

DANIEL R. GARODNICK
COUNCIL MEMBER, DISTRICT 4

DISTRICT OFFICE:
211 E. 43RD ST., SUITE 1205
NEW YORK, NY 10017
TEL: (212) 818-0580
FAX: (212) 818-0706

CITY HALL OFFICE:
250 BROADWAY, ROOM 1762
NEW YORK, NY 10007
TEL: (212) 788-7393
FAX: (212) 442-1457



THE COUNCIL
OF
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

CHAIR

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

COMMITTEES

LAND USE
EDUCATION
TRANSPORTATION
WATERFRONTS
RULES, PRIVILEGES & ELECTIONS
ZONING & FRANCHISES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Cory Epstein (646) 946-4519

**COMBATING CON ARTISTS AT NYC AIRPORTS:
COUNCIL MEMBER DAN GARODNICK TO INTRODUCE
LEGISLATION PROTECTING CUSTOMERS FROM PREDATORY,
PRICE-GOUGING, ILLEGAL SCAMMERS BEHIND THE WHEEL**

Legislation adds new monetary penalties for fake cabbies who dupe consumers and claim to be licensed for-hire vehicle (FHV) drivers.

Legislation also gives Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) authority to suspend and eventually revoke TLC licenses of repeat offenders who operate vehicles illegally or lend them to individuals to perform pick-ups without a TLC license.

Legislation ensures stronger enforcement by accelerating time frame for administrative trials.

Garodnick: We must ensure that New Yorkers and visitors alike have safe, regulated, and licensed transportation options, and with my legislation, we will put fraudsters out of business.

July 20, 2017 – Today, New York City Council Member Dan Garodnick will introduce consumer protection measures aimed at combating con-artists who pretend to be licensed FHV drivers, perform illegal pick-ups, and take advantage of travelers across New York City -- especially at airports.

“Too often, travelers are ripped off by unlicensed scammers behind the wheel,” said **Council Member Dan Garodnick**. “And with every illegal ride, our hard working, law-abiding TLC-approved drivers miss out on a hail. We must ensure that New Yorkers and visitors alike have safe, regulated, and licensed transportation options, and with my legislation, we will put fraudsters out of business.”

“This bill speaks directly to the challenge of protecting the public from predatory scammers at our airports and on our streets who cheat, steal and lie from the passengers who unfortunately trusted them,” said **Taxi and Limousine Commission Chair and COO Meera Joshi**, “and it will give us new tools and deterrents to help us get these bad actors off the road permanently.”

This legislation targets con artists who prey on individuals across New York City. This behavior is especially prevalent at our airports, where con-artists target [visitors](#) who may be tired after a long flight or unfamiliar with our taxi and FHV policies. According to [The New York Post](#), the TLC performed 49

arrests and issued 4,524 summonses for violations at our airports in the first half of 2016. One [study](#) by Uber found that more than 2,000 of these illegal pick-ups take place each week at JFK and LaGuardia airports.

This predatory behavior can take many forms. In some instances, FHV-licensed drivers will poach a passenger who has arranged a ride with a different car. Other times, individuals without a TLC license will represent themselves as FHV drivers and offer rides to customers. In each case of these illegal transactions, hustlers [shamelessly overcharge](#) travelers, no sales tax is collected, and hardworking, law-abiding TLC-licensed drivers miss out on a paying customer.

The legislation introduced by Council Member Garodnick brings our laws into the 21st century, closes loopholes to ensure stronger enforcement, and increases penalties so that they are not just a slap on the wrist and part of the cost of doing business.

“Illegal hustling endangers the safety and consumer protections of millions of New Yorkers and visitors and has reached crisis levels in New York,” said **Ron Sherman, President of the Metropolitan Taxicab Board of Trade**, which represents the owners of 5,500 yellow medallion taxicabs. “This bill will empower regulators with the tools they need to meaningfully prosecute dangerous illegal hustling at the airports and throughout the City. More must be done, but this is encouraging news for all law-abiding, tax-paying licensed drivers that play by the rules.”

"The LRT wholeheartedly supports the efforts of Councilman Garodnick to stop illegal conduct in the industry. Illegal pick-ups threaten the vitality of our industry. The bill introduced today will help protect drivers and bases and is in the best interest of the industry," said **Steven Shanker, Executive Director, Livery Round Table**.

"Rides from illegal scammers hurt hard-working drivers that follow the rules and those rides lack the consumer protections that Uber trips provide. We support efforts to crack down on this activity and we look forward to reviewing this legislation in detail," said **Alix Anfang, Uber spokesperson**.

The legislation addresses various types of illegal activity. Below is a description of the penalties assigned by this legislation to the different types of bad actors in the FHV sector:

For FHV drivers who operate their vehicles in illegal manner (*i.e. FHV driver doing an illegal street hail*)

- Increases monetary penalty (\$1500 for first violation, \$2000 for second).
- Give TLC the authority to suspend drivers' TLC licenses after the second violation or revoke after the third violation.

For FHV drivers who misrepresent themselves in order to pick up passengers who ordered a different car (*i.e. FHV driver approaches a customer who has already ordered an car on a specific platform, claims to be the driver of the car they ordered, and then offers the passenger a ride*)

- Adds new monetary penalties (\$2000 for first violation, \$4000 for second violation, \$7000 for third violation).
- Gives TLC the authority to suspend drivers' TLC licenses after the second violation or revoke after the third violation.

For individuals who falsely advertise themselves as affiliated with a specific dispatch service provider (*i.e. an individual without a TLC license places a logo for a specific e-hail company on their*

car and claims to work on this platform, or a TLC-licensed driver who is not affiliated with a specific e-hail company represents that they are).

- Adds new monetary penalty (\$500 for first violation, \$1500 for second violation, \$3000 for third violation).
- Gives TLC the authority to suspend drivers' TLC licenses after the second violation or revoke after the third violation.

For TLC-licensed individuals who lend their TLC-licensed vehicle to someone who is not properly licensed.

- Gives TLC the authority to suspend drivers' TLC licenses after the second violation or revoke after the third violation.

Additionally, the legislation SHORTENS from two years to two months the amount of time violators can move to vacate determinations and seek new hearings with Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH). With the current two year window, there is no accountability, enforcement has little teeth, and violators can evade punishment.

###