



Puget Sound Taxi Driver

January 2014

FORE TIMES

News for the Western Washington Taxicab Operators Association (WWTCOA) - Teamsters Local 117

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WWTCOA Leadership Council members speak out at the Teamsters taxi political forum on December 10.

POLITICAL FORUM A BIG SUCCESS

Taxis take their concerns to elected officials

Teamsters 117 and the Western Washington Taxi Cab Operators Association (WWTCOA) hosted a political forum on December 10 at the Teamsters Building in Tukwila.

Over a hundred taxi drivers along with a dozen elected officials from the state, county, and city of Seattle attended the event.

The forum provided taxi operators with an opportunity to voice their concerns directly to elected officials about a variety of issues, including the continued lack of enforcement of for-hires and limousine drivers in the city of Seattle, the high cost of insurance, and the current mandate for drivers to participate in the State's Labor & Industries program.

Currently, taxi cab operators are required to pay hundreds of dollars a month for their L&I insurance. One of the WWTCOA's top priorities this legislative session in Olympia is to pass a bill that would allow taxi drivers the freedom to choose whether or not they want to participate in the program.

Teamsters Local 117 **Lobbyist Teresita Torres** has been meeting with legislators

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WWTCOA TAXI TICKET PROGRAM

Legal assistance provided for moving violations. Sign up now!



For taxi cab operators, getting a moving violation can be a hugely expensive ordeal and even threaten your livelihood. Taxi drivers can spend thousands of dollars each year on expensive attorney fees, fighting tickets in court.

Now, the WWTCOA and the Teamsters Union are excited to announce a new **Taxi**

Ticket Program that will help protect you when you are hit with a ticket. For an annual fee of \$120, an experienced, professional attorney at the Teamsters Union will represent you when you receive a moving violation while you are driving your taxi.

Teamsters 117 **Senior Staff Attorney Dan Swedlow** graduated from the University of Washington Law School in 2006 and has extensive courtroom experience defending members of the Union, and he is skilled at getting tickets dismissed.

In order to participate in the program, you must be a current, active member of the WWTCOA and you must maintain your membership throughout the calendar year. For more information, talk to Dawn Gearhart at 206-441-4860 ext. 1254. ●

L&I Hearing Scheduled

Important Hearing in Olympia on L&I Bill (HB2152)



The WWTCOA and the Teamsters have been laying the groundwork in Olympia to pass a bill that would lift the mandate that requires taxi cab operators to pay into the State's Labor & Industries insurance program. Under the bill, drivers would still have the option to participate in the program, but they could also opt out if they so desired.

A bill for the proposed law (HB1252) has been drafted and there will be a public hearing on the proposal on Thursday, January 16 at 8 a.m. before the Labor and Workforce

Development Committee in the John L. O'Brien building in Olympia. Please make an effort to attend the hearing if possible. It is important for legislators to see that we are united, organized, and serious about passing legislation that would give taxi cab operators greater freedom in running their businesses. ●

TAXIS MAKE GENEROUS DONATION TO FOOD BANK

WWTCOA members pool resources to help feed hungry families



WWTCOA Leadership Council members Salah Mohamed (l) and Parminder Cheema (r) present a gift of \$3,300 to Deborah Squires of Northwest Harvest.

Puget Sound taxicab operators made a special trip over the holidays. The drivers traveled to **Northwest Harvest** food bank, where they delivered a \$3,300 gift - a generous display of solidarity and support of families in need this holiday season and beyond.

Members of the **Western Washington Taxi Cab Operators Association** (WWTCOA) presented Deborah Squires, Northwest Harvest's Director of Community Engagement, with the donation on December 20.

15,000 MEALS FOR HUNGRY FAMILIES

"This is the busiest food bank in the state,"

Squires said. "In a week, about 5,000 people come through here, so your gift goes a long way. Three thousand three hundred dollars means 15,000 meals because the buying power of Northwest Harvest means we can give a person a full, nutritious, good meal for about 22 cents."

"One in four kids in our state doesn't have enough food, so you just fed a lot of kids," she said.

The WWTCOA, in partnership with **Teamsters Local 117**, started collecting the donations from taxi cab operators shortly before Thanksgiving.

"We live and work here in the community, and this is our way of giving back during the holidays," said Parminder Cheema, a member of the WWTCOA Leadership Council. "It is our way of saying, 'Thank you' to the community that helps provide for our families by choosing taxis to get around town. As independent owner-operators of our cabs, we rely on the community for their support."

"People are struggling, and we are trying to make a living, too," said Jagjit Singh, a taxi driver with **Orange Cab**. "It's good to share that with somebody." ●



POLITICAL FORUM

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over the issue, and **Representative Cyrus Habib** (48th District) has agreed to sponsor a bill that would remove the L&I mandate for taxi drivers.

The bill (HB 2152) has already been drafted, and there is a public hearing to discuss the proposal in the **Labor and Workforce Development Committee** on Thursday, January 16 in the John L. O'Brien building at 8 a.m. This is a critical first step to see if the bill has traction among legislators.

Members of the WWTCOA Leadership Council along with the Teamsters are lined up to testify at the hearing. If you would like to attend, please talk to Dawn Gearhart at 206-441-4860 ext.1254. ●

NEXT CITY COUNCIL HEARING SCHEDULED FOR JAN. 30

The next **Seattle City Council** hearing on taxis is scheduled for January 30 at 9 a.m. This is an important hearing, as the Council will likely be voting on a proposal about how to regulate app-based companies, such as UberX, SideCar and Lyft. Please be sure to attend the hearing. If you would like to testify, contact Dawn at 206-441-4860 ext.1254. ●

LAWSUIT PENDING - HOTEL MONACO & THE ALEXIS

A WWTCOA lawsuit is potentially in the works, targeting two downtown hotels, **Hotel Monaco** and **The Alexis**, which are allowing ongoing violations of city taxi regulations. Teamsters 117's Legal Department sent a letter to both hotels, demanding that they take immediate action to curtail illegal activity. If we do not receive a response promptly, we intend to move forward with legal action. **Stay posted!** ●

Join us for Lobby Day!

January 28 in Olympia

Help educate our elected officials about the real life concerns of Puget Sound taxi cab operators.

We will be meeting at the State Labor Council (906 Columbia St. SW in Olympia) at 9 a.m. for a short training before heading off to our visits with legislators. If you would like to participate, talk to Dawn. ●