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NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 9, 2018
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MAYOR DE BLASIO, CITY COUNCIL, ADVOCATES CELEBRATE PASSAGE OF FOR-HIRE VEHICLES LEGISLATION

NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio, Speaker Corey Johnson, the City Council and advocates today joined a rally at Union Square Park celebrating the passage of for-hire vehicle legislation. Among other things, the package of legislation will set a minimum pay for drivers and mitigate congestion by placing a one-year pause on the number of for-hire vehicles app-based companies are able to have on New York City roads.

“The City is sending a clear message: we’re putting hardworking New Yorkers ahead of corporations,” said Mayor Bill de Blasio. “The City Council has spoken boldly, and now we can act. We are taking immediate action for the benefit of more than 100,000 hard-working New Yorkers who deserve a fair wage, and halting the flood of new cars grinding our streets to a halt. I’d like to thank Speaker Johnson, Council Member Levin, the City Council and advocates for seeing this legislation through.”

“The City Council has taken a big step toward creating a fair and equitable framework for overseeing the for-hire vehicle industry in our city. FHV drivers should be able to support themselves and their families without working unhealthy hours, and they shouldn’t have to work longer and longer with each passing month because thousands of new cars are flooding the streets. I’m proud of this package of bills, and I am confident we will see meaningful change that benefits this city,” said City Council Speaker Corey Johnson.

At the rally, the Mayor announced:

That he will be signing the legislation on Tuesday, August 14th, 2018.

The City will stop issuing new for-hire licenses that same day, with the exception of wheelchair-accessible vehicles.

The City will initiate a study to more comprehensively manage the changing industry to reduce congestion and protect workers by ensuring fair pay.

The City will introduce and adopt a new minimum compensation rule at the Taxi and Limousine Commission within 75 days. Once adopted, it will increase for-hire vehicle driver take-home pay by approximately 20 percent on average – that’s more than \$6,000 per year.

“Yesterday was a historic day. The New York City Council led by Speaker Corey Johnson along with my For Hire Vehicle Committee passed some of the most comprehensive legislation halting app-based ride sharing services and initiating a study on their effect in NYC. This is the first

legislation of its kind in the nation and it will stand as a template for other large cities facing issues with their taxi industry. Thank you to all my colleagues who were a part of this package of legislation and we will continue to work for a more fair & equitable New York City,” said Council Member Ruben Diaz, Sr., Chair of the Committee on For-Hire Vehicles, Sponsor of Intros. 634-B, 838-C, 958-A.

“In a just a few years, the number of for-hire vehicles in our city has increased dramatically, snarling traffic and sparking a race to the bottom where all drivers are struggling to make more than poverty wages,” said Council Member Stephen Levin, Sponsor of Intro. 144-B. “An average of 2,000 additional vehicles hit the streets every month, while drivers already spend nearly half their time with empty seats. Doing nothing was not an option. I'm proud New York City is leading the way, becoming the first city to comprehensively and thoughtfully address this issue. I thank my council colleagues, Speaker Johnson, and Mayor de Blasio for their support, leadership, and courage to do what is right.”

“I'm proud that my bill will make New York City the first city in the country to establish a minimum pay standard and living wage requirement for Uber and Lyft drivers,” said Council Member Brad Lander, Sponsor of Intro. 890-B. “These new laws will ensure drivers are paid enough to make ends meet, maintain the level of service provided by these companies today, reduce congestion, and support accessibility. Huge thanks to the courageous for-hire drivers for organizing tirelessly and ringing the alarm bell on driver pay – and to Mayor de Blasio, the Taxi and Limousine Commission and Council Speaker Corey Johnson for taking leadership on this issue.”

“We should all be able to make an honest living whether it's driving a yellow or green taxi, livery, black car or an app-based vehicle, and we should all be governed by the same rules,” said Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez, Chair of the Committee on Transportation. “The package of bills passed by the Council yesterday will level the playing field. It will allow policy-makers an opportunity to step back and proceed thoughtfully on how to best improve ground transit in the city.”

“This victory belongs to yellow taxi, green cab, livery, black car, Uber and Lyft drivers who united together in our union to transform our shared struggle and heartbreak into hope and strength. The legislation passed by City Council didn't just set a precedent for our city, it set a precedent for the entire world as companies like Uber and Lyft use technological innovation to return us to a time of sweated labor, destroying lives and livelihoods. Yesterday, we took the first step toward ending the crisis of poverty devastating New York City's professional drivers. Tomorrow we will continue to fight,” said Bhairavi Desai, Executive Director of the New York Taxi Workers Alliance.

“This victory shows the power that workers coming together in a common purpose, speaking out and supporting each other. This was possible because drivers from all sectors -- yellow, green and livery cabs, and those working for app-based companies -- joined together, organized and did not give up, even as many of them continued to drive long shifts to keep up. We will continue to support the Taxi Workers Alliance and all drivers as they seek a just system that will allow them

to support their families and benefit their communities,” said Héctor J. Figueroa, President of 32BJ Service Employees International Union.

“I was proud to support this package and I applaud my colleagues for their critical leadership. I look forward to continued partnership as we assess the For-Hire Vehicle industry and identify ways to sustain livable wages and provide critical transportation services, both of which are of tremendous significance to all New Yorkers,” said Council Majority Leader, Laurie A. Cumbo.

“I am proud that NYC is the first to enact legislation to support for-hire vehicle drivers. Every day we hear complaints that NYC has become too expensive for hard working New Yorkers and public transportation has become increasingly challenging. For several years, for-hire-vehicle drivers found a way to make a decent living while customers found a better way to get around all five boroughs. But due to an unregulated industry, we now have too much congestion and too many vehicles on the road causing serious competition between drivers. This package of legislation will help all drivers and everyday New Yorkers navigate throughout the city in a more efficient, safe and affordable way,” said Council Member Alicka Ampry-Samuel.

“I am proud to have voted in favor of legislation to regulate the for-hire vehicle industry. The Council's package is bold, comprehensive, and influential - not only will it mitigate traffic congestion throughout the City, but it will also ameliorate working conditions for drivers," said Council Member Diana Ayala. "Additionally, as the Chair of the Council's Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities, and Addiction, I am thrilled this package includes an exception for wheelchair accessible vehicles. I commend my colleagues for their efforts in passing this legislation and thank Mayor de Blasio for swiftly signing it into law.”

“The time for us to take action to address congestion – while giving drivers from all sectors an opportunity to make a living – is long overdue. With roughly 2,000 new for-hire vehicles being added to the road every single month, more and more Lower Manhattan residents are forced to suffer from the traffic safety and quality of life issues that stem from worsening congestion on our over-burdened streets. By putting a temporary cap to the number of new for-hire vehicle licenses, we as a City can push the pause button to better understand how these vehicles are utilized, level the playing field for drivers, and ensure that our streets are safe for children and seniors – all while continuing to give riders from all five boroughs the option to use their transportation method of choice. I thank Council Members Stephen Levin and Brad Lander and Speaker Corey Johnson for their tireless work to bring long-awaited equity to this industry,” said Council Member Margaret S. Chin.

“Working closely together, the Mayor and the Council have produced legislation that will protect the over 100,000 taxi and for-hire vehicle drivers in our city,” said Council Member Daniel Dromm. “The legislation will make our streets safer and cleaner by reducing traffic congestion while ensuring that rideshare drivers earn living wages. As a Council Member who represents a large number of for-hire vehicle drivers, I celebrate this achievement which will improve the lives of many who call NYC home.”

“The package of legislation breaks new ground about standards and efficiency in the for-hire

vehicle industry. Midtown Manhattan, in my district, has come to a crawl due to congestion. This gives the city time to implement meaningful strategies to reduce congestion and increase efficiency,” said Council Member Keith Powers.

“The bills we passed this week maintain current service for drivers and consumers, and give us a temporary pause in unrestrained growth while we study the effects of for-hire vehicles on our roads and on our economy. While the issues are complex, the goal is simple: we do not want one more suicide of a taxi driver. We will not stand by while lives are destroyed. New Yorkers deserve a system that works for riders and drivers of all for-hire vehicles, and this package of legislation creates a path to a better system,” said Council Member Debi Rose.

“I was proud to co-sponsor the Council’s just passed for-hire vehicle legislation. Ensuring every driver in New York City earns a decent wage, tackling the nuances of congestion, and properly regulating app-based vehicles is a fair, evidence-based, and comprehensive approach. Even better, the 12-month moratorium on new licenses exempts wheelchair-accessible vehicles -- a powerful incentive to finally start adding accessible vehicles to the road. Thank you to Council Member Levin and Speaker Johnson for their strong leadership on this important issue,” said Council Member Helen Rosenthal.

Assembly Member Harvey Epstein said, “While we have to recognize the yellow taxi industry’s history in relation to serving New Yorkers of color, we also have to recognize the impact that congestion has on our city’s quality of life. This legislation will help us to take a step back and evaluate the impact of overcrowding on our streets.”

“Same as we limit the number of yellow cabs, we need to limit the number of app-based cars,” said Assembly Member Richard Gottfried. “The rides can be a great convenience, but we also need to control congestion and protect the livelihood of career drivers.”g

“There is no reason billion dollar app-based companies shouldn’t have to adhere to the same regulations as NY based businesses, regulations that were put in place to reduce congestion and protect New York’s drivers,” said Assembly Member David I. Weprin. “This cap levels the playing field for medallion owners and drivers of yellow and green cabs, who adhere to caps of their own, and gets these empty, congestion causing, cars off of our streets. I commend Mayor Bill de Blasio and Speaker Corey Johnson for taking this bold step and look forward to working with them to take additional steps to protect working New Yorkers”

“As an organization that has many cab drivers as members, and many more family members of drivers, we say it is 'about time' that some regulations be put into place for the taxi industry to control the devastation and uncontrolled race to the bottom for wages. Credit goes to the taxi drivers from the Taxi Workers Alliance for leading the way by proposing policies based on their experiences and wisdom, and further reaffirming why the voices and organizing of workers themselves is so important,” said Fahd Ahmed, Executive Director, DRUM (Desis Rising Up & Moving).

“The Interfaith Center of New York welcomes the common sense reforms passed today by the

NYC Council. The 12 month-freeze on new for-hire vehicle drivers and the provision for a fifteen dollar minimum wage are humane steps towards helping suffering families and promoting a sustainable environment in our shared city. New York's diverse religious leaders applaud the City Council's steps to mitigate the results of unchecked profit-gain for a few corporations while providing a decent livelihood for drivers and a reasonable array of transportation options for riders within all five boroughs," said The Rev. Chloe Breyer, Executive Director, Interfaith Center of New York.

"The City Council approval of a cap on for-hire vehicle licenses is a crucial step towards supporting Muslim and immigrant drivers who make significant contributions to the taxi and for hire industry in New York City. Drivers working for different companies have shared with us that they were not making enough fares, and worried about how to pay rent and feed their families. When half a dozen drivers take their own lives because of financial problems, the urgency to prioritize their welfare is clear. Drivers are not expendable and they deserve fair wages. The City Council approval of a cap on for-hire vehicle licenses for 12 months is a reasonable period to conduct a fair survey that analyzes the industry. We commend the Council and Mayor for their moral leadership and their balanced approach," said Abdelhafid Djemil, PhD, President, Majlis Ash-Shura-Islamic Leadership Council of New York.

"This legislation represents an important step in bringing NYC closer toward the goal of economic justice we all share; by assuring a decent, stable livelihood for the hard working immigrant taxi drivers that move this city. They deserve dignity, and a living wage; the City Council bills help them achieve that. 'Justice, justice you shall pursue,'" said Rabbi Michael Feinberg, Executive Director, Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition.

"Our groups supported the cap bill because it makes a smart exception for wheelchair-accessible vehicles. We applaud Mayor de Blasio, City Council Speaker Johnson and the council for taking this crucial step toward wheelchair accessibility," said Edith Prentiss, Chair of the Taxis For All Campaign.

"Three years ago, the mayor saw the need for a cap on for hire vehicles to prevent the flooding of tens of thousands of additional vehicles. The mayor was 100% correct. For the first time in three years, medallion owners have hope that the city is moving in the right direction. We are hoping that City elected officials will work to protect, as stated in the TLC rules, those of us who invested hundreds of thousands of thousands of dollars in taxi medallions, and establish a more level playing field for the drivers," said Carolyn Protz, Member, NY Taxi Medallion Owner Driver Association.

"Uber, Lyft and other for-hire companies now have a choice: They can kvetch about this common-sense rule or they can start putting wheelchair-accessible vehicles on the road. We will continue to work with the Taxis Workers Alliance for fairness for drivers and riders," said Joe Rappaport, Executive Director, Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled, Member of Taxis For All Campaign.

"As a gay man and former taxi driver, I know what it's like when the deck is stacked against you.

Taxi drivers work long hours and take on significant financial burdens to earn a living in New York City. The flood of ride-hail vehicles has put their livelihoods - and even their lives - in jeopardy. The LGBT community stands with the Taxi drivers and supports enacting these sensible regulations that will help level the playing field for hardworking New Yorkers,” said Allen Roskoff, President of the Jim Owles Liberal Democratic Club.

“Chhaya CDC congratulates the NYTA for its tireless work organizing around the issue of regulating the gig economy, which has had dire effects for the livelihoods of drivers in New York City. We are pleased that the New York City Council listened to the voices of those who are directly impacted,” said Annetta Seecharran, Executive Director, Chhaya CDC.

“This bold step to do the right thing for New York - and for New York’s struggling taxi and car service drivers, who are finding it more and more difficult to make a decent living - will set an example for other cities that standing up to powerful corporations on behalf of hard-working members of the community is the right choice. We applaud Speaker Johnson, Mayor Bill de Blasio, and City Council Members for supporting New York drivers, not only by setting a cap on ride-hailing app vehicles and a minimum pay standard for the drivers, but also by reversing illegal street hail penalties,” said Yanki Tshering, Executive Director of the Business Center for New Americans.

"Powerful corporations have increasingly taken control of our economy and, in many ways, of our democracy, for their own financial gain. But this moment shows that massive wealth and power does not always prevail. This moment shows that workers, their organizations, and the brave and clear-minded elected officials who have their backs, can still win. And we must continue to win for the working people of this city. Congratulations to the Taxi Workers Alliance, SEIU Local 32bj, Speaker Corey Johnson, and Mayor De Blasio,” said Deborah Axt, Co-Executive Director of Make the Road New York.

“Most people cannot understand the suffering felt by hard working taxi drivers in New York City. But Speaker Corey Johnson, Council Members, and Mayor Bill de Blasio felt their struggle and heard their voices. The passage of these bills will positively impact thousands of our community members and will help the hundred thousand taxi thousands across New York City,” said Urgen Sherpa, president of the United Sherpa Association.

“For generations, driving a taxi was a way to realize the American dream. But today drivers and medallion owners in New York City are barely able to feed their families. The passage of this legislation gives our community hope and the confidence that City Council and Mayor have our back. We hope this is just the beginning and look forward to additional measures to help both medallion owners who have invested heavily and all taxi drivers who work hard on NYC streets,” said Harpreet Singh Toor, Chairman of Public Policy & External Affairs at the Sikh Cultural Society.