

Cab Gab

by Abe Mittleman

Long Summer

It was a long summer. As many drivers had been complaining of how slow it was this summer, I do also agree. Were there any reasons we could blame this on? If so, can we look forward to business picking up in the future?

Some thought that one of the reasons it has been slow, not only in the summer, but for some time prior, was that the slow economy was forcing people to cut back on their expenses. Another reason it may have seemed business was slow was that more of our taxis were on the road at any given time due to drivers who needed work because they were laid off from other jobs.

But, don't worry! I feel better times are ahead.

The news media has been reporting that the economy is picking up steam. Coincidentally, I did notice, at least for me, that business was better the last two weeks in August.

It will be burdensome starting November 1, when we will be required to charge our passengers an extra fifty cents for the benefit of the MTA. This is an injustice and many drivers will be extremely upset when this occurs. You may not agree with me. But, I believe that group riding just may be our ace-in-the-hole against this injustice.

Group riding will soon be tested by the TLC at the major terminals where it can be controlled by dispatchers. There are many who feel that this will be counter productive. They think that while some taxis will have multiple fares many others will be empty because of this. I tend to disagree.

I could be wrong, but I think it will create more business for us. I also think it will tempt many of the MTA's customers to use our taxis instead. Just ask yourself, If you didn't take taxis because of your ability to afford one. And now with group riding, you can take a taxi for a reduced price that in most cases is competitive with bus or subway fares, wouldn't you switch? I think many will switch. This will keep more taxis busy.

Trip Records

I would have never thought this but I have recently read that drivers are being charged for copies of trip records. This is an outrage. These trip records that had been handwritten until our current system of electronic trip sheets was introduced were always available at times of need. Rarely have drivers been charged for these records in the past. Now it seems to have become a standard practice.

They are usually needed when a driver is charged with an offense. Not only is it mandatory to have such records at hearings, but often to prepare a defense the trip record helps the driver to remember the incident in question. Drivers may also want to review for one reason or another credit card transactions and fees.

Not only should drivers not be charged for these records, but they should have computer access to their personal trip records just as the medallion owner does. I'm sure it's possible for this to be done without the driver having full access to other records that they need not be privy to.

Health Care-More Truths

In last months Mini Press I told you of how Health Insurance companies buy politicians and distort the facts in order to keep a firm hold on their monopoly and windfall profits made at the expense of honest people who need quality health care. I hope you watched the video I recommended. If you missed it here again is the link to watch this video on the internet. This is a tell all video. Journalist Bill Moyers interviews Wendell Potter. Mr. Potter is a former Vice President of Cigna, one of the largest health insurers in the United States. Mr. Potter tells all.

<http://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/07312009/watch.html>

There still is very much misinformation being subversively spread by these crooks. Recently in the Daily News some of this misinformation was addressed.

Here is what was reported:

Euthanasia Counseling: Sarah Palin fueled this canard: "The America I know and love is not one in which my parents or my baby with Down Syndrome will have to stand in front of Obama's 'death panel' so his bureaucrats can decide...whether they are worthy of health care."

The Annenberg Public Policy Center dismisses as "nonsense" claims that Congress encourages suicide. Obama told a New Hampshire town hall audience it's ridiculous to believe the government intends to "pull the plug on Grandma."

Forget Your Favorite Doctor: As Obama repeatedly points out, "If you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor." That's true, the AARP says: "Every proposal would allow people to choose their own doctors and their own hospitals."

Say Goodbye to Your Private Health Plan: The White House says that won't happen - but it might if small business owners decide to stop their health insurance, forcing employees to find an alternative program.

Benefits for Illegals: There is no taxpayer-funded health care for any illegal immigrants in any reform bill.

Rationed Care: Some critics claim it will result in arbitrary denials and delays. Experts say there are no provisions in the legislation to ration care - for the elderly, injured or the sick.

Huge Government Takeover: Never mind that the feds already run massive - and highly popular - medical programs, including Medicare; Medicaid; Veterans Administration health programs; Tricare for the military and their families, and federal employees' health insurance.

Higher Taxes: Almost certainly true, especially for wealthier Americans. The only question is where Congress sets the "rich" threshold requiring higher income taxes.

Deficit Busting: White House aides insist any health care reform will be deficit-neutral. Skeptics say his plan will add tens of billions to the national debt. Obama claims that unless the spiraling costs of health care are restrained, the economy will eventually be wrecked.

Medicare Whacks: Obama wants to chop Medicare spending by billions of dollars by cutting out waste, duplication and overpayments to doctors and hospitals. But boo-birds are wrong when they claim Medicare benefits for seniors will be reduced. That would be political suicide.

Abortion Coverage: None of the bills working their way through Congress provides any federal funds for abortion.

If you haven't done so yet, call your representatives. Tell them you have had enough. Tell them you want a single payer system for all citizens.

Here is who you should contact:

Senator Schumer: 202-224-6542

Senator Gillibrand: 212-668-6262

E-Mail the White House: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/CONTACT>