

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

By Councilman Rubén Díaz Sr.

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NOT FOR SALE, NOT FOR RENT, AND NOT FOR HIRE

You should know that the City of New York has become the first city in the nation that has regulated Uber.

It is also very important for you to know that even those responsible for Uber being the cause of drivers taking their lives, and the devastation of the Yellow Taxi industry, now are taking and claiming credit for what The For Hire Vehicle Committee has accomplished.

The For Hire Vehicle Committee was created by Council Speaker Corey Johnson under a negotiation with Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., and the Bronx Democratic County Chairman, Assemblyman Marcos Crespo.

After becoming aware of my efforts to solve the problems of The For Hire Vehicle drivers, and my serious commitment and concern for this industry, Assemblyman Crespo was very influential in convincing the Speaker, Corey Johnson to appoint me as the Chair of this newly created Committee. This Committee is geared toward exploring the issues that negatively impact the drivers of the taxi industry, especially the livery drivers under the Transportation Committee which was led by Councilmember Ydanis Rodriguez.

Councilmember Rodriguez and some of the same councilmembers that are now claiming credit were responsible, in 2016, for approving legislation to increase penalties up to \$10,000.00 for those drivers picking up passengers in the street in order to give Uber and others the opportunity to be the ones allowed to do street hails.

By taking away the Taxi Section from the Transportation Committee, and creating the newly independent Committee, Speaker Johnson gave me the authority and the opportunity to hold public hearings and to question, even The Taxi and Limousine Commissioner, about the abuses done to livery drivers and allowing Uber to devastate the Yellow Taxi industry.

There were some central council staff and some councilmembers working to put an end to my efforts as The Committee Chairman, with the hopes of impeding some of my initial legislation. In their efforts, sometimes we were confronted by some individuals that even ignored the Speakers instructions.

Today this legislation has passed, and I have to recognize the efforts of the Committee Counsel Mr. Christopher Lynn, who on many occasions had to become a thorn on the side of many. This was to ensure that what had to be done was done correctly.

The support, that the For Hire Vehicles Committee, received from our Council Speaker Corey Johnson, and his chief of Staff, Mr. Jason Goldman was vital allowing us to move forward in accomplishing our goals on behalf of the Taxi industry. Their support was honest, sincere and greatly appreciated.

The City Council's Central staff, Ms. Malak Masderdean and Mr. Louis Cholea-Brown, Mr. Hector Figueroa President of 32BJ, The Metropolitan Taxi Cab Board of Trade, Ms. Bhairavi Desai from The NY Taxi Workers Alliance and Mr. Richard Lipsky and the Drivers with the Yellow Cowboy Hats, Councilmembers Brad Lander and Steven Levin were all extremely helpful in our endeavors.

By the way, it was Christopher Lynn who was the most instrumental in writing and helping others write their Legislations.

Finally, it was I who confronted everyone. Some confrontations were contentious especially the ones I had with the Commissioner of the TLC in order for everyone to understand that this committee meant business. Also, these confrontations were intended to send a message to those who were not paying attention to the Committee in the beginning.

There were some reporters that tried to make news by twisting everything, and questioning my integrity and honesty, implying that this legislation was motivated by political contributions. This not true! And this is not right.

You should know that my only intention was to bring equality and justice to the taxi industry, that for many years had been used, abused, and ignored by everyone including the NYC Administrations.

The press and some of my colleagues have refused to give me any credit or acknowledge that it was the efforts of my Committee for this historic moment in NYC. However, everyone, Uber and company know that no matter how much money, lies and scare tactics, there is now, a For Hire Vehicles Committee, in the NYC Council with a Chairman that are not for sale, not for rent, and not for hire.

I am Councilman Ruben Diaz and this what you should know.