schaeffer now. You need to check that.

10 MR. MAHNINE: But I went to him, and
11 I talked to him. I said did you sell the
12 company. He said no. He show me a paper with
13 his name signing as tenant and Schaeffer --

14 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: Go to
15 Schaeffer and see if Schaeffer don't own the
16 company now, and maybe you can better resolve it.

17 MR. MAHNINE: But it's him who's
18 calling me all the time, Saleem. I mean Lincoln
19 Company, Saleem, he's the one who's calling me
20 asking me for the tags.

21 I say the tag doesn't belong to you.
22 It's my name. It's yours. You have to clear my

1 name at least if you want to get the tag back.

2 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Yes, because it
3 sounds to me that you're crossing into a
4 contractual dispute. You may have to engage an
5 attorney.

6 If you send me an email, I can give
7 you a link to the DC Pro Bono Clinic that helps
8 small business owners for free. It's free.
9 They'll give you some legal advice.

10 In general, in dealing with this
11 particular policy issue with these tags for 2006
12 forward and the like, that's why I've remanded it
13 to the panel on industry to look at how --

14 (Simultaneous speaking)

15 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Oh, I'm sorry.
16 That's why I remanded this whole H-tag issue to
17 the panel on industry to solve it, to figure it
18 out because I'm not going to make a decision now
19 without an informed --

20 MR. MAHNINE: Oh, sure.

21 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: -- information
22 from folks like yourself and the like. But in

1 your immediate situation with your immediate
2 problem, send me an email.

3 I'll put your in touch with some free
4 resources in the city who can help you determine
5 whether or not you have a private right of action
6 against your Lincoln Cab Company and the like.

7 And definitely as I'm doing my
8 deliberations on new rules and regs and how, what
9 our regulatory posture's going to be like going
10 forward, I'll definitely keep these comments in
11 mind because the one thing that bothers me are
12 people taking advantage of hardworking folks.

13 MR. MAHNINE: Yes.

14 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Now, the folks
15 have to do what they're supposed to do. I got
16 that, but in general, the rules of the game
17 should be clear to you so that you can make the
18 best decision on whether or not you want to be a
19 cabbie, how you want to conduct your small
20 business.

21 So that is what I do promise you, that
22 after we go through this exercise, the rules of

1 the game will be very clear. The customer
2 service downstairs will be efficient and the
3 like.

4 If possible, and if necessary, maybe
5 we can to the degree possible, reduce some of
6 your administrative burden, fees and stuff that
7 we charge and the like.

8 As the gentleman said, Mr. Chubbs
9 said, to balance out the amount of money that you
10 make. But I feel for you. I really do.

11 But right now that's the best I can do
12 is give you those resources so that you can
13 engage a private attorney, hopefully for free or
14 at minimal cost.

15 MR. MAHNINE: Yes, because that's the
16 only source of income I have. I'm married. I
17 have two kids. I'm full-time student. I'm going
18 for my Bachelor's Degree. I'm Senior, so I have
19 --

20 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS:
21 Congratulations.

22 MR. MAHNINE: Yes.

1 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: What are you
2 studying?

3 MR. MAHNINE: Accounting.

4 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Okay.

5 MR. MAHNINE: So I'm going to graduate
6 in May. So he took the tags yesterday, so I have
7 no job now. I don't know what to do. So it's
8 hard situation for me.

9 So that's why I came today.
10 Fortunately, so they told me there's a meeting
11 going on here, so I came in.

12 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: But also speak
13 with, where's John? John around?

14 MR. LERNER: John popped out.

15 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Our operations
16 guy, maybe he can, on your behalf, make an
17 inquiry to the company to get some clarity to at
18 least explain their reasoning, their logic, their
19 authority to do what they did.

20 MR. MAHNINE: I'm not sure that they
21 have right to take it because I pay for
22 everything.

1 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: No, I got you.
2 Let him kind of be your go between.

3 (Simultaneous speaking)

4 MR. MAHNINE: Yes, and the second
5 issue he stated is the 2006 and up drivers. Why
6 some drivers they have everything under their
7 name, and we don't have that option, sir?

8 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: And that's why
9 I've remanded that --

10 MR. MAHNINE: I know so many drivers,
11 my friends, and they have names on their, only
12 their name and address on the, and they not
13 supposed to have that.

14 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: What has
15 happened there is, if I've been driving, okay,
16 where do you live?

17 MR. MAHNINE: Virginia.

18 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: That's the
19 problem, sir. A lot of these companies request
20 the drivers living out of the city to sign their
21 title over to them, which is illegal. You should
22 never sign your title over to them. You

1 should've known that.

2 MR. MAHNINE: That's what I'm saying.
3 It's illegal, so that's why I didn't want to do
4 it. So, but thank you so much.

5 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Yes, no
6 problem. Mr. Scott is, I saw him pop in and pop
7 out, but definitely talk with him about your
8 particular issue.

9 And he can maybe call Lincoln, find
10 out precisely what's going on at least for the
11 Commission's sake. Find out what's going on so
12 that at the very least, find out whether or not,
13 to see whether or not what they did complies with
14 our regulations or not.

15 If it complies with our regulations,
16 then you may have --

17 MR. MAHNINE: Yes, I asked him this
18 question, and he didn't answer.

19 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Well, let us
20 ask the question.

21 MR. MAHNINE: Yes, I said is this --

22 (Simultaneous speaking)

1 MR. MAHNINE: I'll pay you \$50. If
2 it's, look if it's all the companies paying \$50,
3 all the drivers, I will pay \$50. But if it's
4 not, I'm not going to pay you.

5 He say if you don't pay me, you're not
6 going to get the insurance. They don't want to
7 sell me the insurance.

8 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: I understand.

9 (Simultaneous speaking)

10 MR. MAHNINE: There's nothing I can
11 do.

12 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Talk to my man
13 so that we can find out for the Commission, so I
14 can find out. So he'll call on my behalf, on
15 your behalf and my behalf to find out and explain
16 to you this is why they did it.

17 And it's legal or it's not legal. If
18 it's not legal, then obviously we have under
19 Title 31 to do something. If it's legal, then
20 you may have to avail yourself or your private
21 fare.

22 MR. MAHNINE: Okay. Thank you so

1 much, Mr. Commissioner.

2 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: I appreciate
3 it.

4 MR. MAHNINE: Thank you very much.

5 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: And the last
6 man. Okay, well it's not first meeting. Go
7 ahead. It's got to be two minutes.

8 (Simultaneous speaking)

9 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Oh, you already
10 spoke? Oh yes, that's right. You did already
11 speak. So go ahead and then you can go one more
12 time, and then we're going to shut it down.
13 Clear? No, no, no.

14 (Off microphone discussion)

15 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: It's fine.
16 It's a public hearing, and people want to talk,
17 I'm here.

18 MR. GEBRESELASSIE: Thank you.
19 Actually, I need to describe a lot of things,
20 which is like we on our Teamster Association we
21 represent more than 2000 drivers.

22 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: And remind me

1 your name.

2 MR. GEBRESELASSIE: My name is Addis.

3 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Addis. All
4 right.

5 MR. GEBRESELASSIE: Yes, unfortunately
6 it's a lot of issues are came now after lot of
7 drivers, they have a lot of issues. One thing
8 you have to understand, clearly there is a lot of
9 issues are going on.

10 The system that you are going in is
11 not like that you are expected. It is a lot of
12 issues. For instance, we found out more than 700
13 tags are issued after, wasn't that the last four
14 years, which is like we couldn't trust them,
15 where they are go.

16 And it is a lot of issues. You have
17 to understand it is not about the legal issue or
18 the public's needs. One thing you have to
19 understand is what is the problem.

20 For instance, okay previously there
21 was a PSM provide us our, like more than nine PSM
22 providers are have a license to provide, to

1 collect that \$0.25. Unfortunately, two of them
2 get bankrupt.

3 When they do bankrupt, unfortunately
4 the Taxicab Commission knows how they are getting
5 their license. One of them is Glikey (phonetic).
6 More than 1000 drivers, they are not get their
7 money back.

8 They lost their money. Even the
9 government not even collecting their \$0.25.
10 Unfortunately, the buck stopped somewhere. What
11 it does worse is when we come to ask the
12 Commission, they just told us that okay, Glikey
13 is not working with us anymore.

14 They are bankrupt. They file
15 bankruptcy. So the driver lost their money.
16 Now, this gentleman he have, unfortunately when
17 he park his car that tag is belong to the driver
18 and the company owner.

19 The only thing the company owners own
20 that tag is because their company is in DC,
21 registered in DC. So the title is belong to the
22 driver. The tag belongs to the driver.

1 They use the company, but now as you
2 heard, some of them they required to pay them
3 \$50, but unfortunately most companies are taking
4 advantage of because of the system by itself.

5 If you ask some of them, they just
6 come and talk to you on your ear. That's, he
7 just will have to want to hear. But you have to
8 understand what is the driver's issue is.

9 How many of them are, return their tag
10 and then are not get them back? But how many of
11 them are issued? More than 700 tags are out, not
12 for these drivers. Some of the tags even not
13 even exist on the street.

14 But the actual thing, you have to put
15 your humanity first. You have to listen. It is
16 not like engage, don't put yourself on that box
17 again. Just come out from that box.

18 Listen to that drivers, what is the
19 problem is. How are we going to solve it? It is
20 a lot of issues. It is a lot of people, their
21 hand is in there. So don't quote on a meter.

22 There is a lot of issues now. We can

1 discuss in days comes. So I really warn you for
2 that because it is not about the law. For
3 instance, the drivers knows about five years to
4 get in, seven years to get out until recently.

5 Who's benefit out of it? The drivers
6 get hurt. Even when you go to work for Uber,
7 Uber allowed ten years of car. Now the driver
8 forced before your car note end, you are out of
9 the service.

10 Who's going to get benefit out of
11 this? What kind of law is that? You, okay, for
12 instance they just told you, you need to listen,
13 100 miles. If I want to buy a car, it have to be
14 less than 100 miles.

15 Even the age is required. How much
16 it's going to cost to the driver? How much it's
17 cost the old man that they told you about the
18 story of it? So, who is benefit out of it?

19 More regulation for the drivers but
20 less money because the competition over there is
21 killing the drivers. They are now making \$5 an
22 hour now. But they don't have anywhere to go.

1 You need to understand it. Come out
2 of the box and listen to the drivers. What is
3 the problem is? You will find a lot. Trust me.
4 Thank you.

5 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: I appreciate
6 that. Final saying. You've got two minutes, and
7 I'm holding you to it.

8 MR. MOMEN: Okay.

9 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: One minute, 59,
10 one minute, 58.

11 MR. MOMEN: Okay. My name again is
12 Mohammad Momen. One of my other concerns is,
13 sir, if you could look to regarding the DCTC or
14 regarding our one signature.

15 Those poor cab driver pay \$50. I'm
16 not asking you to reduce the price, but I'm
17 asking you if you can concern to take it out that
18 \$50. Why they have to pay for one signature,
19 \$50?

20 Does the signature cost \$50? I don't
21 think so. Why my signature cost \$50? Thank you
22 very much.

1 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: You're welcome.
2 Thank you, sir. Okay. Well, it's definitely
3 been a fruitful meeting for me. It's definitely
4 been eye opening, and I appreciate everyone that
5 took the time to come down here, express your
6 comments.

7 They haven't fallen on deaf ears. I'm
8 like a sponge, so I will definitely take all of
9 the comments that have been made today into
10 consideration as we move forward.

11 But again, I'm going to keep saying
12 this. I'm going to tell you this until I'm not
13 in this job and probably until the day I die.
14 This is a public process.

15 So when we put the call out for folks
16 to come and testify and participate and do it in
17 a public way, I need you guys to be as vocal and
18 as passionate where it really counts.

19 When the decisions are made and as we
20 start putting forward proposals and proposed
21 rules and the like, I need to hear from you
22 because like I said, I'm giving them the

1 opportunity to do it.

2 Let's do it. Let's work together
3 because I don't want to have a back and forth. I
4 don't want to say well, back in 2015 Chairman
5 Rogers said, no, no, no, no.

6 Chairman Rogers was very clear. Here
7 are the rules of the game. Make a business
8 decision. You want to play by the rules or not.
9 Now, the rules of the game, we're all going to
10 figure out together so it's beneficial for all.

11 But again, it's a participatory sport,
12 democracy is. It's a democratic process that may
13 or may not benefit you. I'm not promising that
14 everything that we're going to do is going to
15 benefit you.

16 It'll benefit the industry as a whole,
17 but not necessarily each individual driver. So I
18 want you to come into any of the meetings, any
19 conversations you have with me with that in mind.

20 I have an open mind. I'll definitely
21 bend as much as I can to whatever particular
22 point of view that you feel the Commission should

1 go. But I want to make this abundantly clear
2 that not every suggestion is going to be done.

3 Not every one of my suggestions will
4 be done because I have to get enough votes to do
5 it. So they may say oh, Eric, you're crazy. No,
6 no, we ain't doing that.

7 But as long as you keep the faith and
8 participate in this process, I think we can do
9 some wonderful things. So with that, are there
10 any additional comments by the commissioners?

11 COMMISSIONER SMALLS: I'm just happy
12 to see the participation I've seen today.

13 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you,
14 Commissioner Smalls.

15 COMMISSIONER SMALLS: Thank you
16 everybody who had the courage to get up to speak
17 today. Give yourselves a round of applause
18 because it was really wonderful.

19 This is the first time I've seen this,
20 and I'd like to thank all the cab drivers who
21 stepped forward to speak --

22 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Appreciate

1 that.

2 COMMISSIONER SMALLS: -- because it
3 took a lot of courage.

4 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: Commissioners,
5 anything? Commissioner Muhammad?

6 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Nothing.

7 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: You sure? All
8 right.

9 COMMISSIONER MUHAMMAD: Thank you
10 everyone for coming out.

11 INTERIM CHAIR ROGERS: All right,
12 well, with that, this meeting is adjourned.

13 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
14 went off the record at 12:56 p.m.)

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A	Abraham 49:17 60:2	affiliated 37:16	anybody 39:10 113:7
\$0 98:15	absent 18:7	afford 61:22 80:22 82:7	119:2
\$0.25 155:1,9	Absolutely 39:6	87:10 108:18 111:10	anymore 54:9 80:18
\$0.85 102:3	abundantly 161:1	111:20 117:7	81:5 86:4 100:17
\$1 95:21	abuse 33:3 41:3	affordability 89:3	108:18 155:13
\$10 102:4	accept 128:1	affordable 89:17	Anytime 76:1
\$10,000 86:1 87:12	accepts 26:8	afforded 67:3	anyway 72:6
\$100 85:22	access 40:3 71:18 74:7	afloat 112:11	appeal 2:11 16:18 17:3
\$1000 109:18	accesses 40:12	afoul 95:14	86:20
\$11.50 104:16	accessible 10:10 39:19	afternoon 141:13	appear 91:10
\$12,000 87:13	45:4,9 47:11 66:13	age 87:12 89:2 107:11	applause 161:17
\$120,000 86:1	67:4 68:5,16 132:6,11	108:2,6,7,7 157:15	applicable 15:8
\$15 104:14	133:12	agency 34:15 125:6	application 135:15,16
\$150 118:10 122:10	accident 137:17	agency's 8:10	applications 43:10
\$150,000 86:1	accommodate 38:10	agenda 11:10,11 19:18	applied 50:18
\$200 61:10,20	accomplished 58:4	75:16 78:3,7 79:2,10	apply 31:5 136:5
\$22,000 87:11	account 71:17	ago 50:5 97:21 100:1	appointee 136:2
\$25 11:20 14:1	Accounting 149:3	100:10 110:18 111:5	appointment 75:22,22
\$250 61:14	accusation 34:9	agree 18:10 124:19,20	appreciate 7:1 36:14,14
\$3 130:9,10	accusations 34:8 35:10	128:10,12,14	49:6 51:9 59:1 62:6
\$3400 138:10	achieve 8:7	ahead 85:16 132:21	62:10 76:1 112:14,21
\$35 11:19 12:1 14:4	act 23:18 24:4,21 25:4,5	136:15 144:12,15	114:4 118:17 137:2
\$40,000 109:14 111:22	53:10,14 82:19	153:7,11	141:5 153:2 158:5
\$400 81:6 82:7,9 86:5	100:12	ain't 161:6	159:4 161:22
\$5 157:21	action 30:2 147:5	airline 93:14	appreciated 62:17
\$5.12 110:3,8	actions 26:6	airport 72:8,15 89:13	appreciations 134:6
\$5.14 110:5	active 114:10	Alame 122:22	approach 105:15
\$50 82:9 118:11 138:8	actual 13:12 23:1 83:16	allies 130:6	124:15 127:13
142:4 143:1,5 152:1,2	156:14	allow 17:8,13 33:10	approaches 124:11
152:3 156:3 158:15	adapt 53:6,7 54:16	34:7 46:18 84:10	appropriate 10:3,13
158:18,19,20,21	55:13 56:6 58:7 89:18	91:19 95:10 115:5	18:14 34:15 43:4
\$500 138:19	adapting 58:8	125:7	106:14 133:17
\$8.28 110:6	added 40:22	allowed 83:10 107:10	appropriately 20:4
\$800 61:21	Addis 37:6,11,12 154:2	157:7	54:21 89:1
A-B 73:20	154:3	allowing 27:14,15	approve 13:21 14:2,18
A-B-D-U-L 137:15	addition 17:6 46:14	114:5 125:8	16:16 84:16 86:6
A-B-E-B 73:16	additional 46:12 94:20	aloud 126:4	approved 11:17 47:3
A-B-E-B-E 73:20	95:6,22 107:15	altered 24:20	80:15 98:2
A-B-R-A-H-A-M 49:21	161:10	alternate 103:9	arbitrary 29:13
A-D-D-I-S 37:11	Additionally 50:15	amazed 108:16	area 70:11 99:8,8
A-D-I 73:21	address 37:20 100:6,20	amend 15:6 29:10 30:8	areas 42:17 46:1
A-L-A-M-E 123:1	150:12	amended 11:10 74:21	argument 84:7
A-S-S-A-F-A 131:22	addresses 77:12	amendment 15:11	Arlington 93:4
a.m 1:10 3:2	adjourned 162:12	23:17,18 82:19	armed 36:6
AAA 100:3	Adjournment 2:19	amendments 25:5	asked 123:9 144:2
ABADI 73:16,20 75:7	adjustment 106:15	America 85:3 93:6	151:17
77:18 78:6,12,17 79:4	administration 8:5	American 56:5	asking 85:12 90:8
79:17	114:14 127:6	amount 87:13 95:5	138:13 145:20 158:16
Abdul 137:8,15	administrative 129:19	118:4 148:9	158:17
Abebe 73:16	148:6	amplification 68:10	aspect 42:21 57:12
ability 10:11 26:5 32:5	administratively 46:19	amplify 67:15	aspects 24:14,17
32:7 56:4 125:8,9,18	adopted 20:8 50:21	announcement 9:9	Assafa 131:21
able 48:2 53:21 102:16	advantage 147:12	annual 105:17	asset 115:4
112:3 120:7,8,15	156:4	answer 23:8 24:8 28:21	assets 72:19,20
125:17,18 128:20	advertisements 102:20	75:5 86:14 123:1,8	association 37:7,16
137:21	advice 146:9	132:19 142:9 151:18	38:2 46:8 61:18 76:9
abolished 100:13,15	aesthetics 89:5	answered 76:4	153:20
above-entitled 162:13	affect 25:6	ANTHONY 1:14	associations 8:19

Assuming 30:2
assure 4:21
attachment 76:14
attend 114:15
Attendees 2:17
attention 49:5 71:6
attorney 31:12 114:22
 146:5 148:13
Auditor 34:14
authorities 26:2 28:2
authority 22:11 25:21
 26:11,16 32:19 54:21
 82:14 84:9,12 86:11
 149:19
authorship 124:14
automatically 107:14
automobile 99:22
avail 152:20
available 15:1 23:19
 76:2 98:4 109:2
Avenue 70:20 71:13
aware 22:13 71:8 77:6
aye 12:11
eyes 12:12

B

B 54:15 104:15
Bachelor's 148:18
back 20:5 35:7 43:17
 45:5 50:8 58:1 60:11
 60:15 61:2,4 62:3
 71:21 73:3 84:19 87:7
 89:12 91:20 94:10
 97:11 109:6 113:22
 116:2 117:10 126:7,7
 126:7,8 137:22
 138:18 144:1 146:1
 155:7 156:10 160:3,4
background 32:19
 33:20 144:17
backgrounds 32:18
backward 100:8
bad 32:3,18
balance 89:3 101:16
 148:9
Baltimore 70:15 72:16
bank 67:7
bankrupt 155:2,3,14
bankruptcy 155:15
barred 36:22
base 89:6
based 124:15
baseless 34:8 35:10
basic 87:21,22
basically 128:7
bear 20:2 113:13
beauty 104:22
behalf 37:6,15 149:16

152:14,15,15
behold 103:1
believe 12:14 23:21
 24:22 46:15 47:3
 53:20 95:20 97:15
 102:2 105:5 133:15
believer 5:8
believes 8:11
belong 143:13 145:21
 155:17,21
belongs 155:22
bend 160:21
beneficial 56:19 116:8
 116:8 160:10
benefit 32:11 87:8
 157:5,10,18 160:13
 160:15,16
benefits 54:11 67:2
 127:11
best 53:6,22 54:1 58:9
 68:3 76:22 77:7,8,17
 77:19 89:15 105:13
 113:19 116:15 123:9
 123:11 147:18 148:11
beta 53:11
better 39:13 43:12 55:4
 104:5 110:17 145:16
BETTY 1:14
beyond 76:3
big 80:19,20 81:2,6,20
 82:2 87:13,13 116:20
biggest 123:13
bit 20:10 45:16 103:5
 112:17
biweekly 77:13
black 22:2 111:16,18
board 36:18,19 80:7
 135:17 136:10
Boards 135:13 136:5
Bono 146:7
book 29:10 32:10
bothers 147:11
bottom 53:19 55:9
 57:15 134:19,22
bought 109:8,12
Bowser 5:2
box 57:5 156:16,17
 158:2
brakes 99:22
brand 109:12
bring 38:8 71:6 87:6
 135:19 139:9 143:10
 143:12
bringing 49:4 127:13
broke 90:2
broken 31:1
brother 67:10 110:22
 117:4 137:2 141:6

brought 71:8
bubbling 63:1,7
buck 128:7 155:10
building 107:8
burden 148:6
Bureau 34:11
burn 73:1
Burns 3:16 12:17 14:7
 16:3 19:6
business 4:9 5:21 6:11
 7:11 41:8,22 42:9
 44:21 55:16 66:20,21
 67:2 82:4,5 103:13,19
 105:9,18 108:14
 110:22 111:9 113:8
 124:4 125:13 126:22
 127:1,4,9 128:16
 146:8 147:20 160:7
businesses 55:17
businessmen 95:11
buy 65:19 74:1,13
 80:19,22 82:7,8,9
 85:20 87:10,11
 111:10,11 112:1
 142:21 157:13
buying 70:4
bye 73:11,11

C

C-O-N-T-E-N-T-S 2:1
cab 5:19 25:12 27:11
 32:20 35:20 44:21
 46:2 49:22 50:2,7
 51:14 67:1 69:17 70:2
 74:13 77:19 79:21
 80:10,10 81:7 82:6
 85:1,13 87:9 93:2,6
 93:11,12 94:6 96:18
 97:6 105:22 107:6
 109:9 111:1 134:11
 134:12,19 137:17
 138:20,20 139:7,7
 142:7 147:6 158:15
 161:20
cabbie 147:19
cabs 50:19 74:5,9 76:13
 117:5
call 2:2,3 3:6,14 11:12
 13:18 16:2 19:5 23:13
 25:14 37:11 47:20
 49:7 75:21 79:11
 81:16 120:4 138:5
 143:9 151:9 152:14
 159:15
called 8:18 17:4 82:20
 103:2
calling 35:10 145:18,19
cap 71:19

capacity 126:22
capitalistic 113:9
capitalized 102:19
caps 15:12,13 40:7
car 45:22 58:14 60:8,14
 61:5,11 62:4,5 63:15
 63:16,19,21 64:4,6,8
 64:11,12 65:3,3,4,8
 65:19 66:6 68:15 70:6
 74:6 83:7 85:18 87:3
 87:6,7,11,12,16,18
 89:22,22 90:9,10 91:1
 91:17 99:21 107:22
 108:7,20,21 109:3,9
 109:12,16 111:10
 112:1,2 117:20
 142:15 143:17 155:17
 157:7,8,13
card 140:17
cards 140:20
care 41:6 42:14 107:16
carefully 104:20
carry 93:13
cars 39:21 74:5 83:3
 87:1,2 88:3,6,12,13
 89:10 90:18 105:3
 107:11 108:22 117:20
 118:3
carved 8:20
case 39:21 40:10 83:16
 114:15
cast 8:12
catch 88:7
caught 63:13 65:22,22
 140:2
center 42:4,15 71:12
central 132:9 133:7,8
century 56:13
certain 24:14,17,19
 34:20 35:13 67:2
 94:14 102:16 105:8
 125:11
certainly 21:16 68:14
 72:16 128:22
chair 2:2,5,8,10,12,20
 3:3,5 4:5,8,13 6:16
 7:1,9 12:4,9,13 13:6
 13:11,15,20 14:17
 15:16,20,22 16:14
 17:20 18:5,11,16,18
 18:22 19:3,17 20:2,18
 21:11,14,17,20 22:8
 23:7 25:20 26:21 27:4
 27:8 28:5,9,13,16,20
 29:14 30:4,19 31:13
 31:17,21 32:16,22
 33:19 34:1 36:9,13,20
 37:12,14 38:6,12 39:4

- 39:14 41:11,17 44:9
44:11 45:18 49:6,10
49:14 51:8 58:21 59:2
59:6,9,19 62:11 63:6
64:3,15,21 65:6,13,16
66:2,4,10,17 67:1,9
67:14 68:20 69:2,7
71:7 72:4,7,17 73:7
73:10,12,18 74:10
76:15 78:5,9,15,21
79:5,8,18 80:8 82:13
83:15 85:5,8,11 86:10
87:2,4,20 90:11,14,17
90:19,22 91:5,9,14,21
92:4,12,15,20 93:16
93:20 94:7,18,22 96:1
96:4,8,12,14 97:8,14
100:21 101:7,12
102:1,5,9,11 104:7
106:19,21 107:3
108:3,5,9 112:13,20
113:16 114:21 118:16
118:19 119:6,12,14
119:19 120:16,19
121:1,4 122:1,3,7,18
123:14 124:7 128:22
129:2,10,13,17,22
130:5,16,19 131:1,5
131:10,20 132:13,18
134:8 135:2,8 136:18
136:21 137:1,7,10,13
138:12,15 139:11,18
139:21 140:14,19
141:3,5,8,12 142:10
142:14,19 144:12,15
146:2,15,21 147:14
148:20 149:1,4,12,15
150:1,8 151:5,19
152:8,12 153:2,5,9,15
153:22 154:3 158:5,9
159:1 161:13,22
162:4,7,11
chairman 4:6 23:12
24:9 39:7 46:15 67:16
69:11 84:17 100:6,19
119:22 121:11 122:5
127:17 160:4,6
Chairperson 1:11,13
Chaka 131:19,21,21,22
131:22 132:15,20
133:2,18 134:10
135:3 136:16,19,22
challenge 54:12 55:3,3
chance 59:16
change 11:22 40:6,14
55:18 57:10,11 61:19
81:3 83:10 84:8,9
102:13,16 106:12
126:10
changed 11:19 43:3
60:21 75:14 100:18
100:19 117:19
changes 25:7 50:12,12
76:18 113:1
changing 41:20 55:22
56:1
Chapter 11:19 12:3
14:1,3,19 15:6,12
16:17 31:18 46:18
76:11,12 78:13,18,19
chapters 17:2 31:20
46:17
charge 33:10 93:7,8,9
93:10,12,14 148:7
charged 83:2 94:5
charging 104:16 138:10
138:18
cheaper 102:21 103:15
103:15,16,16 104:4
104:13
check 9:8 33:21 87:16
87:22 139:4 143:7
145:9
checking 91:17 132:14
checks 142:2
cheeseburger 55:18,19
Chief 133:5
child 61:22
chips 81:22 82:1
choice 117:7
choose 67:20 103:8,9
Chorus 12:12
Chubbs 107:2,5,5
108:4,7,10,17 112:19
113:15 114:4 116:5
118:18 119:5,9,12,17
119:20 120:18,22
121:3,15,21 122:2,4
148:8
Church 93:4
cigarette 6:4
cigarettes 6:4 101:22
102:3
circumstances 75:5
citations 26:18
citizen 22:3 60:6
citizens 3:11 110:14
114:16 117:3 118:2
city 22:13 27:12 28:9,22
29:4,14,19 30:20,22
57:6 69:17 72:19 84:8
84:16 85:13 86:20,21
88:4 105:3 108:11
110:18 112:7,10,22
113:1 118:17,20
127:1 147:4 150:20
civil 27:12 36:3
claims 8:15
clarification 63:12 64:2
65:12,14
clarifies 15:12
clarify 2:7,11 11:20
14:1 16:17 67:22
clarity 149:17
class 15:8 24:15
clean 66:5 71:5 139:19
cleaner 70:7
clear 13:7 14:5 20:8
43:13 76:6 105:11
145:22 147:17 148:1
153:13 160:6 161:1
clearer 43:16
clearly 26:1 59:16
93:22 140:1 154:8
cliche 53:20
client 41:20 89:6 94:13
clientele 109:1
clients 8:10 10:21
42:16
Clinic 146:7
close 72:14 131:16
closed 70:13 72:2,4,8
120:6
clue 92:6
CNG 66:12 70:4,11,21
Cohn 3:17 12:18 14:7
16:4 19:7
cold 35:18
collaboration 126:13
138:20 139:6
collaborator 124:10
collect 155:1
collecting 155:9
collectively 54:2
colorful 63:2
Columbia 1:1 11:7
28:10 29:1,15 30:4,5
36:21,22 70:12 72:1,3
87:18
combination 11:13
combine 12:5 13:9
come 9:14 17:10 22:5
26:22 33:16 35:3,5,7
35:22 37:2,22 38:3
39:2,15 40:16 42:2
43:1,17 44:12,12,13
44:17 45:10 49:11
52:2 55:19 58:1 59:3
59:3 62:22 63:6,7,16
63:17,18 64:6,13 65:8
69:11,19 73:2 75:19
76:22 77:15 88:21
97:11 106:3 118:5
121:10 122:15 124:12
125:17 128:11 137:3
142:8 155:11 156:6
156:17 158:1 159:5
159:16 160:18
comes 81:22 85:18
108:16 114:2 157:1
comfortable 88:16
coming 10:19 24:22
25:7 32:2 42:6,19
50:22 51:19 52:17
53:10 54:13 64:9 95:4
99:1 104:22 105:3
122:19 162:10
comment 2:16 20:22
28:6 51:9 69:10
comments 11:8 17:21
20:20 21:1,6,8 26:22
36:14 37:1 39:15
44:16 46:6 59:3 62:12
62:16,22 63:4 73:8
88:22 147:10 159:6,9
161:10
Commission 1:3,5,9
3:6 4:14 5:10 6:20 7:5
7:14 8:17 9:2 20:14
21:5 22:6 23:2 24:18
33:2,7,13 50:18 53:8
54:2,20 55:11 57:17
75:10 83:1,5,9 95:8
97:20 98:9 99:1 100:7
113:20 114:11 120:1
122:11 124:1 133:16
134:14 135:10 138:21
139:7,12,13 142:7,7
152:13 155:4,12
160:22
Commission's 9:8
10:18 151:11
commissioner 1:13,14
1:14,15 3:16,17,17,18
3:19,20,21,22 4:1,2,3
4:4 6:15,18 7:2,3 12:7
12:8,10,17,17,18,19
12:20,21,22 13:1,2,3
13:4,5,16,17 14:6,7,7
14:8,9,10,11,12,13,14
14:15,16 15:19,21
16:3,4,4,5,6,7,8,9,10
16:11,12,13 17:22
18:1,15,17,21 19:2,6
19:7,7,8,9,10,11,12
19:13,14,15,16 45:1,5
48:20,22 68:22 69:3
75:19 76:5,10 81:13
84:14,18 86:7,22
95:20 96:3 98:22
99:14 101:3,6,21
102:2,7 114:12 122:5

122:8 123:21 131:19
 134:15 144:19 145:8
 145:14 150:14,18
 153:1 161:11,14,15
 162:2,5,6,9
commissioners 1:12
 2:6 6:12 9:18 11:9,10
 18:2 49:18 58:9
 161:10 162:4
Commissions 135:13
 136:5
commitment 5:6 44:7
committed 88:17
committing 33:2
common 10:5 90:7
communicate 77:8
 123:10,11 128:9
 134:18 140:1
communicated 20:14
 33:6
communication 2:13
 44:1 48:19 95:15
 96:18 125:16
communications 19:19
 19:20 20:15
community 105:22
companies 6:7 46:2
 51:14,16 69:4 77:20
 77:21,21 80:11,15
 82:5 85:19 99:16
 123:17 138:20 139:7
 143:8 150:19 152:2
 156:3
company 5:19 24:16
 40:18 44:22 60:2 61:3
 79:21 84:19,20 132:4
 132:10 137:22 141:18
 141:20,22 142:1,3,10
 142:15,16,20 144:4,5
 144:11 145:12,16,19
 147:6 149:17 155:18
 155:19,20 156:1
company's 24:15 143:6
compete 10:11 55:5
 105:6,8 130:14
competition 121:18
 157:20
competitive 8:8 53:15
 56:3 99:9 102:12
compilation 106:16
complaint 34:17
complaints 134:5,6
complete 18:12 43:18
completed 97:22
complex 9:17
compliance 83:10
compliant 65:18 95:16
complies 151:13,15

comply 14:21 15:8
 45:14,15 47:10
comprehensive 8:13
computerized 82:1
 91:11
concept 103:2
concern 4:19 35:3,22
 45:2,7,8 80:13 81:8
 81:14 82:10 86:17
 92:14 93:2 108:2
 109:6 114:6 116:13
 118:15 158:17
concerned 117:2
concerning 9:22 22:15
 28:3 46:13
concerns 11:8 37:1
 38:8,14 44:16 53:10
 76:16 101:1 127:9
 158:12
condition 129:5 144:17
conduct 147:19
confines 113:5
conform 25:3 30:9
confrontational 123:22
congratulations 38:5
 80:7 148:21
Congress 24:4 29:19
 29:22 30:3
connection 123:21
consider 9:2 10:5 68:14
 101:13
consideration 9:15
 66:19 86:12 89:1
 91:22 95:7,8 112:6,12
 118:22 159:10
considered 17:5 69:21
considering 77:7 88:2
 94:1
considers 100:14
consistent 25:8
Consortium 39:18
constantly 132:8
contact 38:1 70:22
 135:12,19
contacted 70:17
containing 10:2
continue 17:16 37:21
 39:11 48:21 62:9
 132:15
continues 68:7
continuing 42:1
contractual 146:4
convenient 72:15
convention 89:9
conversating 104:9
conversation 71:10
 83:19 106:7 120:1
 126:5

conversations 56:9
 89:8 104:10 160:19
converse 103:11
convictions 36:7
cool 106:17,19,20
cooperate 62:7
copies 29:8
copy 98:6 99:3
corner 137:3
correct 11:17 20:17
 74:16,18
cost 71:2 81:6 99:22
 104:14 118:10 148:14
 157:16,17 158:20,21
costs 99:21 116:20
 118:11
Council 22:14 25:9
 28:10,22 29:4,15,20
 30:4 69:19 82:21 84:8
 84:12,13,16 86:20,21
Council's 57:6
Councilmember 70:17
counsel 1:18 11:14
 15:3 16:21 18:9 22:10
 22:22 25:22 46:11
 76:4 82:14 84:7
 113:12 129:18
counselor 74:1
counsels 36:21
count 99:15
counterparts 56:10
country 103:14
counts 159:18
County 93:4,5,5
couple 107:9 110:2
 121:10 136:19
courage 161:16 162:3
course 98:13
crazy 161:5
create 11:5 17:2,6
 22:19 51:11 57:2 77:2
 77:10 82:2
credits 39:9
crime 27:20
criminal 32:17 33:17
criminals 36:6
crisis 80:22
Crocker 1:13 3:17,18
 12:8,18,19 14:7,8
 15:21 16:4,5 19:7,8
crooked 140:7
crossing 146:3
Crown 91:4
cruising 80:12,13,18,22
 81:1,4,9,10,12,16,18
 82:1,8,11,15 109:18
 111:11
current 134:17 135:5

customer 41:19 42:21
 81:12 94:12 132:16
 132:17 133:19 134:1
 148:1
cut 114:7 129:6
CYRIL 1:13

D

D 128:7
D-E-G 39:16
D-E-M-I-S-S-E 49:22
D.C 1:3,10
Dakota 70:20
dam 119:18
damage 81:22
data 106:14
dates 23:15
dating 50:8
day 35:20 43:1 46:22
 75:12 76:21,21 100:1
 109:7,22 111:8 112:4
 128:17 159:13
daydreamer 126:2
days 4:15 29:21,21
 30:13 51:10 75:16
 78:3 80:21 99:1 121:5
 138:11,17,18 157:1
DC 3:5 7:14 10:19 32:2
 34:14 36:18,19 40:16
 47:19 50:2 53:10
 59:22 60:5 74:9 87:21
 93:9,12 142:7 146:7
 155:20,21
DC's 34:13
DC.gov 33:5
DCLIMS 23:20,22
DCMR 25:4
DCRA 31:5 127:2
DCTC 7:20 8:4,11 9:6
 10:21 26:9 32:14
 33:17,19 40:16 71:16
 158:13
DCTC's 10:17
deadline 48:7,11,12
 67:21
deaf 159:7
deal 26:9 106:3 127:4
dealing 29:5 41:12
 45:22 54:7 83:16
 126:18 127:8 146:10
dealings 125:16
dealt 127:3
death 121:19
debate 22:15 57:19,20
 125:3
decades 50:9,17
December 47:4,12
decide 54:8 119:1

decided 138:7
decision 29:4 56:18,18
 116:2 125:4 146:18
 147:18 160:8
decisions 25:8 31:3,4
 159:19
declared 137:18
decrease 101:11
decreases 101:5
decreasing 104:3
deems 10:13
deeply 51:3
defer 18:8
definitely 4:16 5:1 22:9
 39:2 44:6 46:10 51:9
 58:6,8 62:16 72:22
 84:4 112:13 113:2
 118:17,21 129:10
 147:7,10 151:7 159:2
 159:3,8 160:20
Degfae 39:16
degree 102:16 105:8
 148:5,18
deliberations 147:8
demand 55:20 101:15
 103:3
Demisse 49:13,17,18
 49:21,22 58:5,22
democracy 160:12
democratic 52:16 54:5
 160:12
demographics 56:1
denials 2:11 16:18
denied 142:22
deny 84:21
Department 71:11
depends 23:15
describe 153:19
describing 101:3
descriptive 79:11
desk 133:21
destination 140:9
destruction 88:2
detail 22:11 23:1 51:1,2
detailed 78:7
detector 41:1
determination 12:17
 57:7 136:4
determine 147:4
die 159:13
difference 130:9,10
different 24:15 42:12
 80:9 101:18 103:21
differently 57:4
difficult 130:10
digital 133:9
dime 113:3
direct 134:5 139:15

directed 133:5
direction 30:8 64:17
directly 38:1 41:18
disabled 62:8
disagrees 36:12
disaster 126:17
discount 110:14
discriminate 111:14
discriminated 111:15
discuss 49:2 119:1
 130:16 157:1
discussion 13:19 20:1
 24:12 66:16 69:6 79:7
 79:19 92:11 94:17
 138:14 141:11 153:14
dishonest 27:19 30:15
 30:21 31:1
dishonesty 27:21
dispatch 2:9 14:20 15:1
 98:14,15 132:2,7,9,9
 132:11 133:7,8,9,10
 133:11
dispute 146:4
disrespect 113:22
distaste 56:20
district 1:1 3:11 9:1
 11:6 17:10 28:10 29:1
 29:15 30:4,5 36:21,22
 71:10 74:5 87:18
DMV 7:22 50:5 58:15
 60:8,11,16 143:13,15
documents 43:4 46:9
 60:10
doing 3:10,10 5:16 6:2
 6:3 32:3 55:6,6,9 56:2
 56:8 57:17,18 58:9,19
 60:3 61:12 77:6 79:12
 79:15 83:21 88:18
 97:20 100:8,18 121:1
 121:5 125:12 126:19
 143:6,8 147:7 161:6
dollar 116:21 121:18,22
dollars 116:20 121:21
domain 95:13
dome 83:7 85:6,18,20
 86:3,7,8
donation 40:8 60:9 61:2
door 6:2 35:4 37:22
 38:22 39:8 120:6
 121:6
dot 33:4 128:5 140:16
 140:22
downs 107:20
downstairs 148:2
downtown 89:14
dozen 31:19
DPW 71:16,19
drive 70:3 108:21,22

117:19 141:20
driven 54:15
driver 26:8 27:11 42:4
 45:8 49:22 50:2,3
 63:11 77:18 82:6
 85:13 87:9 93:2,12
 94:6 97:6 113:3
 134:17 135:6 136:6
 141:15 155:15,17,22
 155:22 157:7,16
 158:15 160:17
driver's 156:8
drivers 4:18,22 5:16,19
 7:7 17:9,12,15 27:17
 27:19 28:3 32:20
 35:16,17,21 36:2
 37:22 38:17 39:13
 40:6,14 41:5 43:13
 46:3 51:14,15 53:21
 54:8,12 55:4,8 69:17
 75:8,17 76:6,7 77:22
 80:10 81:7 93:22
 101:1 111:16,18,18
 115:6 117:2,4 123:17
 123:21 125:16 134:11
 134:12,19 139:2,3
 144:7 150:5,6,10,20
 152:3 153:21 154:7
 155:6 156:12,18
 157:3,5,19,21 158:2
 161:20
driving 59:22 102:14
 108:4,10 111:1 117:5
 137:9,16 141:18
 142:12 144:3 150:15
dropped 110:4
drove 50:4
due 64:5,14 65:11
dynamic 5:4 11:6 22:9
 57:2

E

E 73:17 140:21
E-D 22:1
E-P-H-R-E-M 44:20
E-R 140:15
E-R-I-C 33:4 128:5
E.J 107:5
ear 113:14 156:6
earlier 131:2
early 67:20 138:4
earn 53:21
ears 159:7
easiest 44:5
east 112:16
easy 62:5 86:2 126:16
economic 5:14 55:12
economics 101:14
 105:1 113:8
economy 80:21 82:3
effect 8:1 11:16 118:1
effectively 7:18
efficiency 74:2
efficient 10:10 66:5,11
 67:4 68:4 148:2
eight 74:7
either 101:17 103:3
 126:17 133:9
elect 27:14
eligible 68:5
email 9:10 26:14 33:4,5
 36:15 77:2,10,11,20
 77:20 127:21 128:5
 129:1 130:20,20
 131:7 140:15 146:6
 147:2
emails 127:22 128:1,3
emergency 9:2 11:16
 13:22 25:3
emissions 87:21
employee 33:1 139:13
employees 134:1,3,7
enacted 30:6 83:6
 110:11
encounters 109:8
encourage 10:21
energy 66:11 67:4
enforcement 17:7 26:6
 34:15 83:12
enforces 32:14
enforcing 34:19
engage 24:9 146:4
 148:13 156:16
engaged 22:14
engine 91:12
enjoyable 6:19
ensure 5:13 6:8 8:4
 18:12 31:9 32:12
 34:16 51:5 56:3 57:14
 65:17
ensuring 53:19
enter 71:15
enterprises 103:14
entire 122:14
entitled 42:2
entrance 89:19
Ephrem 44:20
equal 103:4
equitable 4:21 5:22
 31:2 32:13
eric 1:10,13 2:2,5,8,10
 2:12,20 3:5 7:10
 27:18 33:4 125:1
 128:5 140:15,21
 161:5
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9:11
error 52:11
Escape 69:21 70:1
especially 39:20 55:16
81:20 114:16
ESQ 1:18
Essentially 83:22
establish 2:11 5:7
16:19
established 18:2 57:12
88:1
establishing 5:17
estates 36:8
Ethiopia 128:20
Eventually 61:13
everybody 73:13 80:6
86:22 106:22 110:13
120:9 141:19 144:3
161:16
everybody's 115:20
everyone's 52:7 101:8
evidence 140:3 144:2
exact 47:9,15 75:5
exactly 23:14 26:1
38:18 47:17 62:14
79:12 130:1
example 91:2 109:11
109:21 110:21
examples 139:5,10
exciting 4:17
excuse 51:9 53:14
101:10
executed 13:8
exercise 104:19 147:22
exercised 54:20
exist 100:17 156:13
existing 7:18 10:7
67:18
expect 55:14 58:1
expectation 128:11
expected 40:3 154:11
expenses 129:6,8
130:12,13
expensive 102:18
experiences 42:12
expiration 74:15
explain 11:14 16:22
31:15,16,22 51:1
68:13 94:12 97:9
149:18 152:15
explained 100:9
explanation 15:4 92:7
explore 72:22 115:13
express 59:13,17 114:5
159:5
expressed 136:20
extend 136:6
extended 7:18

extension 46:19,22
48:4
extra 93:8,11 94:4
134:15 135:4 142:4
extras 135:4
eye 105:11 159:4

F

F-A-E 39:17
F-R-E-E-M-A-N 63:11
facility 71:18
facing 42:21
fact 24:22 50:20 74:19
104:4
facts 35:6,7
factual 9:22
fail 125:10
fair 4:21 5:22 6:8 8:7,10
24:14 31:2 32:12 35:9
35:14 38:19 41:7
54:19 56:3 79:16 89:2
113:4 115:17 119:7
131:17
Fairfax 93:3
fairly 10:11
faith 161:7
fall 24:16
fallen 159:7
Falls 93:3
family 61:16
fare 99:2 106:15 127:18
152:21
fares 95:4 106:12
fast 126:16
favor 12:11 33:14
FBI 87:15
February 25:1 65:5
96:5 106:7
fed 27:21
Federal 34:11
fee 122:10 129:14
feel 30:11 33:1 63:1
108:11 134:11,12
136:17 139:12 148:10
160:22
feeling 59:14,18
fees 122:9,12 129:20
143:14 148:6
fellow 45:8 80:10 117:2
Ferguson 3:19 12:20
14:9 16:6 19:9
fiat 56:15
fiduciary 55:10
fight 22:14
figure 52:3 53:6 57:1
71:17 105:12 146:17
160:10
figured 65:10 124:8

figuring 113:17 126:11
file 155:14
fill 120:15 135:16
final 11:18 14:19 15:5
15:11 16:15,16 17:1
23:14 30:3 47:1 67:17
158:6
finality 52:21
financed 109:7
financial 66:19 67:6
105:7
financing 73:5
find 6:19 24:2,3 72:10
101:17 114:14,20
116:13 151:9,11,12
152:13,14,15 158:3
findings 10:2 92:5
fine 26:6,11 106:1
127:20 153:15
finish 28:6,20 29:3
60:18
finished 60:10
finishing 132:22
firm 5:8
firmly 53:20
first 3:8 4:10 8:13 11:22
23:8,8 30:13 40:22
41:12 44:5 59:7,13,18
59:21 69:17 71:1
72:11 73:14 75:11,15
76:10 110:3 117:18
122:9 143:3 153:6
156:15 161:19
fit 45:13
five 8:2 21:3 75:16
110:17 120:10 157:3
fix 34:21
fleet 47:11 107:16,17
132:5
flooded 88:2
floods 88:4
floor 12:5 15:17 21:6
focus 4:22 57:16
folks 3:12 9:10 20:3,20
21:3 26:9 29:3 32:1,6
43:7 52:1,18 53:17
55:17 62:22 71:14
89:10,14 105:2 113:5
118:19 121:10 124:13
125:7,8,11,13,22
131:15 141:10 146:22
147:12,14 159:15
follow 7:8 60:6,17,17
followed 50:17 58:13
137:20
food 55:17 97:5
for-hire 5:5 29:17 30:12
force 40:13

forced 157:8
Ford 69:21 70:1 91:3,4
forever 118:20
forget 101:8
form 22:19 135:15,17
formal 5:18 7:11 46:7
77:14 106:8 121:7
formality 18:6
formalize 7:17
formats 105:4
forms 43:10 103:9
forth 45:5 46:4 71:19
77:5 88:5,20 89:9
105:17 113:22 116:2
125:22 126:7,7,8
160:3
Fortunately 149:10
forward 7:6 38:15 51:18
56:12 100:7,19,22
106:2 119:1 131:7
136:1,3 146:12
147:10 159:10,20
161:21
found 154:12
four 20:5 74:6 75:16
78:3 83:22 93:13
96:11 107:18 112:4
131:16 154:13
Francisco 56:10
fraud 33:3
free 41:9 93:19 146:8,8
147:3 148:13
freelance 22:1
Freeman 63:5,10,10
64:4,20 65:2,7,15,21
66:3,7,22 67:8,12
friends 150:11
front 17:14 70:3 78:6
132:9 133:21
fruitful 125:3 159:3
fuel 10:10 68:3 70:11
70:21 71:2,4 74:1
fueling 71:9,12
full 1:5 9:15
full-time 148:17
fully 10:22 77:6 92:1
98:9
fundamental 8:12
funded 40:7 128:3
further 9:11 15:4 16:21
22:11 23:1 24:9 39:15
63:4 70:10 72:6 106:6
future 9:13 24:21 53:5
53:12 133:17

G

G-E-B-R-E-S-E-L-A-S...
37:10

G-O-R-Y 63:11
G-R-E 63:10
gallon 70:9 71:5
game 31:7,10 52:14
 147:16 148:1 160:7,9
gas 66:12 68:15 71:5
 73:2,2 100:2
gasoline 74:6,7
gateway 7:21
Gebreselassie 37:5,6,9
 37:11,13,15 38:11
 39:3,6 44:8,10 153:18
 154:2,5
general 1:18 10:22
 11:14 15:3 16:21 18:8
 22:10,22 24:13 25:22
 34:19 36:21 46:11
 52:19 82:14 84:7
 101:14 113:12 116:11
 116:12,15 126:19
 127:10 129:18 133:22
 139:16 140:5 146:10
 147:16
General's 34:14
generally 6:2 24:7,8
generation 105:2
gentle 21:7
gentleman 45:3 47:21
 148:8 155:16
gentlemen 141:14
gentlemens 108:14
George 93:5
getting 55:8 63:20 64:7
 103:18 108:1 155:4
Giant 103:16
girlfriend's 94:8
give 10:15 24:10 32:7
 46:2,3,12 60:9,20
 64:17 65:14 68:10
 75:22 77:11 86:13
 88:15 92:6 95:4 106:8
 107:15 109:11,21
 110:14,21 111:18
 116:17 117:6 120:10
 120:20 123:3,19
 125:9 127:22 128:20
 138:22 142:8,9,13,22
 143:2,4 144:16 146:6
 146:9 148:12 161:17
given 99:13 138:9
gives 66:14 84:9
giving 4:10 8:21 34:5
 59:16,17 60:22 61:2,8
 127:21 159:22
gladly 38:3
Glikey 155:5,12
go 15:3 18:3 20:9 22:10
 22:22 23:9,14 26:1,11

31:5 32:5 33:20 49:11
 54:13 55:21 61:13
 65:9,9 68:17 70:16
 71:22 72:5,12 73:2
 82:9 83:19 84:18
 85:16 86:2 87:14
 89:20,20 91:19 93:17
 93:18 96:11,14 99:4
 101:8,9,15 102:13
 104:18,18 110:2
 111:6,7,9 112:1,4
 114:19 115:9 117:8
 120:3 122:20 125:18
 126:21 132:21 135:21
 136:15 139:15 143:22
 144:12,15 145:14
 147:22 150:2 153:6
 153:11,11 154:15
 157:6,22 161:1
goal 57:16 113:3 126:6
goes 41:3 76:3 87:17
 87:18 88:4 97:4,5,6
 97:7 101:14
going 20:5 28:1 34:22
 36:15 45:5 52:3,4,5,8
 52:13,21 53:5 54:1,3
 56:7,15 57:22 61:17
 61:19,22 62:15,18
 63:20 64:22 65:19
 66:5,8 68:14 69:10
 70:8 71:3,20 74:2
 75:8 76:8,10 77:13
 78:17 80:17 81:6,20
 84:21 85:21 86:3,13
 86:20 87:14 88:11
 89:11,12 92:6,18
 93:15 94:11 96:5
 100:7,19,21 101:8
 102:19 104:15 108:17
 110:5 114:8 115:18
 115:20,21,22 119:6
 120:6,7,7 123:1,7
 124:3,4,5,20 126:1,6
 126:9,14 127:12
 128:10,12,14,15
 140:9 141:16 143:2
 143:11,14,22 146:18
 147:9,9 148:17 149:5
 149:11 151:10,11
 152:4,6 153:12 154:9
 154:10 156:19 157:10
 157:16 159:11,12
 160:9,14,14 161:2
good 3:3 21:9 27:2,4
 37:17 38:4 44:19
 45:15 48:19,21 49:11
 49:13,14 59:3,5,6
 65:3 70:2 73:3 75:9

79:20 80:6 91:18
 107:2,3 121:15,17
 129:21 131:4,13
 134:8 141:13
Google 23:22 72:11
gotten 51:2 107:6
government 1:1 2:13
 19:19,21 20:15 55:15
 72:19 81:14 99:17
 128:2,3 155:9
graduate 149:5
Grand 44:21 111:2
grandfathered 110:12
 112:5
great 5:9,10 10:16 51:1
 90:1 95:15 118:2
Gregory 63:10
ground 32:21 90:7
group 50:1,3 51:19 58:6
groups 5:18 26:20
grown 112:22
guarantee 10:15 30:20
 33:13 62:21
guess 4:14 63:13 66:12
 88:9 91:21 124:9
 126:15
guidance 120:21
guide 10:16
guidepost 56:7
guy 31:11 83:18 110:4
 149:16
guys 11:3 20:11 25:13
 27:11,21 32:12 39:5
 57:1 63:14 68:20
 71:16 76:22 77:11
 104:8 108:16 109:4
 110:11 112:7 127:14
 159:17

H

H 8:15 40:9,10,15 50:4
 61:4
H-tag 10:15 41:12 50:2
 51:12,21 52:13 66:14
 146:16
H-tags 7:19,21 9:16
 10:6 45:13,14 50:16
H-U-M-B-L-E-S 69:15
hack 33:17,20
hails 15:2
hair 107:1 119:15,17
half 31:19 73:2 108:13
 122:15
hand 36:12 41:14
 118:12 156:21
handicap 74:6,8
handled 133:14
handling 140:5
hands 94:9
happen 70:5
happened 73:13 102:6
 143:9 150:15
happening 76:19 130:4
happens 43:15
happy 26:14 45:13
 117:13 161:11
hard 40:22 47:10 56:4
 149:8
hardworking 147:12
he'll 64:17 131:8 137:3
 137:4 152:14
head 47:18,22 126:17
hear 5:19 11:3 19:1
 35:19 38:13 42:12
 57:17 62:18 68:21
 72:8 90:5 94:19 108:8
 113:2 116:1 132:18
 156:7 159:21
heard 52:8 73:21 93:21
 122:10 144:22 156:2
hearing 1:10 44:17
 51:13 55:7,7 75:13,15
 76:16 78:2,4 153:16
hearings 29:2
heat 90:1
heating 90:2
held 9:7
hello 44:13
help 5:21,21 44:5 55:4
 56:14 94:8,10 114:1
 115:2,3,14 130:2
 147:4
helpful 39:9
helping 8:7
helps 146:7
hey 92:15 94:14 102:21
 104:4,12,14 125:18
 127:17
Hi 122:22 137:6
high 81:16 103:10
higher 103:5
hire 14:21 15:15 29:6
hired 94:14
history 99:9 144:16
holding 158:7
holistically 45:21
holler 57:22
hollering 57:21
homeless 62:9
homes 128:1
honest 35:2 53:2 125:3
hope 6:19 120:20
hopefully 42:5 101:16
 148:13
hospitalized 50:6
hotel 89:8 110:1

hoteliers 89:7
hour 11:20 12:1 14:1,4
 157:22
hourly 2:7,7 12:2
hours 77:15 111:7
 112:4 121:10
house 111:6
huh 28:4 102:1
humanity 156:15
humbled 73:7
Humbles 69:9,10,14,15
 72:2,5,10 73:4,8,9,11
 74:12
hundred 74:15
hundreds 8:21 139:5,5
 140:12,13
hurricane 88:3
hurt 57:14 157:6
hurting 94:10
hybrid 66:13 69:16,18
 69:20 70:2 74:8,8

I

I-C 140:16
ideals 56:5
ideas 5:9,10,12 11:5
 53:13 115:14 124:10
 126:5
identify 21:15 27:5 37:2
 49:15 59:9 63:8
idiot 27:20
illegal 17:17 26:9
 139:14 144:9 150:21
 151:3
immediate 147:1,1
immediately 11:17
 58:15
impact 7:12 23:4
impacted 51:15
impacts 23:2
importance 6:5
important 81:15 90:3
impose 7:15
impound 32:21
improper 139:14 140:4
improve 5:12,13
improvement 41:7 42:3
 42:17 82:19 100:12
improvements 42:20
improving 38:15
impugns 33:12
inadvertently 11:18
include 8:6 18:6
includes 22:20
including 8:14 53:14
 98:14 99:7 104:17
inclusive 5:8
income 115:8 148:16

increase 2:7 12:1 14:4
 95:21 96:19,22,22
 97:3,4 101:11 103:21
 107:14 130:9
increased 95:4
increases 101:5 105:17
increasing 104:1 130:8
independent 46:3
 107:6
independently 22:7
individual 64:18 76:18
 92:22 127:9 160:17
individuals 69:5 115:2
 115:15,15
industry 4:21 5:1,5,14
 8:7,11 9:19 11:6
 22:10 26:4 29:17
 30:22 38:16,16 43:11
 45:20 46:1,5 50:11,17
 51:2,13 53:1,6,15
 54:7 55:12,13,14
 56:12 57:3 58:10,20
 63:22 85:1 87:7,8
 88:20 89:9,17 92:8
 93:6 101:18 105:13
 135:11,11 136:11
 146:13,17 160:16
industry's 62:13
influenced 34:3
influx 50:19
inform 10:17 77:22
 136:12
informal 5:18
information 9:12 10:20
 23:20 43:12 46:12
 60:22 76:22 78:1 98:6
 106:16 114:19 120:5
 123:13 141:1 146:21
informed 11:4 79:15
 146:19
informing 113:13
initiatives 53:9
innovation 23:18 24:2,3
innovative 11:5
input 123:19
inquiry 149:17
inspection 64:5 65:10
 65:11 87:15,16,18,19
 87:21 88:7 91:13,19
inspector 34:3,13,18
 91:16 139:9,16 140:5
inspectors 32:15 33:17
 33:20
installation 83:17
installers 83:20
instance 154:12,20
 157:3,12
instructions 43:6

insurance 61:3 104:5
 142:13,22 143:1,2,12
 152:6,7
integrity 33:12
intention 113:10
interact 42:16
interested 101:4 136:14
interesting 71:8
interests 127:4
Interim 1:11,13 2:2,5,8
 2:10,12,20 3:3,5 4:5,8
 4:13 6:16 7:1,9 12:4,9
 12:13 13:6,11,15,20
 14:17 15:16,20,22
 16:14 17:20 18:5,11
 18:16,18,22 19:3,17
 20:2,18 21:11,14,17
 21:20 22:8 23:7 25:20
 26:21 27:4,8 28:5,9
 28:13,16,20 29:14
 30:19 31:13,17,21
 32:16,22 33:19 34:1
 36:9,13,20 37:12,14
 38:6,12 39:4,14 41:11
 41:17 44:9,11 45:18
 49:6,10,14 51:8 58:21
 59:2,6,9 62:11 63:6
 64:3,15,21 65:6,13,16
 66:2,4,10,17 67:1,9
 67:14 68:20 69:2,7
 71:7 72:4,7,17 73:7
 73:10,12,18 74:10
 76:15 78:5,9,15,21
 79:5,8,18 80:8 82:13
 83:15 85:5,8,11 86:10
 87:2,4,20 90:11,14,17
 90:19,22 91:5,9,14,21
 92:4,12,15,20 93:16
 93:20 94:7,18,22 96:1
 96:4,8,12,14 97:8,14
 100:21 101:7,12
 102:1,5,9,11 104:7
 106:19,21 107:3
 108:3,5,9 112:13,20
 113:16 114:21 118:16
 118:19 119:6,14,19
 120:16,19 121:1,4
 122:1,3,7,18 123:14
 124:7 128:22 129:2
 129:10,13,17,22
 130:5,16,19 131:1,5
 131:10,20 132:13,18
 134:8 135:2,8 136:18
 136:21 137:1,7,10,13
 138:12,15 139:11,18
 139:21 140:14,19
 141:3,5,8,12 142:10
 142:14,19 144:12,15

146:2,15,21 147:14
 148:20 149:1,4,12,15
 150:1,8 151:5,19
 152:8,12 153:2,5,9,15
 153:22 154:3 158:5,9
 159:1 161:13,22
 162:4,7,11
internally 125:5
Internet 114:17 120:4
interplay 113:18
interpret 133:9
interpretation 84:6
interrupt 29:12
interview 128:21
 130:21 135:20
introduced 103:1
inventioneers 89:7
invest 111:21 117:8,12
invested 109:14 117:15
investigate 9:21 34:10
Investigation 34:11
invitation 136:6
invite 46:5 51:10,19
 62:12 83:17 88:21
 139:14
invited 20:21
involved 34:12,14
 100:3
issuance 8:15 9:16
issue 8:12 10:1 26:16
 31:22 34:2,6 41:12,13
 41:18 45:21 47:9,16
 49:3 51:12,22 52:13
 52:19 62:14,19 76:18
 80:9,11 92:8 144:1
 146:11,16 150:5
 151:8 154:17 156:8
issued 26:19 40:9
 50:10 139:2,3 154:13
 156:11
issues 9:17,18,22 37:19
 49:1 52:2,9 84:2 88:6
 94:19 101:1 154:6,7,9
 154:12,16 156:20,22
it'll 52:5 98:11 160:16
item 2:9,11 11:13,15,21
 12:9 14:18 15:18
 16:15 18:19 19:4,18
 20:19 31:17 32:11
 78:6
items 2:7 12:5 13:9
 20:5 78:22

J

Jacques 1:18 97:14
January 1:7 63:18
 64:10,11 65:5 74:12
job 110:3,6,8 149:7

159:13
jobs 110:2,7
John 41:13,14 45:6
 47:20 64:16 76:1,5,17
 133:5 149:13,13,14
join 8:20
journalist 22:1
Juanda 1:17 2:4,14
June 10:1 64:6
jurisdictions 93:3 99:7
justifications 10:6

K

K-A-H-S-A-Y 59:12
Kahsay 59:11
keep 15:1 21:1 43:22
 52:9 55:21 61:7 63:21
 66:18 69:7 115:2,21
 115:22 127:21 140:21
 147:10 159:11 161:7
kept 112:10
Khan 131:22
kicked 36:5
kids 148:17
killing 157:21
kind 39:1 40:17 48:3
 81:4,11 82:3 107:6
 109:20 124:2,8 131:2
 131:3 140:2 150:2
 157:11
Kmart 103:16,17
knew 61:1
knocking 63:22
know 6:21 23:14 25:15
 31:4,6 33:3 34:4,7,20
 34:21 35:8,21 36:4,11
 38:17 40:4 42:8,14
 47:4,17 50:15 61:7,8
 62:17 63:7 64:12 65:5
 65:7 66:10 67:5 76:8
 78:12,18,18 82:18
 84:11 95:5,12,17
 97:20 103:6 104:12
 105:1,2 107:7 109:4,6
 116:1,4,16,17 117:9
 119:20 120:8,16
 123:17 124:2,20
 126:8,9 128:4 130:4
 131:9,10 135:3 136:8
 136:9,9 139:8 140:5,6
 141:10 143:19 149:7
 150:10
known 46:6 151:1
knows 5:7 31:9 52:14
 54:4 134:17 155:4
 157:3

L

lack 71:9
ladies 141:13
laid 130:1
landlord 145:2
language 43:7
languages 43:11
late 107:7 137:17
lately 116:13
latest 90:9,11
law 30:7,7,8 60:18 83:1
 83:11,14 84:5,8,15
 113:5 125:21 157:2
 157:11
lawyer 79:9 97:9
laymen 31:15
layover 23:13 29:20
laywomen 31:15
leadership 126:13
learn 52:2
learning 4:17 20:3
 113:14,16,17
lease 115:5 145:2
leaser 145:3
LeDroit 112:17
leeway 110:15
lefthand 31:12
legal 9:21 22:11 24:11
 82:14,15 95:16 97:10
 143:5 146:9 152:17
 152:17,18,19 154:17
legislation 22:18 23:1
 23:11 26:3 28:11 29:9
 29:16,19 30:9 82:18
legislative 23:15,20
 29:21
legitimate 34:16
LERNER 1:18 11:15
 15:5 17:1 18:10 23:10
 24:7,13 46:14 47:15
 48:9,12,14 67:15
 74:17 82:17 97:15,19
 98:20 99:3 100:6
 132:21 133:3 149:14
let's 3:4,13 4:15 6:10
 7:10 11:9 19:18 20:19
 23:7 38:7,13,13 49:7
 49:8 53:1 61:20
 105:11 106:6 107:17
 115:19 130:16 160:2
 160:2
letter 63:16 138:9
letting 97:9
level 77:5 89:15
license 2:11 17:3 31:6
 32:9,20 50:10 68:18
 154:22 155:5
licensed 7:16 23:5
licenses 7:20 8:22,22

10:1 16:18 40:1 52:20
licensing 8:14 10:17
 127:1,5,7
life 61:18,19
lifeblood 5:1
light 39:1 80:12,14,18
 81:1,1,4,9,10,12,14
 81:15,17,18 82:1,8,11
 85:6,18,20 86:3,7,9
 91:12 109:18 111:11
lights 82:16 83:2,7
likes 111:6
limit 2:9 14:22 74:2
 107:11
limitations 94:15
Lincoln 70:19 108:21
 108:22 109:3,12
 111:22 142:12,13,19
 144:19 145:5,8,18
 147:6 151:9
Lincoln's 142:18 145:6
line 53:19 55:9 57:15
 109:13 117:14
lines 114:3
link 146:7
Linton 39:7 45:5 48:20
 48:20 75:19 76:11
list 33:16
listen 156:15,18 157:12
 158:2
listening 8:14 144:13
Listerv 77:2,11
Lite 80:16
little 20:10 45:15 72:6
 77:12 94:12 102:20
 103:5 112:17
live 141:21 150:16
lived 112:17 118:20
living 53:21 56:5 113:9
 150:20
lo 103:1
loan 67:8
lodge 34:9
logic 149:18
long 33:10 50:9 52:17
 61:14 64:12 74:20
 81:18 96:20 119:3
 128:10,17 161:7
longer 43:20,22
longest 37:10
longevity 112:14
longstanding 8:15 52:3
look 7:6 8:13 11:11
 23:11,16 24:1 33:8
 45:16,20,21 51:18
 55:11 68:9 70:7 71:20
 72:18 83:20 95:1 99:2
 99:6,16,20 100:3

102:5 103:7 105:11
 106:10,11,15 120:9
 129:6,11 130:1
 133:16 146:13 152:2
 158:13
looked 70:4,10 99:11
looking 4:18 5:11 11:1
 62:15 88:18 92:9
 94:22 99:7 100:8
 129:13
looks 90:1
lose 52:6 54:6 114:8
 116:3
losing 105:20 114:14
loss 105:21
lost 70:22 111:5 155:8
 155:15
lot 22:4 32:1 37:19 43:9
 51:13 62:7 76:18
 85:14 101:19 107:13
 119:20,21 121:17
 122:11,17 126:3
 150:19 153:19 154:6
 154:6,7,8,11,16
 156:20,20,22 158:3
 162:3
loudly 93:22
love 39:4 62:17 103:12
lovely 107:1
low 91:7
lower 129:19
lowering 105:7
Luckily 111:22
luggage 93:7,10 94:5
 94:21 95:1,2,9 107:15
Lyft 82:5

M

M-A-H 141:14
M-O-H-A-M-M 21:22
M-O-H-A-M-M-A-D 80:4
M-O-M-E-N 80:1
Ma'am 23:10
Madam 3:14 12:15 13:6
 13:18 15:22 19:5,20
 20:13
Mahnine 141:13,14
 142:12,18,21 144:14
 144:21 145:10,17
 146:20 147:13 148:15
 148:22 149:3,5,20
 150:4,10,17 151:2,17
 151:21 152:1,10,22
 153:4
main 4:19,20 11:10
 43:11 100:22 108:2
 109:6
maintenance 83:17

84:2
major 8:3
majority 54:6
making 8:9 10:3 43:21
 56:18,18 72:22 99:9
 105:19 106:4 118:13
 118:14 157:21
MALE 144:10
malfeasance 33:11
 140:4
man 94:6 110:17
 119:10 152:12 153:6
 157:17
management 23:20
 124:3 125:5
manager 44:21 125:7
 127:1
mandate 70:20
mandatory 97:17 98:7
maneuver 95:13
manipulate 95:12
manner 40:15
mantra 41:20
manufacturer 85:19
market 54:17,22 55:22
 56:1,3,7 57:8 89:19
marketing 104:4
marks 8:3
Marquis 111:2
married 148:16
Maryland 17:9 70:15
match 119:17
math 103:6
matter 18:6 162:13
matters 9:15 10:12
Mayor 5:2 30:3 136:2,3
Mayor's 135:13
mayoral 136:2
McDuffie's 70:17
mean 39:7 54:1 61:14
 61:17 62:6 72:15 75:8
 77:3 88:8 107:19
 109:16 110:10,15
 114:7 142:6 143:20
 145:18
meaning 100:3
means 26:3
meant 50:18
mechanical 88:6
mechanism 71:18
media 22:2
meet 54:17 55:19,20
 69:11
meeting 1:5 3:4,7 9:4,6
 20:9 25:1,22 26:14
 29:7 33:15,16 35:5,5
 38:7 46:16 48:17 49:8
 71:21 75:3 92:5 98:3

106:8 114:13 121:9
 149:10 153:6 159:3
 162:12
meetings 11:2 34:8
 40:17 62:14 160:18
member 36:19 49:18
 50:1 84:12,20 93:1
 96:21 136:9,10
members 20:21 36:20
 38:9 40:18,19 42:7
 84:13
mention 49:4 104:10
mentioned 5:3 22:9
 35:1
Mercury 111:2
merge 145:1
merged 144:22
mesh 127:10
message 27:16 138:6
messages 30:18
met 1:9
metal 41:1
meter 98:13 109:18
 156:21
meters 111:11,12
method 126:12
mic 21:7 73:19 123:6
micromanage 124:5
microphone 13:19 20:1
 24:12 66:16 69:6 79:7
 79:19 92:11 94:17
 138:14 141:11 153:14
middle 90:3
mileage 91:7 118:3
miles 63:20 65:3 70:9
 71:4 74:16 109:13
 111:2 117:14 157:13
 157:14
mind 20:11 55:22 64:2
 66:8,19 69:8 121:12
 121:13 127:20 138:13
 147:11 160:19,20
minimal 148:14
minute 158:9,10
minutes 21:3,3 92:16
 92:20 120:3,3,10
 153:7 158:6
misfeasance 33:11
 140:4
mistake 52:11
mistaken 22:17 98:3
 135:9
Mister 33:15
mistreatments 133:21
misunderstanding
 139:22
mitigate 53:9
Mixon 1:17 2:4,14 3:16

3:19,22 4:2,4,6 12:16
 12:20 13:1,3,5,10,14
 14:6,9,12,14,16 16:3
 16:6,9,11,13 19:6,9
 19:12,14,16,22 20:17
 21:19 37:8 49:19
 69:12 79:22 80:2,5
 123:3,6 137:12
model 90:9,9 103:20
models 54:14 105:7
modern 8:19 89:10 91:1
 91:4
modernization 82:20
 84:21
modernize 58:10,20
modest 42:3
Mohammad 79:21 80:3
 115:16 158:12
Mohammed 21:9,13,16
 21:21,22 23:3 24:5
 25:10 26:13
mom 90:4
Momen 79:20,21 80:1,1
 80:4,6,9 84:14 85:6
 85:10,17 86:16,19
 87:3,5 90:8,13,16,18
 90:21 91:2,7,10,16
 92:3,13,18,22 93:17
 94:4,21 96:7,10,17
 97:13,18 98:18
 101:10 104:6 106:18
 106:20 122:20 158:8
 158:11,12
moment 3:8,13
Monday 4:15
money 5:22 32:3,6
 42:22 43:22 44:2 55:8
 55:10 64:11 80:20
 81:6 85:13,14 86:2
 87:13 89:4,12 105:19
 105:20 106:4 109:20
 115:3 117:8,9,10,11
 118:13,14 144:8
 148:9 155:7,8,15
 157:20
Montgomery 93:5
month 61:21
months 42:19 52:13
 54:13 62:19 74:22
 81:21 84:1 93:16,17
 104:20 106:12,13
moratorium 7:18,19 8:1
 10:7
moratoriums 52:20
morning 3:3 21:9 27:3
 27:4 35:17 44:19
 49:13,14 59:5,6 79:20
 80:6 107:2,3 143:10

mother 94:8
motion 12:5 13:16
 15:17 16:2 18:19 19:3
mounts 45:22
mouth 56:20
move 11:9 13:16 15:18
 19:18 20:19 38:15
 52:22 56:12 159:10
moved 12:7,10 13:16
 15:19 16:1 18:21,22
 19:4 20:6 76:20 107:7
moving 76:20
MPA 74:5
MTA 9:4,12 76:7,8,12
MTAs 8:19,20
Muhammad 1:14 3:20
 3:21 6:13,15 12:7,21
 12:22 14:10,11 15:19
 16:7,8 18:1,15,17,21
 19:10,11 27:2 68:22
 69:3 101:21 102:2,7
 122:5,8 162:5,6,9
Muhammed 12:11
 17:22
multiple 17:2 25:5

N

N-I-N-E 141:15
name 7:10 18:7 21:18
 21:21 27:6,9 35:10
 37:4,5,10 39:16,17
 40:1 44:19 49:16,17
 49:19,21 59:11,12
 63:9 69:9,13 73:16,20
 79:20 122:22 123:3
 128:8 131:21 134:2
 136:1 137:8,11,13,16
 138:1 141:14 142:14
 142:15 144:5,5,8,9
 145:7,13,22 146:1
 150:7,12 154:1,2
 158:11
name's 3:5 69:14
names 18:3 138:22
 150:11
National 72:8,14
native 112:15,16
natural 66:12 71:5
nature 113:9
near 53:4,4
nearest 70:12,14
necessarily 85:9
 160:17
necessary 148:4
neck 91:17,17
need 10:9 24:6 34:10
 38:17 39:12 43:14,17
 43:21 51:18 56:14

57:1 59:15 63:12
 64:12,13,18 65:7,11
 66:13 75:14,15 76:4
 98:18 110:20 118:5
 130:5 134:6,16,22
 135:5 139:19 145:9
 153:19 157:12 158:1
 159:17,21
needed 70:15
needs 75:6 154:18
negatively 51:15
neither 128:1
nets 103:3
neutral 101:17 105:1
never 97:7 124:11
 137:21 150:22
Neville 98:5 131:6
new 4:13,17 7:5,19 8:5
 8:8,18,21 10:6,15
 11:5 17:2,5,7,13
 21:10 25:4 26:2 28:10
 35:14 39:1 50:7,19
 53:1,12 54:14 55:19
 56:6,10 63:20 64:7,11
 64:22 65:1,4 68:4,9
 68:12,18 69:11 70:18
 80:12 85:18 87:11
 103:2,19 104:22
 105:2 109:5,8,12
 115:4 121:6 123:18
 125:11,12 131:2
 139:3 140:19 141:19
 142:6 147:8
newsletter 123:12,16
newspaper 128:19
nice 125:6
nickle 113:3
nine 4:15 30:13 52:13
 62:19 74:8 104:19
 121:5 154:21
non 9:1
non-registered 21:4
normal 88:7
normally 25:12 108:22
north 72:6
note 139:16 142:9
 157:8
notice 20:20 60:21
 81:13
notification 77:4
November 64:5 98:2
nowadays 99:22
NT 9:3
number 6:20 7:7,16
 11:13,13 13:8,22
 14:18 24:20 26:17,18
 29:17,18 31:15,17
 32:11 40:5,9,10 82:12

86:19 87:17 99:6,16
 102:17 107:6 108:16
 122:19,21,21,21
 131:14,15,16 140:12
numbers 40:14 139:1
numerous 36:7

O

o'clock 143:16
OAH 17:14
obc.dc.gov 135:14
 136:4
obligation 43:8 88:15
obligations 95:18
obviously 52:11 55:6
 79:9 100:22 125:20
 136:7 152:18
occasions 126:14
occupational 127:6
occurring 30:1
October 22:17,18 28:14
offense 30:14
office 1:3 17:7,8,13
 34:14 38:9 40:15,17
 41:4 46:18 47:22 49:7
 70:17 75:21 118:12
 135:13 136:4 139:15
officer 25:17,18 98:6
officers 26:10
official 18:8 30:7 33:6
 46:9
Officially 44:15
oh 30:17 44:17 49:11
 73:12 90:11 94:10
 106:22 138:15 146:15
 146:20 153:9,10
 161:5
okay 3:14 6:14,16 11:9
 12:16 13:15 14:6,17
 15:20,22 16:14 18:15
 18:16 19:17 20:18
 25:12 26:13,20 28:8
 28:19 36:1 38:11 39:3
 39:14 44:9,16 48:5,18
 49:10,11 56:15 59:11
 59:12,19 62:21 63:3,4
 64:3,20 65:15 67:12
 69:14 78:5 79:18 87:4
 90:12,17 92:12,13
 96:3 107:11 108:8,10
 109:1,5,8 111:4
 112:12,19 113:15
 114:7 116:5 118:6,9
 120:18 122:19 123:1
 123:7,9,14 128:18
 129:1,2,17 131:11,17
 132:12,20 133:2,3
 136:18,21 137:5

138:16 139:17 140:14
 141:2,3,4 142:20
 149:4 150:15 152:22
 153:6 154:20 155:12
 157:11 158:8,11
 159:2
old 50:17 89:22 90:9
 94:6 95:21 109:10
 112:22 117:17 157:17
older 88:13 108:14
 110:11 117:3
once 30:6,6,7 48:2,4
 77:16,16 121:8
ones 18:4 81:2 89:11
 109:10 112:10 127:14
ongoing 8:3
online 23:19 135:15
open 6:2,8 21:5 34:6
 35:2,4,8,14 37:21
 38:22,22 39:8 77:15
 115:14,22 121:6,14
 131:3 160:20
opening 2:5 4:11 6:12
 7:11 159:4
openness 37:18
operate 17:16 111:12
operated 6:1
operating 16:20 17:9
 50:20
operation 139:19
operations 24:15 34:16
 48:1 133:6 149:15
operator 17:19 51:7
operator's 50:10
operators 17:18 116:9
opinion 24:11 52:7,17
opinions 58:2
opportunities 68:21
opportunity 5:3 10:16
 34:5 59:17 61:15 62:2
 114:5 125:7 160:1
opposed 12:13 79:12
 106:16
ops 83:18
option 150:7
orchestrate 55:15
order 2:2 3:7 17:16
 63:21 102:12 105:6
outside 35:16,18 55:5
 57:5 89:13 143:17
overall 100:2
overt 113:11
owned 145:9
owner 51:7 84:20 142:1
 142:3 155:18
owners 5:19 6:7 8:20
 9:5,7 80:11 127:9
 146:8 155:19

P

P 1:18
P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S
 3:1
p.m 162:14
pace 40:5
packaging 43:12
paid 109:9 111:22
 115:4,4 138:19
paint 111:10
panel 9:18,20 10:5 11:4
 45:20 46:4,10 51:12
 62:13,17 84:17 88:20
 92:8 96:20,21 97:1,2
 99:20 100:13,14,15
 100:16 146:13,17
panel's 10:14,20
paper 145:4,12
paperwork 130:13
paramount 6:5
park 155:17
part 23:3 53:14 73:4
 89:6 132:22 135:6
 145:5
PARTICIPANT 144:10
participate 10:22 20:21
 46:5 51:20 62:13
 159:16 161:8
participation 161:12
participatory 160:11
particular 25:16 34:2,3
 34:17,18 52:19 75:6
 85:9 90:6 92:8 105:14
 146:11 151:8 160:21
parties 101:4
partly 75:17
partner 51:18 56:8
partners 41:22 42:9
 57:3
partnership 71:16
parts 46:1
pass 84:15 91:13
passed 22:18 28:10,12
 28:13 29:16 39:20
 64:4 111:15
passenger 93:8,11 94:5
 95:22 107:15
passengers 15:2 94:20
 95:6
passes 29:20
passionate 159:18
patron 94:14
pay 41:9 61:4,7,8,20
 86:3 110:6,8 112:1
 127:18 130:12,12
 142:4 143:1,5,11,14
 143:14 144:8 149:21
 152:1,3,4,5 156:2

158:15,18
paying 27:17 89:11,21
 138:3 152:2
peace 64:2
penalties 17:18
pending 23:19 24:4,20
 29:18 47:8 129:19
people 39:22 54:15
 55:2 93:13 99:16
 103:12 107:17,18
 116:12 140:2 147:12
 153:16 156:20
percent 39:20 40:3,12
 45:4,9 46:13 47:11
 83:8 91:18 110:7,9
 132:5
percentage 96:20,22
percentages 133:4
perception 102:14,18
 104:8
performing 15:10
period 2:16 20:22 23:13
 29:20 53:21 64:9
permanent 67:17
permission 69:20,22
 70:16 86:8
person 68:8,8 120:7
 135:11
personal 25:11 64:17
 65:17 67:5 77:5 97:12
 128:2
personalities 35:13
personality 35:14
personally 136:17
perspective 5:20 35:19
philosophy 97:12
phone 138:5,6
phonetic 155:5
physically 72:12
pick 107:17 127:16
picked 110:5
picture 84:22
PIO 131:6
place 1:10 48:5
places 89:13
plan 6:21 65:4
planning 66:20
plate 119:21
play 160:8
please 9:8 10:18 12:11
 13:18 16:2 19:5 21:1
 21:7,7,15 26:22 27:5
 37:2,2,4,8 49:20
 69:13 78:3 79:22
 113:21 115:18 123:3
 136:13 137:12 140:18
plows 71:13
plus 86:2

pocket 44:2 115:3
pocketbook 32:3,7
 103:22
pocketbooks 57:14
podium 49:12
point 30:10 45:19 47:6
 54:15,15 68:11 71:8
 102:11 103:7 104:15
 104:15,17 105:10
 106:6 160:22
police 25:17 26:9 32:20
policies 10:17 51:15
policy 9:21 25:8 29:4
 31:3,4 34:19 50:18,20
 51:2 53:18 57:7,11
 82:22 121:6 127:10
 146:11
poor 81:7 82:6 87:9
 93:2,11 94:6 97:6
 158:15
pop 151:6,6
popped 149:14
port 140:8
position 4:14 8:8 21:10
 24:10 46:9 99:9 126:8
 126:9,10
positive 101:17
positively 134:4
possible 148:4,5
post 77:22 78:3 79:2,3
 96:5
posture's 147:9
potential 88:14
potentially 88:6
power 32:20
practical 40:5
practice 50:6,17
precisely 151:10
preclude 105:14
prefer 43:7 89:10
prepare 75:17
preparedness 9:3
preponderance 23:12
present 1:12,16 3:18
 4:7 121:7 127:14,15
presented 98:2
presiding 1:11
press 22:2
presumptively 98:15
pretty 83:7 88:10
prevent 50:19
previous 114:6 119:22
 126:22 138:8
previously 10:7 39:7
 154:20
price 93:13 97:5,5
 101:14 103:2 129:4,4
 129:5 130:8,12

158:16
prices 103:10,15 105:8
pricing 103:3
pride 124:13
Prince 93:4,4
prior 6:20 75:12 78:4
priorities 8:5,6 15:13
priority 7:7
Prius 91:3
private 2:9 8:8 10:12
 14:22 22:15 26:19
 29:5 30:11 53:2,16
 147:5 148:13 152:20
privileges 16:20 17:9
Pro 80:15 146:7
Pro-Lite 80:17
probably 24:1 25:2
 88:10 95:3 159:13
problem 38:1 45:11,12
 51:17 75:7,9 80:11,14
 81:2,21 82:2 85:19
 123:13 134:18 141:17
 144:10 147:2 150:19
 151:6 154:19 156:19
 158:3
problems 38:3 39:12
 126:11
procedural 20:10
procedure 20:3 100:18
procedures 2:11,11
 16:18,19 17:3,6 48:4
proceedings 10:20
process 5:8 6:9,19
 22:15 35:9 47:5,18
 51:21 52:6 54:4,5,7
 54:14 56:17,20 60:19
 100:18 101:2 104:18
 115:22 121:14 135:22
 159:14 160:12 161:8
processed 48:3
processes 4:17 5:13
 113:17
proclamation 106:8
productive 125:3
profession 50:13,15
professional 42:10,11
 57:20 127:5,6 128:15
professionals 42:10
 58:2,3 127:5
professor 70:5
profitable 113:4
program 40:7
programs 8:4
promise 20:9 33:8 95:2
 147:21
promises 72:22
promising 160:13
properly 12:10 13:8

16:1 19:4 20:6 29:15
proposals 159:20
proposed 7:15 9:13
 10:7 11:22 14:3 25:2
 46:16 47:2,16 78:22
 94:1 159:20
protect 143:22
prove 104:13
provide 46:19 80:17
 154:21,22
provided 43:2
providers 154:22
PSM 154:21,21
public 1:9 2:16 5:11 6:6
 10:1,22 14:20 15:6,14
 20:20,21,22 21:6
 22:14,14 23:6 25:8,12
 29:2,4,5 51:6,21 52:6
 55:20 57:7,11 71:11
 77:3 81:13 82:21
 88:15 95:13 101:2
 102:14,15 103:8
 104:7,10 105:4 116:8
 116:11,12,16 153:16
 159:14,17
public's 11:4 154:18
publication 14:3,19
 47:9
publicly 28:4
publish 75:12,16 96:6
published 28:15,17,22
 75:11
pump 90:1,2
purple 107:1
purpose 40:17 57:18
pursuant 26:11 98:7
 99:12
push 50:13 113:7
pushed 58:13
pushing 4:20
put 31:19 36:12 70:21
 81:9 82:11 84:1 86:4
 86:8 90:9 91:19 94:9
 99:22 106:2 108:13
 109:3,4,9 110:11
 117:13 118:3,7 119:1
 119:2 123:12,15,16
 136:1,3 147:3 156:14
 156:16 159:15
putting 70:18 83:2
 159:20

Q

quality 89:18
question 23:4,8,9 26:8
 28:21 39:18 63:19
 69:1 73:22 75:20
 119:18 123:9,20

132:1,2,12 151:18,20
questions 11:8 15:17
 17:21,21 24:8 26:22
 37:1 44:16 75:1 76:3
 104:11 120:13 122:19
 123:2,8 133:4
quick 3:13 126:16
quickly 96:14
quiet 73:14
quorum 3:15 4:6
quota 7:15,17 8:2,21
 10:8
quotas 52:20
quote 156:21

R

R-A-Z-Z-A-Q 137:16
R-I-C 140:22
R-O-G-E-R-S-2 33:5
R-O-U-Z-B-E-H 27:10
rain 81:22
raise 41:14 73:22
ran 110:3
rap 127:19
rate 11:19,20 12:1,2
 96:19,22 97:6,16
 98:14 99:9,17,19
 102:7 105:20 106:15
 107:12,14
rates 2:7,7 12:3 14:4
 97:11 98:9,13,14
 102:13 104:1,3
rationale 11:14
Razzaq 137:6,8,15
 138:17 139:17,20
 140:12,17 141:2,4,7
reach 140:9
read 18:3 74:3 75:17
 76:11 84:5
readapting 103:19
reading 60:6
readjust 57:13
ready 64:7 117:11
 119:10 141:10
real 106:14 134:18
reality 103:3
realize 63:21
really 5:11 6:14 56:22
 63:12,12 64:1 112:11
 112:15 117:2 134:17
 148:10 157:1 159:18
 161:18
reap 54:10
reason 44:4 54:17 61:6
 67:19 87:8 88:12
 103:12 111:17 124:22
 125:2 141:15
reasonably 95:3

reasoning 149:18
reasons 8:17 83:13
recall 46:17
receipts 60:9
receive 50:22 99:4
received 27:16 63:16
 138:5
receiving 7:21
recipe 55:18
reciprocity 16:20 17:11
recognition 27:13
recommend 23:16
 48:14
recommendations 10:3
record 5:7 18:7,8,12
 21:15,18 27:5,9 33:6
 37:3 49:15 59:10 63:8
 66:9 137:14 162:14
recorded 20:7
records 33:18
recoup 117:9 118:15
reduce 129:5 130:11
 148:5 158:16
reestablish 106:9
reestablishing 101:2
reevaluate 122:16,16
referred 26:10 46:4
referring 9:18 23:12
 24:16 97:19
reflect 3:9 8:5
reflected 133:13
reflections 116:1
reflects 98:8
refused 61:12
regard 122:13
regarding 39:19 40:7
 80:21 86:22 87:16
 91:10,11 93:2 96:17
 96:19 158:13,14
regardless 15:9 17:4
 54:18,19
register 10:19 29:1
 47:19 77:4
registered 21:2,3
 155:21
registration 40:2 144:6
 144:9
regs 147:8
regular 68:15 81:4
 82:12
regulate 89:1
regulated 30:21
regulates 29:16
regulation 58:13 74:3,4
 75:12 76:7 110:10
 111:14 117:18 126:15
 134:20 143:21 157:19
regulations 7:13,20 8:4

8:10,18 9:4 26:12
 108:12 112:5 116:7
 123:18 124:17 126:18
 151:14,15
regulatory 22:19 147:9
reinstate 122:10
reiterate 107:12
related 9:16 11:21
relates 11:3 41:19
 88:19 97:11
relationship 42:1,21
 48:21
relatively 7:5 101:17
 105:1
relet 28:2
relevant 9:21
relied 9:5
relief 82:11
remain 55:14
remand 51:12 92:7
remanded 45:20 146:12
 146:16 150:9
remarks 2:5 4:11 6:12
remember 87:20 96:4
remind 153:22
reminded 115:1
removed 76:20
render 25:18
rent 61:9,13,21 97:4
rental 39:21
renting 61:9,13
repair 99:21
repeat 48:9
repeatedly 86:21
replace 68:2 122:17
replacement 50:1,10
 51:6
replacing 67:19,20,21
 88:19
report 10:1 51:1,18
 71:21 81:12 92:4 98:1
 98:7 99:4,12 100:11
 100:11
reports 2:13 19:19,21
 20:16
represent 134:21
 153:21
representative 134:17
represented 134:13
 135:1
representing 42:13
 117:1
request 26:14 84:17
 150:19
requested 40:10
require 14:20 15:6
required 40:11 83:4
 132:3,4,8,10 156:2

157:15
requirement 82:15 83:9
 132:7 133:15
requirements 14:21
 43:14 82:21 136:8,13
requires 15:13 133:8
requiring 84:3
research 9:20
reserving 8:22
residency 136:7
resident 59:21 60:5
 136:10
residents 9:1
residual 115:8
resolve 52:4 145:16
resources 72:18 147:4
 148:12
respect 42:2
respectful 128:16
respectfully 40:21 41:5
respond 28:7 32:22
 45:19 82:14
response 24:6 26:7
responsibility 55:11
 61:17
responsible 77:21
restaurant 93:18
result 29:9
retail 55:17
retirement 74:19
return 58:15 60:4,11,14
 60:15 61:4 62:2
 116:21,22 121:22
 143:15 156:9
returned 50:4
returning 50:6
review 8:3 34:10 84:18
 97:16 98:8 99:12
 100:11,19 135:18
reviewing 98:9
revision 48:7
revisiting 24:21 52:9
revocation 2:12 17:14
revoke 16:19 17:8 32:8
 32:20
ride 22:20 93:19 127:18
riders 95:16
rides 88:16
riding 5:16 6:6 88:15
 102:15 103:8 104:10
 116:8,11,12,16
right 21:5,21 30:1 31:5
 31:8 32:10 36:15 37:5
 41:21 44:11,12,15
 47:15,21 48:16 49:9
 49:11 51:20 52:16
 59:2 63:4,4 64:19
 65:8 66:2 67:12 68:1

71:12 73:6,10,11 75:3
 84:11 85:10 86:10,14
 96:12 101:6 106:21
 119:5,8 120:22 121:3
 125:2 131:6,18
 133:18 147:5 148:11
 149:21 153:10 154:4
 162:8,11
risk 88:9
river 112:17
road 66:18 68:16 70:19
 88:13 91:20 134:18
rob 27:15
robbery 32:18 36:7
robust 57:19
rocking 119:12
Rogers 1:10,13 2:2,5,8
 2:10,12,20 3:3,5 4:4,5
 4:8 6:16 7:1,9,10 12:4
 12:9,13 13:5,6,11,15
 13:20 14:16,17 15:16
 15:20,22 16:13,14
 17:20 18:5,11,16,18
 18:22 19:3,16,17 20:2
 20:18 21:11,14,17,20
 22:8 23:7 25:20 26:21
 27:4,8,18 28:5,9,13
 28:16,20 29:14 30:19
 31:13,17,21 32:16,22
 33:5,19 34:1 36:9,13
 36:20 37:12,14 38:6
 38:12 39:4,14 41:11
 41:17 44:9,11 45:18
 49:6,10,14 51:8 58:21
 59:2,6,9 62:11 63:6
 64:3,15,21 65:6,13,16
 66:2,4,10,17 67:1,9
 67:14 68:20 69:2,7
 71:7 72:4,7,17 73:7
 73:10,12,18 74:10
 76:15 78:5,9,15,21
 79:5,8,18 80:8 82:13
 83:15 85:5,8,11 86:10
 87:2,4,20 90:11,14,17
 90:19,22 91:5,9,14,21
 92:4,12,15,20 93:16
 93:20 94:7,18,22 96:1
 96:4,8,12,14 97:8,14
 100:21 101:7,12
 102:1,5,9,11 104:7
 106:19,21 107:3
 108:3,5,9 112:13,20
 113:16 114:21 118:16
 118:19 119:6,14,19
 120:16,19 121:1,4
 122:1,3,6,7,18 123:14
 124:7 127:17 128:6,7
 128:7,7,22 129:2,10

129:13,17,22 130:5
 130:16,19 131:1,5,10
 131:20 132:13,18
 134:8 135:2,8 136:18
 136:21 137:1,7,10,13
 138:12,15 139:11,18
 139:21 140:14,19
 141:3,5,8,12 142:10
 142:14,19 144:12,15
 146:2,15,21 147:14
 148:20 149:1,4,12,15
 150:1,8 151:5,19
 152:8,12 153:2,5,9,15
 153:22 154:3 158:5,9
 159:1 160:5,6 161:13
 161:22 162:4,7,11
Rogers2 140:16
Rogers2@DC.gov
 128:6 140:22
role 19:5 113:2
roll 2:3 3:15 16:2
room 1:10 60:2
round 161:17
Rouzbeh 27:2,6,6,10
 28:8,12,15,19 29:12
 30:17 31:11,14,18
 32:14,17 33:14,22
 36:2,10,18
Roy 128:7
rule 11:16,20,22 15:5
 31:15 84:15 113:11
 117:18 118:1,22
 142:6
rulemaking 7:15 9:3
 10:4 11:18 13:22 14:3
 14:19 24:21 25:3
 46:16 47:5 95:21
 133:13,17
rulemakings 13:13
 16:16
rules 7:12 9:4,12 15:8
 15:12 17:2,11 20:3
 25:6 28:22 31:6,9
 33:12 34:20 38:18
 43:3 47:17 48:3 52:14
 52:15,16 55:15 67:17
 67:17 68:10,13 74:19
 76:20 79:1,1,3 84:9
 88:18 89:16 94:1
 95:10 108:12 110:10
 110:12,13 111:14
 113:17,18 115:5
 116:6,10 125:22
 129:19 137:21 139:22
 141:19 147:8,16,22
 159:21 160:7,8,9
run 70:12 95:14 110:2
 111:7 139:19

running 22:5 140:6
runs 65:3
rushed 45:16
ruthless 36:6

S

S-E-T-E-G-M 39:17
S.E 1:10
sacrificing 89:18
safe 88:16
safety 83:12 87:22 89:4
Safeway 103:15
sail 140:8
sake 151:11
Saleem 145:18,19
salvage 86:22 87:3,6,7
 87:12,15 88:12 89:22
 90:9,10,19,21 91:16
San 56:10
sat 42:15
satisfied 115:20
save 87:13
saw 42:17 67:10 127:17
 151:6
saying 6:22 58:12,17
 65:5 67:7 86:12 90:15
 91:6,15 102:21 104:2
 105:12 108:6 109:5
 111:13 112:21 115:9
 115:12,21 117:12
 140:21 151:2 158:6
 159:11
says 58:14 60:13 74:5
 74:13 81:18 124:16
scarf 63:2,2
Schaeffer 144:20 145:2
 145:6,9,13,15,15
schedule 9:6 35:4,5
 38:7 49:7
schedule's 39:1 131:2
scheme 22:19
Scott 41:13 47:20,20
 48:15 64:16 65:13
 67:22 68:10,13 75:3
 76:17 133:5 151:6
scream 57:22
screaming 57:21
screening 41:2
searching 72:11
seat 134:16 135:1,4
second 11:21 13:12
 15:20,21 19:1,2 21:11
 23:4,9 75:18 123:20
 132:22 137:4 141:8
 143:3 150:4
seconded 12:8,10
 13:17 16:1 19:4 20:6
secondly 71:2

secretary 2:4,14 3:14
 12:15 13:7,18 16:1
 19:5,20 20:7,13
security 41:1 108:19,20
 109:17
see 34:19 41:14 42:16
 42:20 49:12 72:12,14
 83:20 84:19,22 85:1
 90:14 106:11 108:18
 113:13 119:9 127:15
 130:1,11 134:2 139:4
 145:15 151:13 161:12
seeing 42:5 43:9,12
 56:10 72:18
seek 10:16 17:13 26:6
 103:9
seeking 10:6 50:1
seen 22:4 113:1 161:12
 161:19
segments 45:22
sell 85:21 145:11 152:7
send 26:14 36:16 46:8
 77:12,20 78:1 84:15
 127:22 128:4 130:20
 131:7 140:22 146:6
 147:2
senior 110:14 114:16
 117:3 118:2 148:18
sense 107:13
sentiment 11:4
September 22:18 28:14
seriously 38:12 56:22
 124:18
servant 27:13
servants 36:3 121:17
serve 5:3 51:6 113:19
 124:16
served 108:12 110:18
 112:7,7
service 15:9,9,13 41:9
 41:19 50:7 58:15
 60:15 82:19 94:12
 100:12 112:15 116:16
 116:17 118:17 120:12
 120:20 132:16,17
 133:20 134:1 148:2
 157:9
services 22:21 41:20
 42:4 43:2 55:2 98:16
 99:10
serving 27:12 108:11
 116:12
session 34:6
set 25:22 46:17 98:15
 130:20 140:8
SETEGM 39:16 41:16
seven 93:15 97:1
 117:17 157:4

- Shannon** 1:10
share 45:2,8 62:22
shared 45:3,9
sharing 22:20
ship 140:7
shipping 86:2
short 128:19
should've 151:1
show 30:17 81:17 135:6
143:4 145:2,4,12
showing 33:15
shut 153:12
shy 39:15 44:12 59:3
62:22
side 31:12
Sidecar 82:4
Sienna 91:3
sign 21:19,20 37:3
113:22 150:20,22
signature 158:14,18,20
158:21
signed 30:5
significant 52:11
signing 145:13
silence 3:9,14
silenced 44:1
Silver 79:21
similar 94:2 101:2
simple 71:1
simply 50:16 118:6,7
Simultaneous 28:18
29:11 30:16 36:17
65:20 67:11 78:11,14
78:20 85:4 86:15,18
92:17,19 94:3 96:13
96:16 98:17,19
101:20 102:10 119:11
119:16 121:20 129:15
140:11 142:17 146:14
150:3 151:22 152:9
153:8
single 12:6 35:17 138:3
sir 15:16 17:20,21
18:18 27:1 31:13
32:16 36:13 37:14
44:11,18 47:13,14
48:10 49:12 59:10
67:14,22 69:2,8,13
73:6,9,15 74:17 82:17
84:14 95:19 97:15
106:21,22 107:4
119:19 122:3,7,18
141:12 142:20 144:18
150:7,19 158:13
159:2
sit 29:20 35:16 38:8,13
39:5 43:20 77:16
111:5 121:8 135:17
141:9 145:4
situation 51:3 62:7
64:18 65:17 67:6
94:13 147:1 149:8
six 52:12 62:19 74:8
93:15,16,17 97:1
104:19 106:12,13
size 8:11
skills 95:15
slavized 36:3
slow 64:9 82:4 110:1
small 38:9 124:4 126:22
127:4,8 146:8 147:19
Smalls 1:14 3:22 4:1
7:2,3 13:1,2,17 14:12
14:13 16:9,10 19:2,12
19:13 161:11,14,15
162:2
smoke 6:4
smoking 6:4
smoothly 20:10
snatch 32:8
snow 71:13
social 108:19,20 109:17
society 113:10
sold 145:6
solution 39:13 85:15,15
85:17
solve 51:17 52:5,13
146:17 156:19
solved 39:12 62:20
solving 38:3 126:11
somebody 117:22
soon 98:18 130:22
sorry 13:20 142:20
144:14 146:15
sound 53:20
sounds 146:3
source 148:16
South 70:19
spark 126:4
speak 41:13 48:16
64:16 75:3,4 76:17
79:1 98:5 123:6
131:11,14,15 149:12
153:11 161:16,21
speakers 21:4
speaking 28:18 29:11
30:16 36:17 63:14
65:20 67:11 78:11,14
78:20 85:4 86:15,18
92:17,19 94:3 96:13
96:16 97:16 98:17,19
99:15 101:20 102:10
119:11,16 121:20
129:15 140:11 142:17
146:14 150:3 151:22
152:9 153:8
special 69:20,22 70:15
specific 41:18 45:22
46:1 47:16 75:1,4
83:16
specifically 30:10
134:5
spell 21:17 27:8 37:3,8
49:15,19 63:8 69:12
79:22 80:2,3 137:10
137:12,13
spelled 128:6
spend 85:13 118:13,14
spending 70:8 71:3
spent 109:18
spoke 122:9 153:10
sponge 159:8
sport 160:11
square 99:8 131:8,11
stack 107:19
staff 1:16 2:13 19:19,21
20:15 77:16 125:12
staffers 39:8
stage 47:2
stand 126:6
standing 35:18
Stanley 1:15 135:5
start 4:10 8:3 21:12
37:17 38:4 41:3 59:18
159:20
started 3:4 4:15 42:3
72:11 102:3 110:22
117:18 138:18
starting 84:1 110:17
state 32:2 93:6
stated 150:5
statement 7:12
States 29:22 85:1,2
station 70:21
stations 70:11 71:3,9
statistics 103:7
statute 97:17 100:16
124:16 126:15 133:8
statutory 83:9 100:16
133:15
step 9:15 20:5 21:7
51:5 125:13
stepped 161:21
stole 143:18
stone 8:13
stop 27:21 60:20
stopped 90:3 102:8
155:10
store 70:19
story 157:18
straight 51:22
straightening 52:18
street 15:2 26:9 28:3
32:21 63:17,18 64:7
64:13,14 65:8 109:22
118:6 127:15 156:13
streets 5:17 32:2
117:17 130:3
stripped 50:16
student 148:17
study 23:5
studying 149:2
stuff 20:11 38:19 43:10
73:3 79:12,13 88:4
96:6 97:10 109:19
114:18 136:1 148:6
stupid 27:19,20 30:19
30:21
style 85:9 124:3,7 125:5
subject 15:7 17:12,18
47:16 133:3
subsidize 108:20
109:17
succeed 125:8,9
successful 54:18
103:13
suggest 23:10 25:21
48:16 74:22 75:2
suggested 137:22
suggesting 136:16
suggestion 41:10 95:13
132:1,16 133:19
134:9 135:7 161:2
suggestions 42:18
134:20 161:3
summarize 24:6
summer 53:12
support 4:12 58:11
62:1 125:14
supportive 8:18
supposed 60:7 63:17
144:4 147:15 150:13
surcharge 94:19
104:17
surcharges 95:5
sure 3:15 7:8 8:9 9:8
20:11 22:13 43:5,5
44:6,14 46:10 48:7
85:15 127:16 139:20
144:21 146:20 149:20
162:7
surge 103:2
surprised 142:3
surrendered 137:19
suspend 16:19 17:8
32:8
suspension 2:12 17:14
sustained 17:17
switching 67:3
system 5:13 23:21 31:1
31:2 32:13 71:17
92:10 106:9 113:4

114:17 115:16 119:7
132:2,7,10 154:10
156:4

T

T-A-D-E-S-S-E 123:5

T-E-F-E-R-I 59:12

table 105:11

Tadesse 122:22 123:1

123:5,7,15 128:18

129:1,3,12,16,21

130:2,7,18,22 131:4,9
131:13

tag 40:15 50:5,6,10

51:6 58:15 60:4,20

61:2,7,11 62:3 67:18

68:1,2,6,7 134:2

138:1,22 143:10,12

143:12,18 145:21

146:1 155:17,20,22

156:9

tags 8:16 10:16 61:5

64:5,12,14 65:9,10,10

68:18 69:4,4 134:7

137:19,21 138:2,4,19

139:3 142:5 143:17

145:20 146:11 149:6

154:13 156:11,12

take 3:8,13 11:16 13:12

23:11 27:1 30:14

35:20 40:5 42:14 51:5

56:22 83:20 86:11

88:9 90:4 91:22 95:7

95:8 100:2 107:16

109:9 112:12 113:21

117:13 118:21 124:17

138:8 149:21 158:17

159:8

taken 30:2 41:6 53:8

talk 35:15,15,16,20 36:1

36:16 38:13 39:5

41:17 47:21 48:14

49:8 58:3 59:15 73:13

73:14,18 75:20 76:5

83:18 105:12 106:22

107:9 119:22 120:8,9

121:11 126:4 129:8

131:5 141:16 151:7

152:12 153:16 156:6

talkative 124:9

talked 145:11

talking 25:15 47:10,13

74:4 79:8 92:2 100:13

107:12 133:11 144:1

tank 73:2

Tapscott 1:15 4:2,3

6:17,18 13:3,4,16

14:14,15 16:11,12

19:14,15 95:20 96:3

98:22 99:14 101:3,6

108:15 115:12 144:19

145:8,14 150:14,18

Target 103:16

Taurus 91:3

tax 142:1

taxes 135:22

taxi 50:11,18 51:7 53:10

58:10,20 63:11 65:4

81:13,18 86:6 102:22

110:22 114:11 118:12

124:1 141:15,20

143:18

taxicab 1:3 3:6 4:21 5:4

5:14 6:7,7,19 7:5,7,14

7:20 8:14,19 15:7

22:6 25:12 33:2 40:16

44:22 56:12 61:18

76:9 82:19 109:7

155:4

taxicabs 2:9 7:16 10:11

14:22 17:7 102:15

taxis 71:18

TCDC 25:13,17

team 124:14,15

Teamster 37:16 38:2

153:20

TEFERI 59:5,7,11

telephone 133:10

tell 28:8 53:4 59:15 64:8

76:13 77:17 78:7

108:17 109:2,14

114:9 117:16 118:5,7

119:15 121:12 125:1

126:20 127:19 139:8

159:12

telling 110:6 111:21

117:4 126:20 129:18

ten 76:14,14 96:10

111:19 157:7

tenant 145:13

tens 55:1

tenure 57:18

terms 100:8

tested 53:11

testified 29:3

testify 75:13,18 78:17

108:15 159:16

text 27:16 30:18 79:11

thank 4:11 5:2 15:16

16:15 17:20 18:18

26:20 27:11,12,14,15

33:15,18 36:12,13

37:14 38:5,6 39:13

41:10 44:8 49:3,9

51:7 58:21,22 59:13

62:10,11 66:3 67:12

67:14 73:6,9 79:17

80:5,8 97:13 106:18

118:18 122:2,3,4,18

129:12 130:18 131:20

133:18,19 135:7

136:22 137:1,3 141:7

151:4 152:22 153:4

153:18 158:4,21

159:2 161:13,15,20

162:9

Thanks 44:10

themselves 75:17

thing 22:4,7 33:9,9 34:7

34:22 41:6 52:1 54:11

77:19 78:2,16 93:21

95:1 108:2 109:19

110:13 114:9,22

115:1 116:6,21

117:12 121:16 125:15

126:6 138:3 147:11

154:7,18 155:19

156:14

things 4:19,20 20:4

24:2,17,19,20 25:14

30:12 32:4 61:4 84:3

92:9 99:7,11 100:5,14

103:4 105:9,16 107:9

115:10 116:18,19

119:21,21 125:11

126:12 128:19 153:19

161:9

think 7:6 18:5,13 21:2

24:13 29:13 46:21,22

48:15 54:14,16 55:4

57:4,5 70:16 74:1,3,8

77:18 86:12 98:1,4

103:11,20 104:20

105:7 114:11 120:12

120:14 121:6 124:12

124:13,21 125:2,12

125:19 126:3,20,21

128:4 129:7 130:14

132:6 134:16 135:10

135:21 158:21 161:8

thinking 51:5 53:18

54:12 56:11 101:8

102:13 103:19 115:1

115:11 116:1 123:18

125:19 126:4

third 143:4

thirdly 71:3

thorough 33:20

thoroughly 61:22

thought 96:9 114:8

115:8 116:3,11 129:4

129:4

thoughts 3:12 118:21

thousands 55:1,1,1

three 74:22 75:16 78:3

81:21 83:22 107:17

112:4 120:3 122:21

131:16

ticket 25:13,16 130:13

tickets 26:17,18

tidal 140:10

tie 107:1,20

time 4:17 12:3 19:22

25:17 27:1 37:20

42:22 45:15 46:20,21

51:20 52:10,10,17

57:12 61:9 62:10

64:10 65:18 66:14,18

68:16 74:20 82:3

89:17 96:20 98:10

99:20 106:14,14

116:6 122:4,9 126:11

128:20 130:3 131:12

143:3,3,4 145:18

153:12 159:5 161:19

times 5:4 22:9 125:21

137:20

title 7:21 14:22 17:4

25:3,4 26:7 29:10,13

57:13 58:14,16 60:4

60:12 67:17 79:13

90:21 95:14 150:21

150:22 152:19 155:21

today 61:10 149:9

159:9 161:12,17

told 43:2 60:20 61:3

63:15 75:19 76:11

138:7 139:12 142:4,6

149:10 155:12 157:12

157:17

tool 17:7,13

top 47:18 61:21,22

68:17 81:18,19

109:13 117:14 130:9

totaled 137:18

touch 72:13 147:3

Town 108:21,22 109:3

109:12

Toyota 91:3,3

train 93:18 114:8

transaction 43:19

transfer 61:11 62:4

69:4,4

transferable 68:6,19

transferred 68:8

transparency 37:18

transparent 6:8 35:9

transportation 103:10

105:4

travel 93:14

Travelers 44:21

treat 42:11 110:16,17

124:4
treated 40:20 41:5 42:7
Treble 80:16
tried 72:12 76:12
 110:19 137:20
trip 90:3
truck 69:21
truly 51:10
trunk 107:19,21
trust 154:14 158:3
truthful 31:22 89:5
try 53:9 101:16 102:16
 113:21 114:10 119:7
 125:11 136:15 143:3
trying 56:11 64:1 65:22
 66:6 113:7 114:1
 119:2 121:6 144:16
turn 54:5 120:11
turned 50:5
turning 61:1
twice 74:21 87:19
two 9:7 12:5 13:9,21
 21:3 27:17 29:18
 61:12 65:18 66:14
 77:17 80:15 82:12
 86:19 87:17 92:15,20
 96:18 97:3,16,21
 98:12 100:1,10
 106:10 111:7 120:3
 122:21 123:12,16
 127:22 128:18 131:14
 131:15 135:2 148:17
 153:7 155:1 158:6
two-thirds 99:8
tying 118:12
type 17:3 23:22 90:20
 135:22
types 105:9 115:10

U

Uber 22:4,12,20 26:8
 28:3 30:11 53:15
 54:18 57:6 82:4
 102:19,19 103:4
 104:5,12,13,15 130:8
 157:6,7
Uber's 53:2
Ubers 112:8
Uh 49:11
unacceptable 42:8
unanimous 12:14
underclass 36:5
undergoing 50:12
underpaid 36:5
underprivileged 36:5
understand 24:9 35:12
 43:13 50:11 53:18
 54:10 58:6,6,8 64:15

65:6 84:6 86:16 91:5
 91:14,15 92:1 94:18
 101:13 114:1 126:1
 144:17 152:8 154:8
 154:17,19 156:8
 158:1
understanding 43:17
 128:12
Understood 14:5 36:9
 97:8
unfair 38:19 51:3 54:19
 56:21
unfairly 42:7
unfortunate 43:15
unfortunately 154:5
 155:1,3,10,16 156:3
uniform 82:15 83:2
uninformed 56:17,17
union 84:20 93:1
 138:15
United 29:22 39:18 85:1
 85:2 93:6
Universal 145:5
universities 70:6
unlawful 17:19,19
unofficial 121:9
unrelated 24:2
unsafe 88:14
update 77:13 107:16
upfront 115:19
urban 99:8
urgent 49:3
use 2:9 14:22 95:14
 99:2 104:12 105:3
 107:20,20 115:3
 156:1
usually 29:21
utilize 109:15

V

V-A-L-E-N-C-I-A 21:22
V-E-R-N-O-N 69:15
vacancy 135:9
vague 81:19
Valencia 21:22
valid 50:9
value 68:9 114:15
vans 45:4,10 112:9
Various 99:11
vegetable 97:5
vehicle 2:9 5:4 7:20
 8:14,19 9:5 10:9 15:1
 17:19 29:16 32:21
 64:22 65:1 66:6,11,12
 67:4,19 68:2,3,4,18
 69:18,20 70:2,2,3,4
 71:2 73:5 74:18 89:2
 89:19 115:5
vehicle-for-hire 9:22
 11:6 15:7 23:17,18
 26:3,19 57:2 81:17
vehicle-for-hires 53:3
 53:16
vehicles 10:10 15:14
 30:11 69:16 71:5
 88:19 89:6 133:12
vehicles-for 14:20
 15:14 29:5
vehicles-for-hire 8:9
 10:12 22:16 23:6
 25:11
venting 30:22 31:6
vendor 30:20
vendors 127:3
Ventures 39:18
Vernon 69:9,14
versus 100:1
vetting 135:22
vibrant 92:10
victim 27:7 58:18
victimized 27:11
Victoria 91:4
view 98:22 160:22
viewpoint 136:20
violate 17:10
violated 17:15
violates 25:11 26:7
violating 32:9
violation 17:16 25:18
Virginia 17:10 71:13
 141:21 150:17
virtual 112:16
virtue 39:22
vision 81:10
visit 70:12
vitality 5:14 55:12
vocal 159:17
voice 52:7
volume 103:18
vote 2:7,9,11 11:12
 12:6,14,16 13:8,8,12
 13:18 14:18 15:18
 16:16,16 19:5 25:1
 47:6 75:19
voted 18:13 20:7 47:3,8
voter 60:5
votes 161:4
voting 13:21 14:2

W

wage 53:21
wait 2:7,7 11:19,22 14:4
 110:9
waiting 28:6
waits 14:1
waiver 81:16 118:10,11

walking 127:18
Walmart 103:12
want 4:10 5:2 11:2,3
 28:4 31:4 32:5 33:16
 35:4,15 37:20 38:4,13
 38:18 41:6 43:19
 44:14,14 45:16 46:7
 48:6,21 49:2 54:8,15
 55:2 56:14 57:8 58:5
 58:12,17 61:2,11 73:1
 73:14 76:1 77:1,1,10
 77:14 78:12 83:8
 84:10 89:20,20 95:18
 98:6 100:7 104:20
 105:5,21 107:9,16
 111:7 114:2,19 116:3
 116:18 117:16 119:3
 119:3 120:14 121:16
 121:16,18 125:11,12
 125:13,17,17,22
 127:18,19,19 130:20
 132:18,19,22 133:22
 134:16 136:19 142:21
 143:21 146:1 147:18
 147:19 151:3 152:6
 153:16 156:7 157:13
 160:3,4,8,18 161:1
wanted 4:11 23:3 39:11
 51:11 60:1 69:11 71:6
 107:11 111:20 116:4
 117:6
wants 24:9 55:20 73:13
 77:18 94:8 105:22
 106:22
warn 157:1
Washington 1:10 59:22
 60:5
Washingtonian 112:16
wasn't 69:10 70:2 71:8
 110:5 114:15 154:13
waste 33:3 126:10
watch 10:18 47:19
water 81:22
Waters 98:5 131:7
waves 140:10
way 5:22 6:1 18:14 33:1
 37:22 40:13 41:4 44:5
 44:5 46:7 53:7,22
 54:1 55:4 68:17 71:22
 72:15 76:22 77:3,8,8
 79:14 83:4,13 89:20
 104:21 105:15 115:7
 115:9 116:19 121:7
 123:9,11 124:21
 129:6,7 159:17
ways 5:15 55:5 103:21
 125:12
we'll 24:21 46:2,3 77:12

79:2 82:16 106:2,13
106:15 116:2 126:21
128:16 131:11,12,16
we're 3:10,10 20:12
34:19 42:9,10 46:22
47:8 52:3,4,5,8,13,21
54:1,3 55:5,6 56:2
58:2,17 62:18 77:6,7
79:15 84:3 92:6
101:18 102:21 104:4
104:13 105:16 112:10
119:6 124:14 126:9
126:19 128:10,15
132:2 140:9 143:2
153:12 160:9,14
we've 7:13 52:10 90:7
99:15 105:12 140:8
wearing 107:21,22
website 9:9 10:19 72:11
77:1 79:2 98:4 135:14
wedded 104:21
WEDNESDAY 1:7
week 7:14 38:7 42:15
61:10,20 77:16 121:8
138:8,8
weekly 77:13
weeks 9:8 10:19 42:6
50:22 77:17 123:12
123:16 138:5
weigh 114:5
welcome 6:18,21,22 7:4
21:10 26:21 37:17
38:5 45:1 59:14,19,20
80:7 131:19 159:1
went 28:21 30:22 60:8
70:12 109:21 118:1
143:7,16 144:22
145:10 162:14
West 71:13
whatsoever 25:19
123:22
wheel 70:3
wheelchair 15:2 39:19
40:3,12 41:12 45:4,9
47:11 66:5,13 67:3
68:5,15 132:5,11
133:4,12
wife 111:4,5
wildly 54:18
William 93:4
willing 40:11 59:14 76:5
102:15
win 52:6 54:6
wish 68:14 132:1
134:10,11 135:4
withdraw 9:3
withdrawal 8:2
withdrawn 9:12

withdrew 7:15
wonderful 4:8 20:19
73:15 161:9,18
wondering 22:5 100:4
word 24:1,3 56:22
words 79:11
work 6:6 10:14 22:1,6
37:18 48:2 56:4,16
57:1 62:3,18 65:16
72:21 84:4 86:4
109:20,22,22 112:2,3
112:4,4 119:3,4
126:21 157:6 160:2
workers 116:14
working 5:18 6:21 7:6
7:13 32:2 36:4 48:15
53:1 86:7 127:13
134:19 155:13
Works 71:11
worse 155:11
worth 81:5
would've 118:2
write 31:3 128:19
writers 25:16
wrong 47:7 81:10 87:5
91:12 135:10

X

Y

Y-I-K-U-N-O 44:20
year 10:2 28:14 47:12
74:6,14 76:19 89:22
93:15 97:2,16 111:19
118:4 122:15 132:5
138:10
years 6:20 8:2 22:2
50:2,4,5 60:1 61:12
74:7,8,9 93:15 94:6
96:18 97:4,21 98:12
99:18 100:1,10
106:10 108:11 110:18
111:1,5 112:15,18,22
117:6,17 120:19
121:2 138:21 154:14
157:3,4,7
yelling 106:3
yesterday 143:9,16,19
149:6
Yikuno 44:19,20 47:14
48:6,11,13,18 49:9
York 56:10
young 119:10
younger 112:18,18,18
Yusuf 141:14

Z

0

04 108:21 109:3,11
117:13 118:5,6
08 109:12 117:13 118:7
118:8

1

1 2:7 11:13,15 13:22
10 2:8 16:17 31:18
76:11,12
10:00 1:10
10:09 3:2
100 80:19,19,22 85:20
85:21 86:3 91:17
157:13,14
1000 40:19 155:6
11th 106:8
12:56 162:14
13 2:10 16:17 31:18
50:2
14 1:7
15 16:17 31:19 89:22
15th 10:2
16 2:12
18 2:14 14:20 15:12

2

2 2:7 11:13
20 2:17 22:2 62:4
20,000 91:8
2000 153:21
2002 82:18
2003 137:17
2004 63:15
2004's 63:18
2006 40:1 137:17
141:19 144:3,4
146:11 150:5
2007 138:4,4
2012 61:9 82:20 90:16
2013 90:16 91:3
2014 23:19 90:16
2015 1:7 90:16 109:4
160:4
21st 56:12
2235 1:10
25,000 111:2
260,000 63:20 65:3

3

3 2:2,4,9 14:18
30 29:21
31 7:21 17:4 25:3 26:7
29:10,13 57:13 58:14
58:17 60:12 67:17
95:14 152:19
31st 47:12

35 59:22

4

4 2:6,11 16:17 19:18
31:15,17,18 32:11
78:13,18
40 50:4
400,000 118:1
41 112:21

5

5 20:19 46:18 110:7,9
50 108:11 120:19 121:2
500,000 117:20
506.2 60:12
58 6:20 158:10
59 158:9

6

6 39:20 40:3,12 45:3,9
46:13,18 47:11 132:5
60 46:22 94:6 111:1
117:5 142:13
609 74:18
609.4 74:4,9 76:13,14
609.5 74:13
65 94:6
69 107:6

7

7 16:17 31:18
700 154:12 156:11
78,000 109:13 117:14
79 119:9

8

8 11:19 12:3 14:1,4,19
15:6 78:19

9

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This is to certify that the foregoing transcript


In the matter of: Commission Meeting

Before: DC Taxicab Commission

Date: 01-14-15

Place: Washington, DC

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Court Reporter

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