

Cab Gab
by Abe Mittleman

Why Did They Pick On Us?

I'm incensed! I can't believe what the State of New York has done to medallion taxi drivers, taxi owners and taxi passengers in the City of New York. When the final bill was done a tax that would have taxed taxi cabs in the entire 12 county MTA region was only imposed on medallion taxis in New York City.

To tax taxi passengers 50 cents a ride in order to raise funds for the MTA is wrong!

To ask taxi drivers to collect this tax when passengers know full well they can balance the tax against the tip they would otherwise give to the drivers is wrong!

Although it is not yet clear how this tax will be collected from the drivers, if it is at all possible, owners may be asked to collect it from the drivers and then be responsible to pay this tax to New York State. This is wrong!

To limit our ability to raise fares when expenses of both taxi owners and drivers are rising is wrong!

They knew all this and they did it anyway!

But don't blame the Republicans this time. Blame the Democrats. It was the elected Democratic Senators and Assemblymen who voted for this. Most of these Democrats represent the neighborhoods where Medallion taxi service is scarce if at all. In case you didn't notice livery taxis were not included in this tax. Surprise, Surprise! Not really, they knew who they were benefitting and they also knew who they were hurting!

You have to wonder : Why did they pick on taxis? There were hundreds of other businesses they could have picked on.

Just think of all the businesses and ways that cater to the rich that they could have picked on. Hotel Rooms, beauty salons, gymnasiums, tennis facilities, golf facilities, sporting events, stock and bond transactions, political donations, these just off the top of my head. I don't know too many because I'm not rich enough to

be in with the rich insiders. But if they weren't going to just pass the MTA expenses on to the MTA's users and thought they needed to tax others this is just a short list of where they could have gotten some of the money.

No, they decided to tax business that employ millions of people who are just eking out a living and taxi riders, some of whom just have the price of the taxi fare and in many cases use taxis as a necessity and not as a luxury!

I already mentioned that excluded from this taxi tax were the livery taxis. But, one of the reasons they may have picked on medallion taxis is because now that we have a system where every fare and which driver did it is recorded and archived it won't be hard to send the tax bill to that driver or owner of the taxi. In the case of all the other businesses many of their transactions are not on paper.

Having said all this I believe that even though the bill was passed the debate will go on. I think that some of the Democrats that voted for this will not be reelected. With a little luck for us this insane tax bill that was passed will be repealed. But, what will it cost us in the mean time?

Cell Phones Returned

I like finding Cell Phones. Recently I separately had two passengers leave behind their cell phones.

It may seem like a pain in the butt when one is left behind. Many drivers may not even try to return them. Aside from being wrong not to return them it is counter productive.

Over the years I have recovered many cell phones in my taxi and I only drive one or two days a week. I have to assume from these common occurrences that thousands of cell phones are left behind in all the taxis. It's usually the next passenger that alerts you to the lost item.

It's really not hard to find the owners. In order to so all you have to do is call one or two persons with the lost cell phone on the owners list of contacts. When doing so, the caller ID shows whom you are calling the person who the phone belongs to. The rest is easy. They usually know how to contact that person on another phone.

Another way is to use the lost cell phone and call your cell phone. This should show you the number of the lost cell phone. You can then call the lost cell phone and wait for the voice mail and leave a message for the owner. Messages can be retrieved with another phone and chances are real good that the person who lost the phone will get the message.

Of course you can just wait for an incoming call to the phone, answer it and find out from the caller who owns it.

Twice this happened to me in the last few weeks and each time I was handed a twenty dollar bill when I returned the phone!